

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Civil Expressions



- KidsPost Reprint: “When the Guns of the Civil War Fell Silent”
- Discussion Questions: Surrender at Appomattox Court House
- KidsPost Reprint: “Reunited Nation Loses Its Leader”
- Student Activity: Capture the Civil War (in Your Imagination)
- Student Activity: Artists and Writers Who Communicated
- Washington Post Reprint: “No Closure After Appomattox”

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KIDSPOST

THE CIVIL WAR | 1861-1865

When the guns of the Civil War fell silent

150 years ago, General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House, ending the four-year conflict.

In 1860, the United States, a country just 84 years old, was coming apart. The election of Abraham Lincoln as president split North from South over the issue of slavery. The country had nearly 4 million slaves. Lincoln's political party, the Republicans, wanted to free them. But the South relied on slave labor for its huge cotton, sugar and rice plantations.

Lincoln and the Republicans were hated and feared across the South. Before the new president was sworn in, seven Southern states left the union to form their own government, the Confederate States of America. Four more states, including Virginia, soon joined them. This act was called secession (seh-SESS-shun), and it led to the Civil War.

Four bloody years

The Civil War was the bloodiest conflict in U.S. history. If you had told someone in 1861 that it would drag on for four harsh years, they would have laughed at you.

No one dreamed they would still be fighting in April 1865, when Southern commanding general Robert E. Lee finally surrendered to his Northern counterpart, Ulysses S. Grant. Although a few fights



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Appomattox Court House, Virginia, where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant is now part of the National Park Service. The site contains several buildings, including the Peers House (above).

flared afterward, Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865 — 150 years ago this week — is often cited as the war's end.

By then, hardly a community or family had been left untouched. At least 620,000 died in the Civil War, and recent estimates suggest the number is closer to 750,000. Disease and starvation were far more deadly than cannonballs, rifles and swords.

Families, especially in border states, were torn apart by the conflict. Even the White House was affected: First

lady Mary Todd Lincoln was from a slave-holding family in Kentucky and had relatives fighting for the South.

At the start ...

Some people in Washington thought the war would be, literally, a picnic. On a Sunday in July 1861, they packed lunchboxes and rode 30 miles west to Manassas, Virginia, where a battle was brewing. It was the first big fight of the war. Since people thought it might also be the last, they didn't want to miss it.

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WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

Reenactors portraying Confederate troops fire cannons April 9 in Appomattox Court House National Historical Park on the 150th anniversary of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender to Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in the McLean House, effectively ending the Civil War. A bell sounded for four minutes, a minute for each year of the war.

They were shocked when Union (Northern) troops were routed and fled in panic. The frightened picnickers fled, too.

Now everyone knew the war was real.

As months stretched into years, the names of places largely unknown before the war suddenly were on everyone's lips. Antietam. Gettysburg. Chickamauga. Chancellorsville.

The North had few chances to cheer early on. That changed in July 1863 with major victories at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Vicksburg, Mississippi. Over time, the North's advantages — machines to produce weapons and goods, workers to operate those machines and money to buy what they couldn't make — crushed the South, whose

economy was tied to plantation life. Food and other items were hard to find there, and Confederate money was almost worthless.

Near the end ...

In spring 1865, Lee's army was dug in around Petersburg, Virginia. When Union troops cut off their supply lines, Lee's men abandoned Petersburg and nearby Richmond, the Confederate capital.

Lee's plan was to escape west, but his pursuers followed. They caught up with him at Sayler's Creek, where Lee lost nearly 8,000 men and eight generals. His army held on for two more days, but with no supplies and with desertions mounting, Lee knew that the end had come. "There is nothing left for me to do but to

go and see General Grant," he told aides, "and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

The two met on April 9 at a private home in the village of Appomattox Court House. Grant's surrender terms were generous. Lee's men were given food and allowed to return home. They could keep their horses and mules, as these would be needed for farming.

"The war is over," Grant said. "The rebels are our countrymen again." As Lee prepared to ride back to his men, Grant stepped from the porch and saluted him by raising his hat. His men did the same. Lee raised his own hat and returned the honor.

— **Marylou Tousignant**

April 6, 2015

Surrender at Appomattox Court House

Read “When the guns of the Civil War fell silent.”

1. What does “secession” mean?
2. The first paragraph of the KidsPost article begins: “In 1860, the United States, a country just 84 years old, was coming apart.” What reasons are given for this “coming apart” of the union?
3. When and how did the Civil War end?
4. Why do you think the author chose these battles to reference: Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg, Chickamauga and Vicksburg? What is the significance of each?
5. What advantages did the North have over the South?
6. Locate Appomattox Court House on a map.
7. Why did so many battles of the Civil War take place in Virginia?
8. Explain Grant’s reason for providing “generous” terms of surrender.
9. Grant raises his hat to Lee as the Southern commander departs Appomattox Court House. Lee returns the gesture. What were they communicating without words?
10. If you could interview one of the leading figures involved in the American Civil War, who would you choose? Why have you selected this individual? What are the first five questions you would ask of him or her?

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KIDSPOST

THE CIVIL WAR | 1861-1865

Reunited nation loses its leader

150 years ago this month, the president was shot while attending a play in Washington.

Northerners whooped it up when they heard that Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered. The Civil War was all but over! The North had won!

Five days later, President Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, decided to see a play at Ford's Theatre, near the White House. The president was tired from the strain of leading the nation through four years

of bloodshed. An evening out often lifted his spirits. So on the night of April 14, 1865 — 150 years ago next week — the Lincolns went to the theater.

'The president is shot!'

The actor John Wilkes Booth was hanging around Ford's Theatre when he heard that the president was coming that night to see "Our

American Cousin." Booth hated Lincoln. The North's victory meant the end of slavery in the South, a land Booth loved. He had wanted to harm Lincoln for a long time. Now was his big chance.

Booth went back to Ford's that night and sneaked into the presidential box. He carried a small pistol that fired just a single shot. It was all he would need.

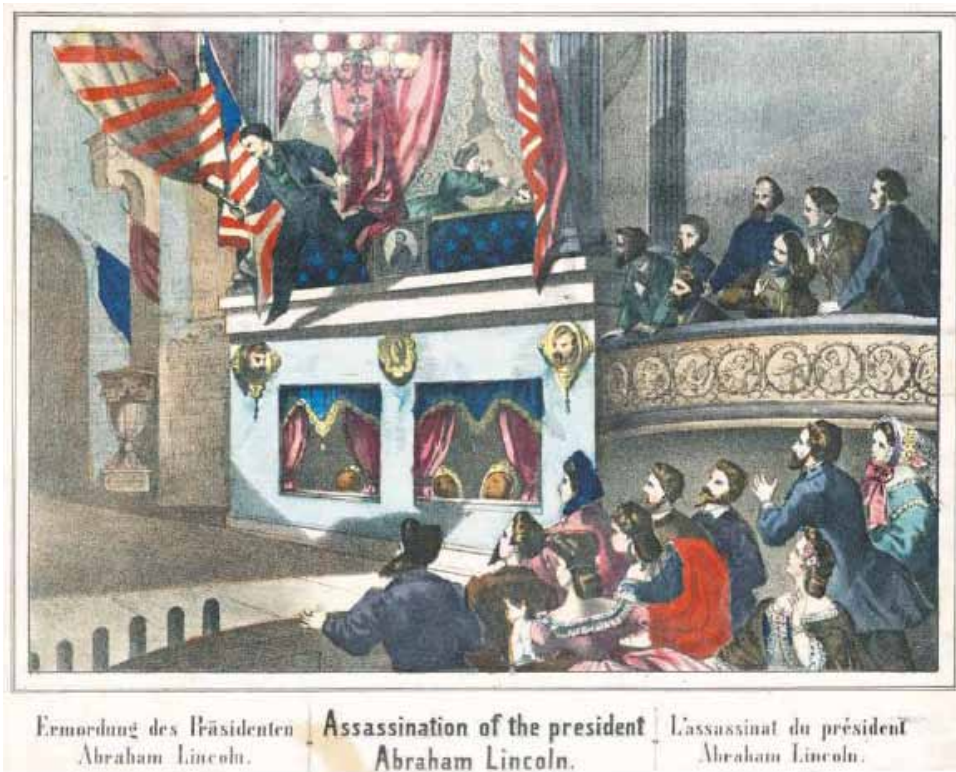
At a moment in the play when the audience was laughing and clapping loudly, a muffled noise was heard. People were confused. Was this part of the play? Suddenly a man jumped from the Lincolns' box onto the stage. Many knew right away who he was, since Booth had acted at Ford's a few times.

Booth yelled something, fled backstage and escaped on horseback.

"The president is shot!" a woman screamed.

Lincoln, unconscious and bleeding badly from his head wound, was carried across the street to a private home. Dozens of people crowded in a tiny back bedroom. Outside, a crowd awaited news.

Mary Todd Lincoln held out hope that her husband would survive, but the doctors knew he would not. After an agonizing night, Abraham Lincoln died the next morning. He was 56.



THE ALFRED WHITAL STERN COLLECTION OF LINCOLNIANA/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

John Wilkes Booth leaps to the stage of Ford's Theatre after shooting Lincoln. The president died the next morning.

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The hunt for the killer

The search for Booth and anyone who helped him began at once. A \$100,000 reward was offered.

Booth's escape was slowed by pain in his left leg, which he broke while fleeing. He traveled south through Maryland and across the Potomac River into Virginia. After 12 days, soldiers found him hiding in a barn and shot and killed him. Four people convicted of helping Booth were later hanged.

A train took Lincoln's body back to his home town of Springfield, Illinois. The route traveled through

seven states and took nearly two weeks because of the crowds that turned out to mourn him.

What happened to ...

- The nation's 4 million slaves: The 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery in the United States. It became law in December 1865, eight months after Lincoln was killed.

- Robert E. Lee: The Confederate general, who at the start of the war declined a top Union command out of loyalty to his home state, became president of Washington College in

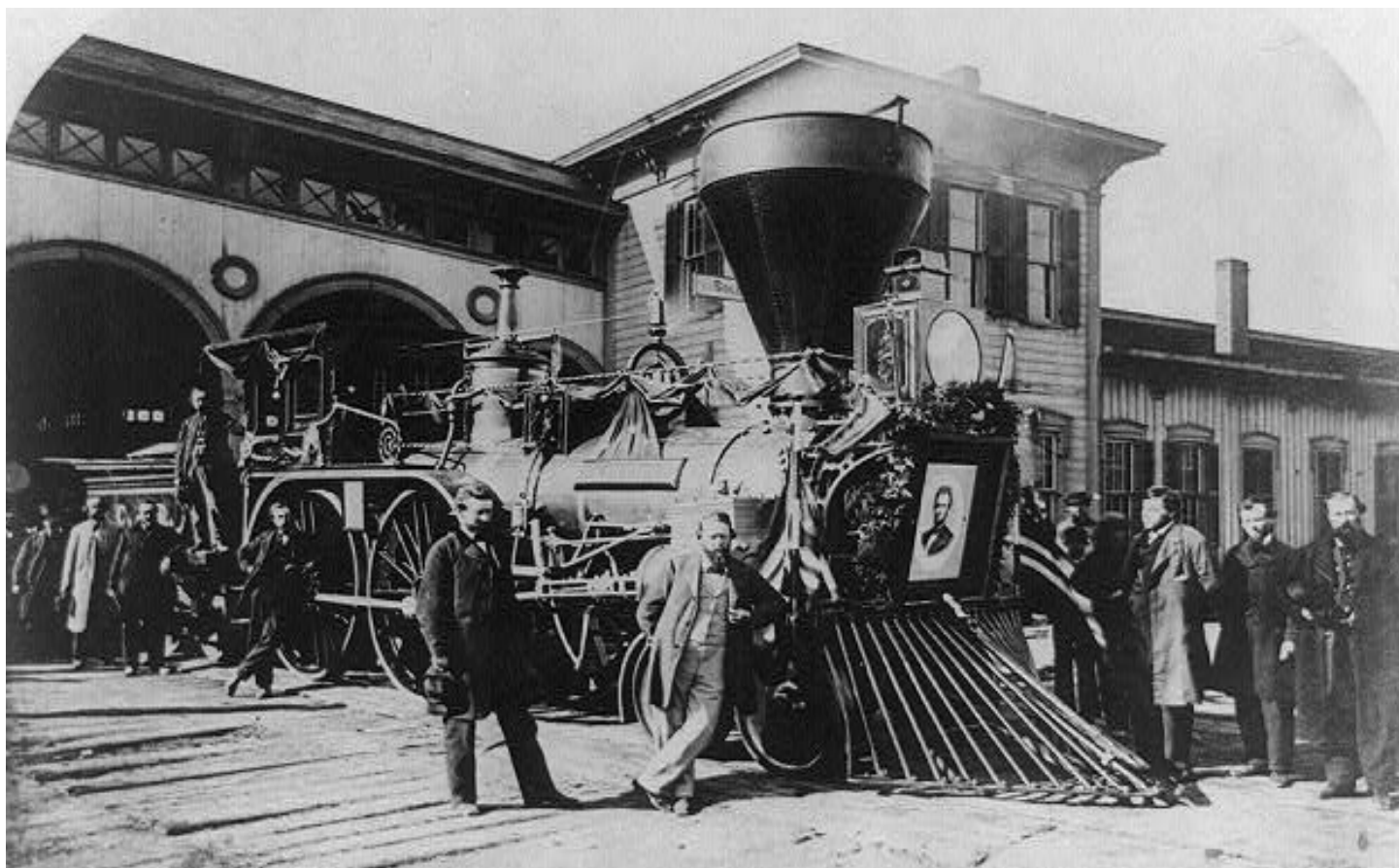
Lexington, Virginia. He died there in 1870 at age 63.

- Ulysses S. Grant: The Northern commander who accepted Lee's surrender was elected president of the United States 3½ years later. Grant's campaign slogan, "Let us have peace," is engraved on his tomb in New York City. He died in 1885, also at age 63.

- John Wilkes Booth: Just 26 when he assassinated the president, he is buried in an unmarked grave in Baltimore.

— **Marylou Tousignant**

April 6, 2015



LOC.GOV

Engine "Nashville" of the Abraham Lincoln funeral train which traveled through 180 cities in seven states, making stops for citizens to honor the fallen president.

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Capture the Civil War (in Your Imagination)

Illustrators, landscape artists and photographers captured images of battle, campsites, landscapes and domestic scenes. Civil War artists such as Winslow Homer, Sanford Gifford, Eastman Johnson and Frederic Church used primarily oil on canvas. Artists would send their works to New York City by train. There, wood engravers would prepare them for the press. Woodblock prints and black-and-white illustrations appeared in newspapers and magazines such as Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*, *New York Herald*, *The New York Times* and *Harper's*.

Your Assignment

Become a Civil War artist using one of these mediums to tell the story of the time period or a specific event such as Grant and Lee meeting at Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

Charcoal	Stick composed of the black substance made of burned wood
Collage	Multimedia composition made of pictures, photographs, cloth and other objects adhered to the surface
Pen-and-Ink	Liquid drawing applied by pens; nibs and techniques such as hatching, cross hatching, stippling and lines of different widths influence the resulting image. Black ink on white paper gives the greatest contrast.
Pencil	The hardness of the graphite lead used in the pencil and sharpness of the point influence the lines drawn; used for quick sketches and finely worked drawings
Watercolor	Paint in which pigment (color) is suspended in water; usually images are painted on paper. Currier and Ives applied watercolor to black-and-white prints.
Woodblock	Method used by wood engravers for publishing images in newspapers and magazines during the Civil War. Illustrations and art drawn in the battlefield or camps were sent to publishers where the images were cut into wood blocks and inked for printing.

Art of the Civil War

http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/archive/2012/art_civil_war/

The Civil War and American Art

<http://www.civilwarinart.org>

The Civil War in Art

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm041.html>

A Civil War Sketch Artist: Alfred Waud

<http://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/photos/>

Pictures of the Civil War

<http://www.philaprintshop.com/cwprintmaking.html>

Printmaking Process

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm181.html>

Promoting the Union Cause: Poster-Map Illustrations

http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/online/civilwar_timeline/index.html#!pretty

Photo Timeline: The Civil War and American Art

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm073.html>

The Wilderness Campaign: Edwin Forbes

Artists and Writers Who Communicated

They shared what they witnessed. They reached deep inside to find expression. Each was a valued artist; many were contributors to publications. The writers were both familiar and unknowns. Select a visual artist or writer. Read about the person's work before and during the Civil War and follow his or her career in the years after. Questions that may be answered include: Which maintained a career in the arts and which did not? In what ways did each contribute to an understanding of life in the 1860s? What contributions did each make to American arts?



Visual Artists

A number of artists worked as sketch artists and illustrators for newspapers and magazines, covering both Northern and Southern troops and domestic life. They learned to sketch rapidly, capture details, and move about with daring and determination to find the newsworthy events.

- Frederic Church (1826-1900) <http://www.fredericedwinchurch.org>
- John Adams Elder (1833-1895) http://www.librarypoint.org/john_elder
- Sanford Gifford (1823-1880) <http://www.sanfordrobinsongifford.org>
- Winslow Homer (1836-1910) <http://www.winslow-homer.com>
- Eastman Johnson (1824-1906) <http://www.anb.org/articles/17/17-00460.html>
- Henry Mosler (1841-1920) <http://civilwardiary.aaa.si.edu/about.html>
- Thomas Nast (1840-1902) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm112.html>
- William Ludwell Sheppard (1833-1912) <http://collections.richmondhistorycenter.com/detail.php?type=related&kv=9713&t=people>
- David H. Strother (1816-1888) <http://images.lib.wvu.edu/s/strother/>
- Alfred Waud (1828-1891) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm041.html>



Writers

Abolitionist writers emerged in this period, but many other well-known authors had mixed feelings about the war as it continued. None was so intimately involved as Walt Whitman who witnessed battlefields and volunteered as a nurse in army hospitals.

- Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914) "What I Saw at Shiloh," "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"
The Red Badge of Courage
A Confederate Girl's Diary
- Stephen Crane (1871-1900)
- Sarah Morgan Dawson (1842-1909)
- Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)
- Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), "It feels a shame to be Alive —," poems
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (1845), lectures
"The Conduct of Life," essays, lectures
"Chiefly About War-Matters," letters, essays
"Benito Cereno" (1855) serial novella of a slave uprising; "Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War" (1866) "Shiloh"
Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)
- Herman Melville (1819-1891), "Beat! Beat! Drums!," "Drum-Taps,"
"The Wound Dresser," "Captain! My Captain!"
- Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896),
- Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

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No Closure After Appomattox

Assassination, Reconstruction, Jim Crow: The war was just a chapter in a tragic tale

BY PHILIP KENNICOTT

The 50th anniversary of the Civil War was all about reconciliation, grizzled old men shaking hands across the wall in Gettysburg, bunking down in tents with the remains of their old regiments, listening to Woodrow Wilson talk

of “reunion and hope and patriotic fervor” before heading back to Washington to preside over a more rigidly segregated federal workforce. The second major anniversary — the centennial — was a strained echo of the first, with politicians and civic leaders still nattering on about sectional and racial comity, but it had

the air of an awkward family reunion with toxic secrets just under the surface. That was in the early 1960s, with McCarthyism a not-so-distant memory, and the simmering anger of the civil rights movement about to explode.

And what of this most recent anniversary, now that we’ve reached



COURTESY OF DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Winslow Homer's "The Four-Leaf Clover" suggests a bucolic moment, but that window that can't be shut and the darkness behind it are ominous.

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the end of another four-year cycle of remembrance? An African American president held office during the entirety of it, while some sectors of the society celebrated a post-racial America, and others focused anew on the glaring racial and economic inequities of our economic, education and penal systems. We have spent four years, now, thinking about the Civil War, in some ways refighting it and contesting again its legacy and meaning. Have we accomplished anything? Have we made any progress?

If so, it may not be clear for years, not just because it's difficult to measure how attitudes and understanding change, but also because the anniversary of the Civil War was always an imperfect way to think about the broader currents of 19th-century American history. Anniversaries are a necessary evil of how history is processed in the popular consciousness. They arrive in the arbitrary increments of 10 or 50 or 100 years, with no natural correspondence to larger social forces. Consider an entry in a diary now on view at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum. It appears in a family journal begun by Adam Plummer, who was born a slave in Maryland in 1819.

In November 1860, Plummer's daughter Sarah Miranda was sold to a slave trader and ended up in New Orleans. After the war was over, Plummer and his wife, Emily, sought to reunite with their daughter. They used their savings, and loans and contributions from their extended family, to buy their son Henry a

train ticket to New Orleans, where he managed to find his sister, now a widow with a young child. They were reunited with their family in October 1866.

Not quite a half century later, the family journal contains this entry: "Just forty-eight (48 yrs.) years ago tonight Bro. Henry and Sister Miranda returned from New Orleans. October 19, 1914 – October 19, 1866 = 48."

It is by our reckoning an irregular interval — 48, not 50 years — marking an event that transpired a year and a half after the war was over. But there's no reason that the dates inscribed in familial memory should correspond to the dates we remember collectively. Even those who lived through the fighting might have more intense memories associated with events that don't correspond neatly to the calendars of history: The open-ended wait for a relative who never returned; the ongoing trauma of veterans emotionally shaken and psychically shattered by what they experienced; the grinding poverty of daily life in the South after its economy and infrastructure were destroyed; the disorientation of former slaves grappling with a freedom that was often more *de jure* than *de facto*; the painful readjustment (for men) to civilian life, and the return (for women) to ordinary domesticity.

A recent poem by the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa published in the volume "Lines in Long Array: A Civil War Commemoration" dramatizes the irregular ways that private hopes and

pain map onto events like the Civil War. "I Am Silas" was inspired by a famous photograph that has been at the center of contentious arguments about the South and slavery to the current day. It shows two young men, one white, the other African American, sitting together, each holding a fearsome-looking knife, with a single rifle lying across both of their laps as if to suggest they are conjoined by its barrel. The white man is Andrew Chandler, a Confederate soldier and son of a slave owner from Mississippi, the black man is Silas, a slave who served his young master during the fighting, including rescuing him from an unnecessary amputation and delivering him to decent medical care after Andrew was wounded at Chickamauga. The poem takes liberty with what is known of Chandler and Silas, imagining a close companionship before the war, and a sense of genuine care and affection during the days after Andrew's wounding:

"... Sometimes,
if you plant a red pear tree
beside an apple, the roots tangle
underneath, & it's hard to say
if you're eating apple or pear."

The original photograph has been used to justify the belief that African Americans served happily in the Confederate army, which plays into the resilient myth that slavery was not the root cause of the war, and that slaves were not unhappy with their lot. But Komunyakaa extends the poem to the days and years after the war, to suggest that after Silas saves a man who was his master

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

Sgt. Andrew Chandler of the 44th Mississippi Infantry Regiment, and Silas Chandler, family slave, look like brothers in arms. But what about before and after the war?

and perhaps his friend, he is shown no love or consideration once free: “When we came back,” he writes in the voice of Silas, “I was ready to bargain for a corner of land/but history tried to pay me/in infamy .../ & a few pieces of tarnished silver.” The poem extends the narrative of slavery and race to the years both before and after the war, capturing an emotional complexity undisclosed by mere historical analysis.

Foremost among all the things not easily accommodated by a historical perspective that prioritizes the war years as its organizing principle is the history and failure of Reconstruction, the great next chapter that arguably played as large a role in the formation

of the racial future as the war and emancipation. These two periods, the war and Reconstruction, are chronologically contiguous, but occupy radically different places in the general American consciousness. One is the subject of intense curiosity, extensive remembrance, rampant mythologizing and an industry of book-writing both scholarly and popular; the other is almost entirely terra incognita for most Americans.

A decade ago, when Eric Foner wrote “Forever Free,” an account of Reconstruction for mainstream audiences, he found myriad markers of how absent Reconstruction remains in our national consciousness: At that time, only one National Park

Service site out of hundreds was particularly devoted to the events of Reconstruction; tests administered to high school students showed that their ignorance of Reconstruction was greater than any other subject in American history; and a best-selling book that prescribed some 1,000 basic facts everyone should know included not one fact relevant to Reconstruction.

At the National Portrait Gallery, senior historian David Ward doesn’t think that’s changed, which is one reason his next exhibition will treat the Civil War as just one piece of a larger narrative, beginning before and lasting well after the actual war itself. “Dark Fields of the Republic: Alexander Gardner Photographs 1859-1872” deals with a photographer primarily known for having brought the carnage of the battlefield home to a wide American audience, and for being the favorite photographer of Lincoln. But Ward sees the importance of Gardner’s work extending into the age of westward expansion, the confrontation and exploitation of Native American populations, and the emergence of a more ambitious and imperial United States. The Civil War and Reconstruction, he says, were only part of a larger “war over the nature of the union which continues well into the 20th century.”

By expanding the focus from the battlefield to the larger “fields” or landscape of America, the show will push the historical narrative into a period when the federal government begins to take the expansive, nationalized form we know today,

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Gens. Wesley Merritt, Philip Sheridan, George Crook, James William Forsyth and George Armstrong Custer in the waning days of the war, and before the beginning of their next one.

an era of railroad building and land-grant colleges, when the prewar promise of “Manifest Destiny” was realized with all the technological and military prowess the government could muster.

One photograph, in particular, stands out for Ward as laden with meaning. It shows five union officers from the Civil War, including

Philip Henry Sheridan and George Armstrong Custer, gathered around a table. It was taken in 1865, and might seem a valedictory image by men who had accomplished their mission. But it isn’t.

“These are the guys who fight the Indian wars,” says Ward. “They are all moving west. The war doesn’t stop for them.”

For Native Americans, the end of the Civil War brought only more violence and suffering. For African Americans, the promises and failure of Reconstruction, and the de facto apartheid of Jim Crow made the promise of emancipation often seem desperately shallow.

Even today, the country is still divided, North and South, in ways that people love to parse on social media and in the partisan press: Vast differences in social attitudes to race, sexuality and religion, and significant differences in educational attainment, lifespan, obesity and other markers of well-being. The basic division of Red and Blue America, which has governed our thinking for decades now, map onto more than just the North and South, with rural and urban cleavages as well; but for most of the states that fought the war 150 years ago, today’s red and blue are basically yesterday’s gray and blue.

It’s tempting to say that is the lesson we’ve just learned from the most recent anniversary: The war isn’t over, it was never over, and it continues now by other means. But we’d be wrong to think we have just discovered that truth. In the early years after Appomattox and the assassination of Lincoln, a muted sense of dread haunted the country. Even with the war ended and the country moving on to new endeavors, there was a powerful intuition that the war would not be easily packaged, delimited and contained within neat historical parameters. In 1873, Winslow Homer, who had covered the war as an illustrator for *Harpers*, painted what at first

