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The Myth of the Lost Cause and Tennessee Textbooks, 1889-2002

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A thesis

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IN partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Masters in History

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by

Rachel Christine Duby

August 2005

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Keywords: The Myth of the Lost Cause, The Civil War, Tennessee textbooks, The Lost Cause  
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## ABSTRACT

The Myth of the Lost Cause and Tennessee Textbooks, 1889-2002

by

Rachel Christine Duby

The Myth of the Lost Cause is an inaccurate account of the Civil War that remains prominent in American society. The myth alters key aspects of the war such as its cause, participants, and outcome. It is my hypothesis that one reason many Americans misunderstand the war is because they learned inaccurate information as children. Most children first learn of the war in school textbooks. I became curious as to the accuracy of this Civil War information. As there is little research on this topic, this paper begins the process of bridging the gap between education curriculum and the Lost Cause.

I examined textbooks used in Tennessee between 1889-2002. I discovered that the Lost Cause is most prominent in textbooks used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century but remains present in modern textbooks. I conclude that material will continue to correct itself as the twenty-first century continues.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the twenty-first century marked the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Civil War. Today the Civil War remains one of the most researched events in American History. Americans, as well as countless individuals around the world, have a fascination with the Civil War for various reasons. Militarily, some consider the Civil War one of the first modern wars, given the new weapons and guerilla fighting style. Emotionally, the war appeals to people with its accounts of the unselfishness and honor of the soldiers and leaders on both sides as well as the tale of brother fighting against brother. Despite the research and interest, millions of Americans' knowledge of the Civil War is inaccurate.

It is my hypothesis that one reason millions of Americans have a misinterpretation of the Civil War is because as children they learned inaccurate information. While some of this inaccurate information undoubtedly came from family members, it is possible that most children first learn about the Civil War in school. Perhaps then it is not solely parents who share with children stories about the Civil War but also schoolteachers during classroom lessons. Public school teachers use state authorized textbooks to educate their students, and, thus, if the textbooks are wrong, students learn incorrect information. If the Civil War information in textbooks is not the actual history of the war, then students, however unknowingly, believe a myth instead of reality.

One inaccurate account of the Civil War, known as the Myth of the Lost Cause, remains present in American society in the twenty-first century. Regardless that the myth contradicts much of the modern research on the Civil War, millions of Americans continue to accept the myth as reality. The Lost Cause developed in the South shortly after the Civil War and quickly

spread, leaving Americans throughout the nation believing this mythical version of the war instead of the actual history. The Lost Cause alters key aspects of the war, such as its cause, the image of its participants, and outcome. Due to such an alteration, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that historians began to uncover the falsehoods of the myth and offer the true account of the war. However, with a century of myth imbedded in American society, correction of the myth was not immediate.

While the numbers have dwindled over the past century, people throughout the United States continue to believe the Lost Cause version of the Civil War. Whether in casual conversation or in an academic setting, some Americans continue to attest Lost Cause aspects of the war as truth. As previously stated, such a wide acceptance could not have come solely from oral stories passed down through families or a handful of books and articles written by Lost Cause advocates such as Jubal A. Early. I, therefore, became curious as to the accuracy of the Civil War information taught to children in public schools. Having completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education, I saw first hand how impressionable children are, especially in the later part of elementary school and middle school. It is in these grades that teachers first introduce students to United States history and for many students this is the first information they receive about the Civil War outside of their own families. According to the Tennessee educational standards for public schools, children first study the Civil War in grades four through eight. Children rarely question the authenticity of the material in textbooks, accepting all the information as truth. If students at an impressionable age study from textbooks that recount a Lost Cause version of the Civil War and accept it as truth, it is likely they will believe that information into adulthood.

There has been countless research on children, analyzing how they learn and the best methods to use when teaching various subjects such as social studies. John W. Santrock finds that the early school years are when children are the most receptive to information and eager to learn.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, children are more likely at an early age to accept, without question, any information given to them by a teacher than they are when they reach high school and college. Therefore, if an instructor teaches students, even unknowingly, incorrect information, it is likely that this is what children will believe, even if later teachers attempt to correct them.

There is also a variety of information concerning the Lost Cause. In the past four decades alone, historians Alan Nolan, Gaines Foster, David Blight, and Thomas Connelly, just to name a few, have offered excellent books analyzing the Lost Cause as a whole and the various aspects of the myth. These men, along with their counterparts, examine the origin of the Lost Cause, reasons why the myth developed, as well as an in-depth discussion into some of the elements of the myth such as the portrayal of Robert E. Lee. The examination of the works of these men, along with others, occurs in later chapters. While these are excellent works on the Lost Cause, they, for the most part, deal with the presence of the Lost Cause in American society and rarely, if ever, mention the effect of the myth on the American educational system.

While the above examples are separate studies about either children during their early years in public schools or the Myth of the Lost Cause, there is no research to my knowledge bridging the gap between the two fields. In his book, *Baptized in Blood*, Charles Reagan Wilson analyzes the presence of the Lost Cause in the curriculum at universities such as Washington and Lee and Sewanee. He traces the appearance of the Lost Cause and its integration into curriculum at these universities. While his findings are interesting, this does not answer the question of the presence of the Lost Cause in the curriculum for younger children.

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Santrock, *Child Development*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001) 526.

The intention of this paper is to begin the process of bridging the gap between the social studies curriculum for children in grades four through eight in Tennessee and the presence of the Lost Cause in textbooks. Only after identifying if the Lost Cause is present in textbooks, and in what areas of the Civil War material, can inaccurate information give way to the true history of the Civil War. In the absence of such information, the Lost Cause will continue to live on in American society, just as it has in the past, in the future generations.

## CHAPTER 2

### CIVIL WAR HISTORY—THE MYTH OF THE LOST CAUSE VERSES REALITY

Americans view the Civil War, perhaps more than any other event in United States history, with strong emotional ties. These emotional ties make it difficult to obtain an objective account of the war, meaning that many Americans' knowledge of the Civil War is not accurate. For generations older family members passed down stories of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers honorably fighting in the war for either the Union or Confederacy, thus passing a biased memory of the Civil War through to the next generation. Despite the fact that most Americans today are at least four generations removed from the war, many vividly remember the family stories told to them. Whether the stories favor the North or South or remain neutral, it is possible that Americans gain much of their knowledge of this great dividing time in American History from ancestral stories. Americans do not receive this biased, or mythical, version of the Civil War only through family stories but also in movies, historical books, as well as educational textbooks. Thus, millions of Americans, regardless of the source, believe an incorrect account of the Civil War. While the Myth of the Lost Cause originated in the South, Americans throughout the country accept the myth as reality. Therefore, perhaps the greatest obstacle in bridging the gap between the mythical and accurate versions of the Civil War is the presence of the Lost Cause version of the Civil War in American society.

The Army of Northern Virginia's surrender at Appomattox not only signified the defeat of the South as a military and political entity, it represented the defeat of Southern society. The end of the Civil War brought uncertainty to millions of white Southerners who now faced a life that was completely different from the one to which they were accustomed. Slaves, the main

source of labor in the South, were gone and the fighting destroyed large swaths of Southern farmland. According to Thomas Connelly in *The Marble Man*,

the psychological trauma of the South's defeat was enormous. The economic collapse was total. Two billion dollars of human slavery had been eliminated. Banks and insurance firms had collapsed, while hundreds of millions of dollars in investments ranging from railroads to farm machinery had evaporated. More important were the losses in human resources. The war had cost the Confederates over a quarter of million dead...Leadership had also been swept away in a region that had always placed faith in political and military personalities.<sup>1</sup>

As white Southerners began to cope with the complete collapse of their society and Northern victory, many Southerners developed their own version of the Civil War, portraying the South in a favorable light. This version, later coined the Myth of the Lost Cause, grew to become a widely accepted account of the Civil War throughout the country. Historians over the past 140 years have identified that there are two contradictory versions of the Civil War, one mythical and one historical, both of which are widely accepted by the American public. For many Americans, the Lost Cause replaces the true history of the war

The Myth of the Lost Cause served many purposes for Southerners in the years after the Civil War. According to Gaines Foster, after the Civil War Southerners feared that through defeat they had brought dishonor to themselves and their society. They had built a society distinctly different from the rest of the nation, boasted of its uniqueness and strength, and yet were unable to defend its independence. The Lost Cause, however, rectified this fear and brought only honor to the South through the memory of the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> Through the Lost Cause, Southerners were able to explain how and why they lost the war, cope with and move

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 91.

<sup>2</sup> Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South-1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 22.

past their utter defeat, and make the critical transition to a new society and social order. Charles Reagan Wilson states that through the Lost Cause, the Civil War epitomized Southern virtue as Southerners entered a moral crusade against the North.<sup>3</sup> The Lost Cause, therefore, was crucial in the South's restructuring after the Civil War. Early creators of the myth, such as Jubal Early and J. William Jones, helped propel the myth nationally, which resulted in people throughout the South, as well as the remainder of the country, embracing the myth as reality. These men, along with countless others, aided in the development of the Lost Cause as a way for Southerners to justify their actions and allow themselves, as well as the entire country, to move past the downfalls of the Confederacy and instead concentrate on its positive aspects. Early writes of the South's desire to preserve its integrity, stating,

the most that is left to us is the history of our struggle, and I think that ought to be accurately written. We lost nearly everything but honor, and that should be religiously guarded.<sup>4</sup>

As Southerners began to search after the Civil War for ways to justify their secession and war against the United States, many turned to the Lost Cause. Alan Nolan states that the Lost Cause recounts the Civil War in an honorable light. Though the myth glorifies the actions of both the North and the South, it primarily focuses on the South, whose actions need more embellishment than its Northern counterpart does.<sup>5</sup> David Blight concurs with Nolan's assertion, stating that the Lost Cause describes the South as a prosperous, glorious civilization destroyed by

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: the Religion of the Lost Cause* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Gary W. Gallagher, "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History: A Persistent Legacy," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 39.

<sup>5</sup> Alan T. Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 12.

Northern aggression.<sup>6</sup> The Lost Cause conveniently omits the atrocities of Southern culture, such as slavery, and instead portrays the South as a tranquil society. This tranquil society, as Jack Temple Kirby states, is relaxed, a little lazy, and a place where both races depend on one another for survival.<sup>7</sup> Despite the inaccuracies of the Lost Cause, it offered a much-needed outlet for Confederate veterans to rationalize their actions during the war.

Perhaps more than any other groups, Confederate veterans needed the Lost Cause to justify their actions during the war. Veterans, along with Southerners who remained on the home front, refused to believe that they fought for a losing cause and preferred to believe their actions were honorable. The Lost Cause glorifies the Southern position in the war, contending Confederate soldiers were honorable patriots—not traitors or rebels.<sup>8</sup> By portraying the South as a proper, dignified society operating with peace and harmony prior to the presence of Northern soldiers, the Lost Cause offered Confederate soldiers justification for their actions against the United States. Confederate soldiers, through the myth, were not reckless in their fighting; they only fought to maintain their superior society. The Lost Cause provided Southerners with a way to move past the war without disgracing veterans. Despite the loss, Confederate veterans held a position of honor in the Lost Cause for defending the integrity of the South.

Aside from allowing Confederate veterans to maintain their honor, the Myth of the Lost Cause had another positive effect on the nation—it allowed the North and the South to reunite. After the Civil War, the South sought to find dignity in spite of its defeat. Many Northerners, for the sake of reconciliation, credited the South's cause and recognized the nobility of its soldiers

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<sup>6</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 257.

<sup>7</sup> Jack Temple Kirby, *Media-Made Dixie: the South in the American Imagination* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 79.

<sup>8</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 13.

who fought tirelessly in defense of their homeland. Without the self-respect and dignity the Lost Cause gave the South, many white Southerners would have had a difficult time swallowing their pride and rejoining the Union. While reconciliation did not depend on the North crediting the South's motives, it certainly aided in a quicker reconstruction period. According to Nolan, the Lost Cause aided in the reconciliation of the nation as the North acknowledged the honor of the South, which allowed the South to reenter the Union on respectable terms.<sup>9</sup>

Despite its inaccuracies, the Myth of the Lost Cause accounted for many positive things, but it also had a negative effect. Through its effort to vindicate the Southern cause, the Lost Cause deprived African Americans of their rightful place as participants and victims and denied the issue of slavery as the principle cause of the Civil War. Robbing African Americans of their crucial role in the Civil War only further placed them in an inferior position during and after the Reconstruction of the South. Without acknowledging the role of African Americans in the war or giving them their rightful place in history, the Lost Cause buried the truth, thus helping to fuel harsh racial relations for the next 100 years, until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Blight states that the Lost Cause was a way for Southerners to remember the allegedly “better times”—times when African Americans were slaves and in their place.<sup>10</sup> Southerners strove to continue these “better times” in the decades after the Civil War by placing restrictions on African Americans in an attempt to keep them in an inferior position. Through the Lost Cause, the nation reconciled on Southern terms, characterizing former slaves as idiots and helpless. According to Blight, this greatly hurt the African Americans' ability to use the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments as a vehicle to political and social equality, as Americans in both the

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<sup>9</sup> Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 266.

North and the South considered them too ignorant to deserve such rights.<sup>11</sup> While the nation suffered greatly through the division in the Civil War, perhaps the greatest victims, especially through the Lost Cause, were the millions of African Americans in the country.

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The Myth of the Lost Cause retells the Civil War and justifies Southern actions. The overall purpose of this paper is to track the presence of the Lost Cause in textbooks used in Tennessee public schools. First, however, it is necessary to examine the individual elements of the Lost Cause in the textbooks. The main issues of the Lost Cause are the nature of slavery in the South and the condition of slaves, the effect Northern abolitionists had on the deepening rift between the two sections, reasons for and the legality of Southern secession, and the Southern military loss, as well as the portrayal of Southern military leaders, specifically Robert E. Lee.

The Myth of the Lost Cause, as already examined, denies African Americans their rightful place in Civil War history and strives to make the war about a number of reasons other than slavery. Wilson affirms that white supremacy was a key component of Southern culture, making it quite difficult to separate the institution of slavery and Southern culture when discussing the Civil War. The Lost Cause, however, adamantly attempts to do just this.<sup>12</sup> Immediately after the war, the leading men of the Confederacy contended that the war was not about slavery. “After Appomattox, Jefferson Davis claimed that ‘slavery was in no wise the cause of the conflict’ and Vice President Alexander H. Stephens argued that the war ‘was not a

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<sup>11</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 272.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 100.

contest between the advocates or opponents of that Peculiar Institution.”<sup>13</sup> According to Gary Gallagher, early Lost Cause writers such as Jones and Early consciously removed slavery from the Civil War altogether.<sup>14</sup> To obtain their goal, writers depicted slaves as passive, ignorant laborers in the South; people such as Walt Disney and Margaret Mitchell carried this depiction to the media in later years. As Kirby asserts, such media represents slaves in two ways. The first is the happy, joyful field hand who works tirelessly in the field for this master while the second shows slaves dutifully assisting the master’s family in the main house by preparing meals, cleaning, and raising the white children of the plantation as if they were their own.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Lost Cause portrays slaves as happy, content, faithful servants who willingly obey their kind, caring masters. These caring masters provided for their slaves similar to how they provided for their own families. They offered slaves basic necessities as well as introducing slaves to Christianity, which, as Wilson discusses, slaveholders hoped would give slaves order and self-control.<sup>16</sup> It, therefore, seems absurd that content laborers would rebel against their loving masters. Through this characterization, the Lost Cause is able to eliminate any bad stigmas attached to slavery in the South as well as the possibility that slavery was the reason for the conflict.

Aside from its depiction of Southern slaves and slaveholders, the Lost Cause portrays the South as a society in which all members were satisfied with their position and willing to defend the Southern culture. Within the Lost Cause, there exists a unifying bond between all white Southerners and blacks over slavery. Nolan contends that the myth portrays all Southerners from

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<sup>13</sup> Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Kirby, *Media-Made Dixie*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 102.

the aristocratic planters to the poor whites united with blacks in defense of Southern culture—a culture centered on slavery.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of their supposed inferiority, according to the Lost Cause blacks were at ease with their position and wished to maintain the current Southern social standings as much as the slaveholders. Wilson notes that white Southerners also used the Bible to defend slavery. Ministers focused on biblical passages that displayed the peaceful coexistence of Christians and slaves as a way of stating that if slavery was acceptable in the Bible than it was acceptable it in the South.<sup>18</sup> Aside from the contentment of all members of Southern society, from slaveholders to slaves, the Lost Cause asserts that the South had every intention of freeing its slaves and ending the institution of slavery by its own accord. Hence, if the North fought to end slavery, it was both ridiculous and a waste of material resources and human life, as Southerners expected slavery to die a natural death over time.

The Myth of the Lost Cause blames Northern abolitionists for creating the sectional rift between the North and South. Within the Lost Cause, abolitionists play the role of troublemakers and antagonists. Abolitionists became the Lost Cause scapegoat for all the unfavorable publicity and situations that occurred in the South during the late nineteenth century. All slave revolts, harassment of Southern women, and disagreements between slaves and masters, according to Lost Cause advocates, were the result of the abolitionists' influence in the South. The Lost Cause attests that slavery was not an issue in the country before the meddling of Northern abolitionists. Nolan confirms this assertion, recognizing the Lost Cause depiction of abolitionists as agitators who insisted on making an issue out of something that no one in the

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<sup>17</sup> Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 4.

North or South cared about.<sup>19</sup> Through their unwarranted and unrelenting attack on the Southern institution, the myth states that the troublemaking abolitionists caused an estrangement between the North and South. The Lost Cause concludes that the resulting national conflict was avoidable but for the influence and persistence of Northern abolitionists.

The Lost Cause offers countless reasons for the cause of the Civil War—none of which directly involve slavery. As previously stated, the Lost Cause earnestly attempts to remove slavery as a potential cause of the Civil War and, therefore, grasps at any semi-logical reason for the conflict. As Nolan asserts, the Lost Cause often identifies tariff disputes (the most frequent argument), cultural differences, rising conflicts between an agricultural and industrial society, and states' rights as the major sectional conflicts.<sup>20</sup> One or more of the above reasons offers Lost Cause writers numerous situations and conflicts to which to attribute the outbreak of the war. Therefore, in the Lost Cause explanations for the cause of the Civil War, the South is able to play the role of the victim.

In regards to tariff disputes, the Southern economy was suffering and thus the South had no option but to secede to protect its economic welfare. The cultural differences and conflicting societies allude to the Southern argument that the North simply did not understand or appreciate Southern society and threatened to ruin a prosperous society if the South did not secede. As Wilson alludes, white Southerners were determined to create their own unique society—whether politically or culturally. Their attempt to achieve this goal was to separate politically from the nation by seceding.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the Lost Cause asserts that Southerners perceived the actions of

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<sup>19</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 15.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 1.

the national government as infringing upon their states' rights, again leaving them no alternative but to secede. Despite their personal view concerning secession, many white Southerners feared the North would deny them the rights and liberties for which their ancestors had fought. They blamed Northern Republicans for attempting to deny Southerners one of their basic rights—the right of property. James M. McPherson quotes a Confederate officer who declared that he

never believed the Constitution recognized the right of secession. I took up arms, sire, upon a broader ground—the right of revolution. We were wronged. Our properties and liberties were about to be taken from us. It was a sacred duty to rebel.<sup>22</sup>

In summary, Blight asserts Southerners, through the Lost Cause, offered many reasons explaining their secession from the Union—none of which included slavery. Southerners insisted that slavery was not the reason for secession; it was merely the point of Northern attack.<sup>23</sup>

Regardless of the reason Southerners used to justify their secession from the United States, they adamantly insisted any state had the legal right to secede from the Union. Foster recognizes this Lost Cause argument, stating that Southerners viewed the Constitution as a voluntary contract between the states, one which any state had the legal right to withdraw at any time.<sup>24</sup> Nolan similarly affirms that the Lost Cause endlessly identifies secession as a legal right of the Southern states, or by any state.<sup>25</sup> Through the Lost Cause argument of the legality of Southern secession, Southerners declared they were not in rebellion from the United States, thus they were not traitors or rebels. With this argument, the Lost Cause directly attacks Northerners

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<sup>22</sup> James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 26.

<sup>23</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 257.

<sup>24</sup> Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 23.

<sup>25</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 18.

who throughout the Civil War referred to Confederates as rebels. Southerners, however, remained adamant that the Southern states were not in rebellion; they were simply exercising their legal right to withdraw from the constitutional contract.

The Myth of the Lost Cause describes the military loss of the South in a way that honors the Confederacy. Brooks D. Simpson notes how Robert E. Lee perhaps planted the seed for the Lost Cause version of the Southern military loss when he declared at Appomattox that his men had fought honorably yet were overwhelmed by superior Northern resources and numbers.<sup>26</sup> Historians, such as Peter S. Carmichael, note that the Lost Cause contends that Union forces did not defeat the Confederacy outright. Instead, the Confederate army was merely a victim of the North's superior numbers, materials, and technology.<sup>27</sup> The Lost Cause, therefore, refuses to credit Northern forces with defeating the South, instead portraying the South as overwhelmed or simply worn down by superior Northern resources and manpower. Though slight, this distinction allows Southerners and Confederate soldiers to save face in light of their defeat.

Despite their apparent loss, Foster contends that Southerners did not view defeat as indicating something was wrong with their society or with slavery—they merely attributed it to unbeatable odds.<sup>28</sup> Through the Lost Cause, Southerners maintained that although their society was far superior to that of the North, they simply could not withstand overwhelming Northern resources. This leads to another assertion by the Lost Cause, that the imbalance of resources available to the North and South constituted an unfair fight. Simply given the resources and manpower available to both sides, the Lost Cause asserts that the Confederacy never had a

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<sup>26</sup> Brooks D. Simpson, "Continuous Hammering and Mere Attrition: Lost Cause Critics and the Military Reputation of Ulysses S. Grant," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 147.

<sup>27</sup> Peter S. Carmichael, "New South Visionaries: Virginia's Last Generation of Slaveholders, the Gospel of Progress, and the Lost Cause," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 111.

<sup>28</sup> Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 196.

chance at victory. If the battle was unfair and Southern defeat inevitable, Confederate soldiers were honorable for even attempting to win a losing battle. Despite their defeat, the Lost Cause portrays Confederate soldiers as being the noblest soldiers of the war. Against overwhelming odds, Confederate soldiers fought for the honor of the Confederacy even when it became apparent that they could not win.<sup>29</sup> The Lost Cause further asserts that Southern soldiers fought to preserve their homeland and culture, not to preserve slavery. Again, the Lost Cause adamantly denies that slavery was the reason for the war by stating the continuation of the institution was not an objective for Confederate soldiers.

A final key aspect of the Myth of the Lost Cause is the portrayal of the military leaders, particularly those in the South. Nolan notes that the Lost Cause undeniably depicts Robert E. Lee as the greatest leader in the war. The only figure that comes close to challenging Lee for this position is President Abraham Lincoln— not a military leader. Perhaps the reason Abraham Lincoln, and not Ulysses S. Grant, contends with Lee for the leading role in the Lost Cause is that the myth states that Lee had no American military peers.<sup>30</sup> The only officers to whom the Lost Cause attributes greatness, although to a lesser degree than Lee, are Lee's subordinate officers, such as Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Early pairs the two Confederate generals when he asserts that white Southerners can "be thankful that our cause had two such champions, and that, in their characters, we can furnish the world at large with the best assurance of the rightfulness of the principles for which they and we fought."<sup>31</sup> The myth does not remotely consider any Union officer as a great, or even capable, leader. The Lost Cause portrays Lee as

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<sup>29</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas J. Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: a Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 81.

<sup>31</sup> Gallagher, "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History," in *The Myth of the Lost*, 42.

the ultimate military leader, a man incapable of error or defeat. The Confederate army under Lee's leadership, however, was defeated.

Similar to the explanation of the military defeat of the South, the Lost Cause asserts that the defeat was not Lee's fault. Instead, the myth attributes the defeat to the inadequacy of some of Lee's subordinates and superior Northern resources—not a superior general. Thomas Brown describes the Lost Cause affirmation that Lee was a military genius whose only downfall was choosing inadequate subordinates. Defeat, therefore, does not rest on Lee's shoulders but on the shoulders of his subordinates.<sup>32</sup> Connelly agreed with Brown in his assertions that regardless of his losses to Grant's army, the Lost Cause credits Lee with outsmarting and outthinking Grant and the Union Army, a man brought down only by his subordinates.<sup>33</sup> According to Blight, the Lost Cause asserts the only way a master general such as Lee could be defeated is by overwhelming odds and numbers. While the Union defeated Lee's army, it did not signify the failure of Lee as a general.<sup>34</sup> Quite the contrary, the Lost Cause portrays Lee as a capable, intelligent general who, despite the odds, led his outnumbered army to countless victories against a powerful enemy before he was ultimately defeated.

The depiction of Lee's character through the Lost Cause only further enhances his flawless image. Nolan declares that the Lost Cause portrays Lee as a man incapable of hate, who was charitable, and gracious towards his enemies.<sup>35</sup> A key aspect of Lee's character in the myth is his opposition to slavery and secession—both of which are cornerstones of the Confederacy. Despite his opposition to these apparently fundamental Confederate values, Lee remained

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<sup>32</sup> Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration*, 81.

<sup>33</sup> Connelly, *The Marble Man*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 257.

committed to his home state of Virginia and the Confederacy. The myth, therefore, makes Lee even more appealing as a national hero by displaying his personal conflict with the values of the Confederacy and his willingness to place the good of the South above himself.

While the Lost Cause exemplifies Lee as the perfect military leader during the Civil War, it disparages the ability of his Northern counterpart, Ulysses S. Grant. According to Simpson, despite his victories over Lee's army, the Lost Cause tarnishes Grant's reputation to embellish Lee. In the Lost Cause, Grant ranks well below Lee as a military leader. The myth does not credit the success that Grant had in the war to his military knowledge or great leadership, instead the Lost Cause credits it to errors made by subordinate Confederate officers—not Lee.<sup>36</sup> A final blow against Grant by the Lost Cause is its portrayal of Lee, not Grant, as the real victor at Appomattox. His honorable surrender, undefeated spirit, and impeccable attire are qualities of a true military hero, not a defeated, rebel general.

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The Myth of the Lost Cause is not an accurate description of the Civil War. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the myth developed after the Civil War while Southerners attempted to cope with their defeat and justify their actions through secession and the war. Thus, the myth tells the story of the Civil War in a manner that glorifies the South regardless of actual history. The five elements of the Lost Cause discussed above, slavery in the South and the nature of slaves, the effect Northern abolitionists had on propelling the disagreement on slavery

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<sup>35</sup> Alan T. Nolan, *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 107.

<sup>36</sup> Simpson, "Continuous Hammering and Mere Attrition," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 148-149.

between the two sections, reasons for and the legality of Southern secession, the Southern military loss, and portrayal of Southern military leaders, contain some elements of actual history but are largely myth.

The Lost Cause portrayal of slaves as happy and content workers is both absurd and degrading. The implication that people, forced into lifetime bondage, were faithful servants and content with their status is ironic at best. Perhaps the best evidence to contradict this Lost Cause assertion is that a majority of the 180,000 blacks who enlisted in the United States Army to fight against the South were former slaves who either legally obtained their freedom or simply ran away. An estimated two-thirds of all slaves ran away during the course of the war. The thousands of other slaves who remained in bondage continually aided Union troops as they moved throughout the South in pursuit of the Confederate Army.<sup>37</sup> Only workers who were not satisfied with their position would offer such overwhelming aid to the enemy.

Another faulty claim by the Lost Cause is the assertion that masters treated their slaves as they would their own children, with gentle discipline and guidance. An examination of the conditions of African Americans after the Civil War, however, illustrates the inaccuracy of this Lost Cause claim. Wilson notes that former slaves were subjected to rigid public segregation, limited rights, and lynching.<sup>38</sup> It is unlikely that slaves found better treatment as legally free people than they received as property of white Southerners. Quite simply, the tranquil relationship between the two races that the Lost Cause boasts of was fictional. The idealized South, united against slavery and committed to protecting Southern society, is like most idealized societies—it never existed.

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<sup>37</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 22.

<sup>38</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 101.

The South did not unite behind Confederate beliefs, such as slavery, as the Lost Cause proclaims. Contrary to the Lost Cause, Nolan identifies deep divisions among Southerners concerning numerous military issues and slavery. There was a great division among white Southerners concerning the military draft and the possibility of drafting slaves in the Confederate Army, the emancipation of slaves if they fought for the Confederacy, control of army forces, as well as methods of replenishing army supplies.<sup>39</sup> The Lost Cause does not address this great division among Southerners and instead attempts to portray the South as a harmonious society. Kirby states that the media played a large part in the continuation of myth in the twentieth century as numerous filmmakers portrayed the South in accordance with the Lost Cause. One example is D. W. Griffith whose movies portray the South and its people in the Lost Cause stereotype. Kirby notes that through Griffith's films, Southerners are either poor, ignorant mountain farmers or powerful plantation owners. The movies omit the vast white middle class of yeomen farmers.<sup>40</sup> With this omission, conflicts between the races are nonexistent as there are no free blacks, few disloyal slaves, and no struggling white, nonslaveholding, farmers.

In the years prior to the Civil War, slavery was becoming more important in the South, not less, thus the Lost Cause assertion that the South would abandon slavery in due time does not align with actual events. There is no evidence to support the claim that the entire South, or even a small group of slaveholders, was willing to voluntarily free their slaves in the near future. According to Foster, evidence suggests the contrary. The willingness of the South to fight bitterly for four years and sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives only shows the depth of the

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<sup>39</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 24.

<sup>40</sup> Kirby, *Media-Made Dixie*, 10.

South's devotion to slavery.<sup>41</sup> Nolan offers further evidence stating that the South remained so devoted to slavery that it abridged the Bill of Rights. In defense of slavery, several Southern states agreed to the infringement of basic rights--freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and privacy of mail.<sup>42</sup>

It is understandable that Southerners made Northern abolitionists out to be the scapegoat for rising tensions between the sections over slavery. Often when an outside group advocates change, the typical response by those they wish to reform is negative. People rarely accept change peacefully, especially changes that were as radical as the ones abolitionists desired. Northern abolitionists had their work cut out for them in the South, for they entered a section that relied solely on an agricultural economy and demanded the South completely abandon its main source of labor-slaves. Strong disagreements over slavery existed in the United States dating back to the early 1800s, long before abolitionists starting advocating the abolishment of slavery. It is quite inaccurate, thus, to primarily blame Northern abolitionists for the conflict between the North and South over slavery. They simply provided Southern leaders with a perfect scapegoat for the rising sectional tensions.

Despite the Myth of the Lost Cause declaration that the South did not secede to protect slavery, it was the primary dividing issue within the nation. In the nineteenth century alone, the Missouri Compromise, Wilmot Proviso, and Compromise of 1850 all centered around the issue of slavery. While the sections disagreed on tariffs and states' rights, these were miniscule compared to the division over slavery. During the war, Confederate President Jefferson Davis

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<sup>41</sup> Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 21.

stressed the importance of slavery in the South, an institution that, contrary to the Lost Cause, was important enough to result in the South's secession from the United States.

As previously discussed, the North and South had contradictory views regarding secession. In short, the South considered it legal while the North viewed it unlawful for any reason. President Lincoln echoed Northern sentiment with his view that secession was wrong, an abuse of power, and a potential demise to democracy. In an era when democracy remained a fragile experiment, the secession of the South represented a huge threat to the system. The secession of a minority group for the reason that it did not agree with the majority opinion completely undermined the foundation of democracy. Such a move would result in anarchy and the destruction of the democratic orderly system.<sup>43</sup> In addition, McPherson asserts that Lincoln, along with the majority of Northern leaders, regarded secession not only wrong but as morally unjust. Secession was indeed tolerable and even warranted if it was for a just cause; however, the North did not consider the South's cause just. As McPherson states, Northerners simply could not justify an institution that ensured comfort to the white elite at the expense of African Americans.<sup>44</sup>

Southern leaders debated secession for some time before the actual separation in 1860 and 1861. The Deep South, however, chose to secede from the Union after Lincoln's election but before his inauguration. Thus, they did not even give the new elected administration a chance to work out a solution to the slavery problem in the country. As McPherson states, this caused many Northerners to regard the South as petty. In the eyes of the North, the South left

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<sup>43</sup> McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*, 29.

<sup>44</sup> McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*, 28.

the Union simply because their party and candidate did not win the election.<sup>45</sup> As the Lost Cause declares, Southerners simply assumed that Northern radicals would influence the new Lincoln administration to bypass Southern rights, especially the right to maintain slavery. For the better part of the previous two decades, the party of the majority of white Southerners, the Democrats, had controlled the government. When the Republican Party, which drew its support almost entirely from the North, gained control, the South seceded. Using logical deduction, Northerners attributed Southern secession to the election of a Republican candidate.

Many historians, such as McPherson, view the Civil War as the second revolution in American history. White Southerners, however, did not see themselves as revolutionists—instead they considered themselves counter revolutionists. The Lost Cause asserts that Southern leaders declared they were not revolting against the United States, they were merely ensuring the protection of their rights.<sup>46</sup> Assuming the North would eventually wage an all-out battle against slavery, the South saw their secession as a preventative measure. Ironically, the North viewed the revolution of the South as a counterrevolution as well but for a different reason. Many Northerners considered a revolution to protect slavery as counterproductive and reversing the progress of the nation. Despite the interpretation, many historians, such as McPherson, credit the secession of the South and the following war as the second American Revolution. Regardless of the legality, reasons, or interpretation of secession, the Lost Cause assertion that the South was not in rebellion from the North is counterfactual. Clearly, the South exercised its right to revolt against its former government and was in a state of rebellion. It was, therefore, the responsibility of the North to end the rebellion and bring the revolting states back into the Union.

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<sup>45</sup> McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* 28.

<sup>46</sup> McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*, 27.

The Lost Cause assertion that the South was not defeated in the Civil War is also counterfactual. According to Nolan, “the Federal armies seized the ports and major cities of the Confederacy, decimated its armies in battle, destroyed its logistical facilities, and ultimately roamed at will throughout the Confederacy.”<sup>47</sup> While the Confederate Army had to fend off a larger foe, in many respects the Union Army had a harder task. The Confederate Army merely needed to hold its own territory and fight in familiar land to achieve victory. The Union Army, on the other hand, had to enter hostile territory, fight in unfamiliar terrain, and continually conquer Confederate cities and military points. Undoubtedly, the South held the initial advantage. Despite the superior population numbers and resources of the North, the South was the more militarily inclined section.<sup>48</sup> The Union Army greatly increased its manpower when it began to enlist black troops into segregated units, despite extreme racism in the North. With nearly four million slaves in the South, the manpower of the Confederate Army would have greatly increased if the Confederacy had followed the North’s lead. As it turned out, the war ended before the enlistment of black troops in the South. In achieving victory, the North overcame far more obstacles than the South by not only defeating an army in enemy territory but also in acknowledging, in the midst of strong racism, the benefit of enlisting black soldiers in the Union Army.

The Lost Cause portrayal of Robert E. Lee is also not entirely accurate. Connelly argued that one depiction of Lee that the Lost Cause got correct was his military genius. Lee was a great military leader.<sup>49</sup> However, other Lost Cause characterizations do not follow as closely to the truth. For starters, idolization of Lee did not begin immediately after the war. Right after the

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<sup>47</sup> Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 22.

Civil War, people in the North and South, instead of finding Lee faultless placed full responsibility on Lee for the outcome.<sup>50</sup> It was not until the 1870s that former Confederate soldiers and other Americans began to idolize Lee through the Lost Cause. The man who became a national hero, however, did not always receive such widespread adoration. Ironically, the man who embodies the Southern military in the minds of millions of Americans was virtually unknown throughout the South in the first years of the Civil War. While professional military men thought highly of Lee in the years prior to the Civil War, he remained unheard of outside the military and Virginia.<sup>51</sup> As noted by Connelly, until the last few months of the war Lee only commanded the Army of Northern Virginia—a single Confederate Army. Yet, the surrender of his army signifies the end of the entire war.<sup>52</sup>

The Myth of the Lost Cause portrays Lee as being against both slavery and secession, resulting in an internal struggle when he decided to join the Confederacy. Like many other aspects of the Lost Cause, the myth tweaks Lee's image to best suit its purpose. According to Nolan, Lee firmly believed in the institution of slavery, participated in slave trafficking, and fought for the Confederate government whose cornerstone was slavery.<sup>53</sup> He was an aristocratic planter in Virginia and, like most men in his class throughout the South, his life centered on slavery. With regard to slavery, Lee resented Northern involvement and asserted it was the best arrangement for the two races.<sup>54</sup> Contrary to the Lost Cause, Lee supported slavery, believed

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<sup>49</sup> Connelly, *The Marble Man*, 64.

<sup>50</sup> Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration*, 80.

<sup>51</sup> Connelly, *The Marble Man*, 193.

<sup>52</sup> Connelly, *The Marble Man*, 15.

<sup>53</sup> Nolan, *Lee Considered*, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Nolan, *Lee Considered*, 23 & 155.

that slaves were better off in slavery in the United States than in Africa, and viewed slavery as the best possible condition for both races and should remain undisturbed.

The Lost Cause correctly asserts that Lee strongly opposed any state seceding from the United States. In this instance, Lee's actions contradicted his belief. Lee was a member of the United States Army who opposed secession, yet he seceded from the Union and fought against the United States. Again, Lee's opposition to secession did not make him unique. Several Southern leaders opposed secession and then, despite their belief, became political and military leaders in the Confederacy.<sup>55</sup> The Lost Cause further modifies Lee's decision to support the Confederacy. The mythical Lee is a man furiously debating to the last minute whether to join his home state in rebellion against the United States. However, the decision to leave the United States Army and join the Confederacy was not a last minute, agonizing decision. According to Nolan, Lee made the decision several months before the secession of Virginia, deciding that if Virginia seceded, so would he.<sup>56</sup> The Lost Cause omits this aspect, along with several others, as it does not add to the drama and honor of Lee's heroic story.

A final misrepresentation of Lee through the Lost Cause is his portrayal as a protective, humble, gracious man who loved his enemies. This is not to say that Lee was a horrible, bitter man—quite the contrary—yet his actions were not as honorable as portrayed in the Lost Cause. Instead of being a kind, protective father figure to his troops, Lee continued to risk the lives of his men long after the chance for victory had vanished. In addition, Lee, like many Confederate officers and leaders, spoke negatively of “Yankees” during and after the Civil War. This does not make him less of a person, it merely shows that he is human.<sup>57</sup> Only in recent decades, have

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<sup>55</sup> Nolan, *Lee Considered*, 46.

<sup>56</sup> Nolan, *Lee Considered*, 51.

historians written about Lee in a way that contradicts the Lost Cause. Modern historians, such as Alan Nolan, note that their predecessors refrained from analyzing Lee and instead took what he said as truth. Such an assumption led to the retelling of the same saintly story of Lee numerous times by various authors.<sup>58</sup> Only now, 140 years later, is a true analysis of Lee occurring, despite the influence of the Lost Cause.

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The Myth of the Lost Cause developed as Southerners began to regain their composure and move toward reuniting with the United States. Many Americans throughout the country embraced the Lost Cause as an accepted account of the recent war events. Confederate veterans saw the myth as a way to justify their actions and honor their fallen comrades. Southerners on the home front used the myth to explain Southern secession. Northerners viewed the myth as an opportunity to move towards reconciliation. Due to the widespread acceptance of the myth in society, Americans began to blend the myth with facts. The Lost Cause mixed with actual Civil War history in historical books, family stories, as well as school textbooks. As new generations encountered these stories, many had no way of separating truth and myth. The result is millions of Americans, even in the twenty-first century, accept the Lost Cause as true Civil War History.

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<sup>57</sup> Nolan, *Lee Considered*, 108.

<sup>58</sup> Nolan, *Lee Considered*, 6 & 7.

## CHAPTER 3

### CIVIL WAR MATERIAL IN TEXTBOOKS USED IN TENNESSEE SCHOOLS BETWEEN 1889-1963

People, for the most part, form many lifelong views and opinions as impressionable young children. Logically, many of these thoughts form during a child's education, as children spend a large part of their waking time in school until age eighteen. For roughly nine months out of the year, five days a week, seven hours a day, children attend school, absorbing material offered to them by teachers from state approved textbooks. Quite possibly, one of the reasons the Myth of the Lost Cause remains embedded in the minds of millions of Americans is due to its presence in the Civil War material taught to children while attending school, especially at a young age. Through an examination of a sample of textbooks authorized for use in public schools in Tennessee, a distinct pattern appears in the Civil War material contained in the textbooks. The Lost Cause presence in textbooks reached its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, only to gradually diminish in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The question arises, therefore, as to what elements of the Lost Cause displayed in Tennessee textbooks did authors correct over the years and what elements of the myth remain in present day textbooks. Imperative to the dissection of this comprehensive question is an analysis of the legitimacy of the information regarding the Civil War in public school textbooks used to teach Tennessee youth during the past 140 years. This analysis begins with the earliest textbooks and concludes with those used in Tennessee public schools in the twenty-first century.

Authorized Tennessee textbooks in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries vary greatly in their portrayal of the Civil War. The Civil War material in books is a confusing mixture of actual history and myth. In the absence of concrete knowledge of the true history of the Civil War, adults and children alike are understandably confused as to what is truth and what is myth.

Students naturally assume that all the information in textbooks is accurate, and thus the myth passes on to a new generation. The textbooks used in Tennessee public schools during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for grades four through eight, fall into two categories based on their Civil War material. Textbooks published in the later part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century have the strongest mixture of Lost Cause and actual Civil War history while those published in the later twentieth century contain slightly more accurate history than Lost Cause.

After the Civil War, Confederate and Union Veterans, along with millions of Americans who remained on the home front during the war, struggled to cope with the memory of the war and rebuilding a divided nation. Perhaps as a way to “set the record straight” or as an outlet to deal with their own feelings, thousands of people wrote their interpretation of the Civil War. Textbooks used in Tennessee public schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contain a strong mixture of Civil War history and Lost Cause. The main aspects of the myth contained in these textbooks are the nature of slavery in the South, the effect abolitionists had on the rising tensions between the North and South, the legality of southern secession, and the reasons for Southern military defeat.

Slavery in the South was undoubtedly the dividing topic between the North and South prior to the secession of South Carolina in 1860 and the outbreak of the war in 1861. The examined textbooks do not dispute the importance of slavery to the outbreak of the Civil War, as most either name it the sole or main reason for the conflict. Textbooks from the early twentieth century however defend the South’s right to have slavery through states’ rights, a component of the Lost Cause. Of the examined textbooks, those that best show this link between the views on

slavery in the South and the Lost Cause are G.R. McGee's *A History of Tennessee: from 1663 to 1919, for use in schools* and S.E. Scates' *A School History of Tennessee*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Lost Cause asserts that the South was prepared voluntarily to release its slaves, or simply abandon slavery in due time. This argument makes the entire war, especially Northern aggression, appear pointless. McGee stated this Lost Cause assertion in his 1919 book, *A History of Tennessee*. He resolutely asserted that Southerners, specifically those in Tennessee, were voluntarily freeing their slaves as early as 1821. Citing the *Emancipator*, an abolitionist newspaper published in Jonesborough, Tennessee as his source, McGee claimed that, "people of Tennessee were freeing their own negroes and were advising others to do as they did."<sup>1</sup> Thus, not only were selected Southerners freeing their slaves, they were encouraging other slaveholders throughout the South to follow suit. Of course, most Southern slave owners did not choose to free their slaves prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, for slavery was a thriving, profitable, and necessary institution to the survival of plantation life in the decades before the war. McGee alluded to the resistance many slaveholders in the South against freeing their slaves, stating, "Tennessee...never proposed to interfere in the affairs of other states, or to attempt forcibly to free other people's negroes."<sup>2</sup> In the years leading to the Civil War, slavery remained imbedded in Southern society and tradition. It is highly doubtful that, regardless of Lost Cause claim, slavery would cease to exist in the South, unless forcibly stopped, for several generations. Alongside the tradition of the institution in the South, slaveholders had huge monetary investments in their slaves and were unwilling to simply free their slaves.

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<sup>1</sup> G.R. McGee, *A History of Tennessee: from 1663 to 1919, for use in schools* (New York: American Book Company, 1919), 195.

<sup>2</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 195.

Scates, in his 1936 textbook, *A School History of Tennessee*, offered states' rights, one of the most pronounced principles of the Lost Cause, as a southern defense for the institution of slavery. Since the American Revolution, Northern and Southern states alike had supported states' rights for various reasons. As the South increasingly lost power in the national government during the 1850s, it turned towards states' rights to defend its minority position. In light of the national debate on the legality of slavery in the United States, several Southern leaders argued, "that slavery was an issue that each state should decide for itself, and that slaves being property, their owners should be able to take them into any United States territory."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the national government should not decide if slavery existed in a state or territory. Southerners insisted that states' rights encompassed numerous rights, all of which were equally important. Despite this assertion, the main right that powerful Southern planters wanted ensured, but hesitated to verbalize, was the right to own slaves. Southern leaders, the majority of whom were slave owners, wanted assurance that the United States government would not submit to the cries of Northern abolitionists and tamper with their investment. Weary of the growing number of abolitionists in the North, Southerners "stood firm upon the doctrine of states' rights and...held that slaves were property, and hence could be taken like other property."<sup>4</sup> Southerners, therefore, used states' rights to insure the protection of all their property, slaves included, when traveling throughout the United States. Scates, in accordance with the Lost Cause, discussed the importance of states' rights to Southerners, while downplaying the right they wanted most and the true cause for the conflict—a person's right to own slaves.

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<sup>3</sup> S.E. Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, rev. 2d ed (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1936), 285.

<sup>4</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 285.

An early interpretation of the history of the Civil War used in public schools was James Phelan's *School History of Tennessee*, published in 1889. Phelan, in agreement with the Lost Cause, labeled Northern abolitionists antagonists who contributed unnecessarily to the rising strain between the North and the South. Recognizing that, "the slavery question was now the all-absorbing topic"<sup>5</sup> in the nation by the 1850s allowed Phelan to explain how abolitionists contributed to this tension. Though Phelan neglected to refer to abolitionists by name, he attributed tensions caused after the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which revoked the Missouri Compromise and declared that territories individually had the right to decide if they would permit or outlaw slavery, to Northern abolitionists. "The Kansas-Nebraska Act excited great indignation in the North, and precipitated the events which caused the war,"<sup>6</sup> which resulted because the North became quite ornery towards slavery, the South, and Southern society. Phelan, in agreement with the Lost Cause, tells readers that life in the South before the presence of Northern abolitionists was ideal. It is only through the Northern contempt of Southern culture, and thus their meddling in Southern affairs, that this perfect civilization dissipates.

Whereas Phelan hesitated to link hostilities in the North to abolitionists by name, McGee and Scates remained less tactful. Both authors explicitly blamed abolitionists for disrupting the tranquil Southern society and causing unwanted discord by attacking slavery in the South. Scates, like the Lost Cause, portrayed abolitionists in the 1850s as, "a constantly growing group in the North," who, "declared that the United States should not allow human slavery anywhere within its borders, and especially that slavery should not be allowed to spread beyond the states

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<sup>5</sup> James Phelan, *School History of Tennessee* (Philadelphia: E.H. Butler & Co., 1889), 180.

<sup>6</sup> Phelan, *School History of Tennessee*, 180.

that already had it.”<sup>7</sup> This extreme stance, however, was not supported by all abolitionist groups. Interestingly the Lost Cause focuses its attacks on the more vocal Northern abolitionists groups in the 1850s. In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were prominent abolition groups throughout the South, especially in the Upper South. Phelan, Scates, and McGee, however, refrain from attacking this group of abolitionists; in fact, they rarely mention them. The authors, in accordance with the Lost Cause, linked none of the destruction brought on by abolitionists to those groups in the South; only later abolitionist groups from the North received blame. Abolitionists of the 1850s, almost exclusively from the North, were far more adamant about ending slavery than their predecessors; however, it is inaccurate to dismiss the contributions of early abolitionists as unimportant. The most logical reason for this omission comes from the goal of the Lost Cause to glorify the South and degrade the North. If even minimal blame for the conflict between the North and South lay on early Southern abolitionists, then the South would be unable to completely embrace the role of the victim in the conflict.

While Scates and Phelan expressed contempt towards abolitionists, McGee was the biggest critic of abolitionists. Throughout his attacks, McGee many times neglected to call abolitionists by name, and instead referred to them as “these people” or “extremist.” Regardless of his term, it is clear to whom he is referring. McGee harshly described abolitionists as a group of extremists who, among other things, “insisted that their ideas and ways were exactly right and that those of every one else were wrong,” as people who “lived in the North and owned no slaves, [yet] said that Congress and the President ought to free all the negroes right off without any consideration of time, condition, circumstances, or consequences.”<sup>8</sup> Thus McGee, along with the Lost Cause, asserted that despite the fact that most Northern abolitionists had never been

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<sup>7</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 284.

to the South and were unfamiliar with Southern society, they were unrelenting in their attempts to abolish the main source of labor on Southern plantations.

As stated in the previous section, McGee agreed with the Lost Cause insistence that the South was in the process of voluntarily abandoning slavery in the 1820s, and, thus, there was no reason for Northern intervention. Obviously, this action did not continue in the South, and McGee, like the Lost Cause, placed full responsibility on Northern abolitionists. McGee admitted that the voluntary freeing of slaves in Tennessee and other Southern states was nearly nonexistent by the 1840s but attributed this to a group of single-minded people, or abolitionists. McGee asserted that when “extreme agitators circulated documents among the free negroes in the South advising them to kill the white people and free the slaves,”<sup>9</sup> abolitionists caused unseen conflict between masters and their slaves throughout the South.

Because of this alleged chaos brought about by abolitionists in the South and their encouragement of Southern slaves to commit violence against their masters, McGee concluded that slave owners began to fear for their lives. He claimed that this fear forced various Southern slaveholders to hold meetings where they “decided that if free negroes were to be made dangerous by the abolitionists, freeing negroes must stop, and those already freed must be deprived of privileges and have legal restrictions put upon them.”<sup>10</sup> Few slave owners were willing to pay the necessary expenses to free their slaves and provide them passage out of the state, so “therefore, emancipation was practically ended by overzealous abolitionists.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 195.

<sup>9</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 196.

<sup>10</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 196.

<sup>11</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 197.

McGee, along with the Lost Cause, fully blamed Northern abolitionists for ending the peaceful serenity in the South.

The Lost Cause primarily idealizes the South while debasing the North, an aspect that McGee brought out in his portrayal of Northern abolitionists. During the nineteenth century, railroads and roads had not developed to the degree of sophistication that enabled frequent travel throughout the country. While there were exceptions, people, for the most part, limited travel to their own geographic section. McGee asserted that because of the lack of travel, “only a few people in the North visited the South and knew the real condition of affairs.”<sup>12</sup> He contended that this lack of travel aided the growth of the abolitionist party in the North, in that, “a great many of [Northerners] finally accepted as true the statements of the violent abolitionists, and gradually there grew up in the North an abolition political party.”<sup>13</sup> McGee, along with the Lost Cause, asserted that abolitionists led to the demise of the South through their spread of untruths in the North to people who had no knowledge of the South.

As analyzed in the previous chapter, a central theme of the Lost Cause debated the legality of secession. Northerners and Southerners alike had strong opinions on the right of one state, or a group of states, to secede from the Union. According to the Lost Cause, Southerners viewed secession as a constitutional right of any state in the Union, when viewing the Constitution as a contract, with the possibility of termination upon violation of the contract. Scates affirmed, “Southern leaders contended that the states had voluntarily entered the Union in the beginning and that they could withdraw from it if the Federal government acted illegally.”<sup>14</sup> Southerners further attested that secession did not make them traitors or rebels, as they were not

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<sup>12</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 196.

<sup>13</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 196.

rebellious or revolting against the United States. Southerners insisted that their actions were permissible when viewing the Constitution as a voluntary contract, and, thus, they were merely exercising their right.

The Lost Cause asserts that Northern leaders naturally disagreed with the Southern interpretation of the Constitution. The majority of Northern leaders, including President Abraham Lincoln, “contended that one section of states could not draw off, or secede, from the Union because the Constitution of the United States did not provide for such an act.”<sup>15</sup> In essence, the authority of the Constitution, and thus the United States government, greatly diminished if a state could leave the Union every time there was a disagreement. The Lost Cause never fully settles this controversial issue, as Northerners refused to concede that Southerners had the right to secede, and visa versa. In his analysis of the Lost Cause, Alan Nolan perhaps concludes the issue best in asserting that, “the real issue regarding secession was whether...it was just or unjust.”<sup>16</sup>

The lawfulness of secession is not the only component of the Lost Cause dealing with secession. Scates, Phelan, and McGee, in agreement with the Lost Cause, asserted that slavery was not the sole reason Southern states seceded from the Union. Textbooks of this era concentrate more on this angle of the Lost Cause secession argument than the legality of secession. Scates, Phelan, and McGee attributed Southern secession to the election of Abraham Lincoln as president in 1860. As described in McGee’s textbook, before the election of Lincoln, Southerners were becoming gradually more defensive of their society, including slavery. McGee stated that Southerners,

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<sup>14</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 286.

<sup>15</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 286.

declared that they had, or ought to have, the right to carry their slaves into any state or territory of the Union whether the people living there wanted them or not; that negroes were created to be made slaves; that the Union only protected abolition fanatics and robbed the South of her rights; that any state had the right to secede, and the Union ought to be dissolved; that they wished all the abolitionists were collected in New England, and New England were hell.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, when Lincoln became President, solely based on Northern electoral votes as he failed to receive a single electoral vote in a slave state, Southern defensiveness skyrocketed. Phelan asserted that the election of a Northern president was the last straw for Southerners who believed “that his election was a notice that the North intended to abolish slavery.”<sup>18</sup>

Every author of the examined textbooks used in Tennessee during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stressed the sectional divide in the 1860 presidential race. This divide allowed Southerners to use the election of a Northern president as the scapegoat reason for many Southern states’ desire to leave the Union. Scates acknowledged, “the quarrel had become so bitter that in 1860, when Abraham Lincoln, an anti-slavery man, was elected President, the Southern statesmen decided that the time had come to secede.”<sup>19</sup> Aside from being anti-slavery, Southern leaders accused Lincoln of being a sectional President, anti-South, and, thus, did not feel that he would protect Southern interests. Similar to the Lost Cause, the authors refused to state that the main reason Southern states seceded from the Union was to protect slavery. Yes, Southerners were concerned that the United States government under Lincoln would not protect Southern interests; however, the interest Southern leaders were most concerned with protecting was their right to continue the practice of slavery throughout the South.

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<sup>16</sup> Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause*, 26.

<sup>17</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 197.

<sup>18</sup> Phelan, *A School History of Tennessee*, 186.

<sup>19</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 286.

A final prominent aspect of the Lost Cause displayed in textbooks used in Tennessee public schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the military defeat of the South. According to the Lost Cause, Southern forces were not truly defeated as superior Northern numbers and resources merely overwhelmed the South. McGee echoed this declaration through his discussion of the war's conclusion. He stated, "the Confederate Army had been literally worn out by the superior power of the Union men, money, and war supplies of every kind,"<sup>20</sup> and not out rightly defeated by a more worthy foe. While this viewpoint is entirely counterfactual simply given the large number of Union troops throughout the South and Union control of numerous Confederate cities, it is, however, supported in numerous textbooks.

It seems preposterous to insist that the South did not lose the war, when all evidence clearly places the Confederacy in ruins at the end of the fighting on the losing side; thus, the Lost Cause typically takes a different approach to explain the military defeat. In addition to asserting that the South did not lose the Civil War outright, the Lost Cause further declares that the South never had a chance to win. Hence, if there was no opportunity for Southern victory, it really did not lose. Through this angle of the Lost Cause, Southern soldiers symbolize the ideal soldiers in the war--honorable and willing to die for a just cause, regardless of the hopelessness of the situation. Confederate Veterans, therefore, receive praise not ridicule for their efforts in fighting an inevitably losing war. McGee asserted that Southern soldiers "bore themselves throughout the war as among the best and bravest in that long and bloody struggle,"<sup>21</sup> quite in contrast to their Northern counterpart. Even through defeat, by portraying Confederate soldiers as superior

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<sup>20</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 206.

<sup>21</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 199.

fighters to the Union soldiers, the Confederacy remains glorified while the Union appears to only have had a lucky day.

For every rule there is an exception, and in the case of Tennessee textbooks of this era it is Mary Rothrock's *Discovering Tennessee*, published in 1936. *Discovering Tennessee*, similar to other textbooks published during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, examines the growth of Tennessee as a state from colonial times into the twentieth century. What makes this addition of *Discovering Tennessee* so unusual, however, is its discussion of the Civil War—it barely mentions the topic. *Discovering Tennessee* refers to a “war which raged for four years between northern and southern states,”<sup>22</sup> but offers no discussion as to what the war was about, why the war started, or how the war ended. Readers simply know that there indeed was a war but receive no additional information. The last brief mention of the Civil War in *Discovering Tennessee* comes when Rothrock acknowledged that Tennessee “was one of the chief battlefields of that unhappy struggle.”<sup>23</sup> Again, she offered no details of the unhappy struggle. Through *Discovering Tennessee*, readers receive neither the actual history of the Civil War nor the Lost Cause version of the Civil War; instead, they receive little information at all. It is unclear why Rothrock virtually left the Civil War out of her textbook. Perhaps it did not agree with the focus of her book or maybe, with the great variation of interpretations of the war, she was merely waiting for the dust to settle and the true facts to emerge before putting any in print.

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<sup>22</sup> Mary U. Rothrock, *Discovering Tennessee*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), 184.

<sup>23</sup> Rothrock, *Discovering Tennessee*, 1936 edition, 281.

As the twentieth century continued, a gradual reduction occurred in the amount of Lost Cause material contained in authorized Tennessee textbooks. During this time, the United States embarked upon the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War and thus it was a time for reflection on years past. The Civil Rights Movement was also a strong force in the United States in the 1960s, with leaders demanding an adjustment of racial relations in the country. Naturally, authors were among the millions of Americans reflecting and offering analysis of the great dividing time in the nation's history, while also being influenced by current racial divisions. While the Myth of the Lost Cause remained prominent in American society, more historians and average Americans began to recognize it for exactly what it is—a myth. Consequently, the mixture of mythology and history visible in textbooks used in Tennessee public schools during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began to diminish in those used during the second half of the twentieth century. There remains, however, several aspects of the Lost Cause present in Tennessee authorized textbooks of this era, the two strongest being the influence Northern abolitionists had on the rising tension throughout the nation and the legality and reason for Southern secession.

Regardless of the time lapse between the textbooks used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to those used in the second half of the twentieth century, there remains some undue criticism of Northern abolitionists and their contribution to the growing tension between the North and South. The Lost Cause continued to fully blame Northern abolitionists for ruining the serene master/slave relationship in the South. Two textbooks used in Tennessee in the second half of the twentieth century that best show this aspect of Lost Cause are Joseph Parks and Stanley Folmsbee's *The Story of Tennessee* and Mary Rothrock's *This is Tennessee: a School History*. These texts, written in 1952 and 1963 respectively, align with the Lost Cause in

placing responsibility on Northern abolitionists for causing tensions over slavery that eventually led to the Civil War.

While neither book suggests that the entire South united in defense of slavery, Parks and Folmsbee declared that “as abolitionists in the North became more and more active, southern slaveholders rallied to the defense of slavery,” and “when abolitionists declared slavery a sin, even a crime, the slaveholder replied that slavery was sanctioned in the Bible.”<sup>24</sup> These radical abolitionists received sole responsibility for slave uprisings in the South, especially that of Nat Turner in Virginia. Because Northern abolitionists encouraged these violent rebellions by both slaves and free blacks, Southern slave owners “feared that these free Negroes might help slaves to revolt.”<sup>25</sup> As a united group, white Southerners tightened restrictions on slaves and passed laws that offered limited privileges to free blacks. In essence, Parks and Folmsbee argued the Lost Cause declaration that abolitionists led to the South tightening its hold on the institution of slavery.

Similarly, Rothrock’s *This is Tennessee: a School History* directly connects violent Northern abolitionists with slave uprisings in the South. Before the influence of abolitionists, *This is Tennessee*, like the Lost Cause, describes slave uprisings in the South as rare and portrayed slave owners as unconcerned for their safety when among their slaves. This peaceful atmosphere changed as “northern abolitionists had grown quite violent in attitude, some of them going so far as to advise slaves to rise up and kill the whites.”<sup>26</sup> *This is Tennessee* does not overlook abolitionism in the South and acknowledges the anti-slavery sentiment in the South in

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph H. Parks and Stanley J. Folmsbee, *The Story of Tennessee* (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Corporation, 1952), 183.

<sup>25</sup> Parks and Folmsbee, *The Story of Tennessee*, 183.

<sup>26</sup> Mary U. Rothrock, *This is Tennessee: a School History* (Knoxville: M. U. Rothrock, 1963), 260.

the early 1800s; however, “by the early 1830’s, anti-slavery sentiment was beginning to die down, pro-slavery sentiment to express itself.”<sup>27</sup> *This is Tennessee* continues to assert that, “one reason for this change was the fear that slaves, freed from control, might rise against their former masters,”<sup>28</sup> and this fear stemmed from the encouragement of slave revolts by Northern abolitionists. Again, Northern abolitionists receive full credit for the increase of slave uprisings in the South, despite the absurdity of the claim. If slaves had no desire, as the Lost Cause claims, for freedom, it is doubtful that an influential outsider could change their mind. Nonetheless, Parks, Folmsbee, and Rothrock tell their readers, students in Tennessee public schools, the Lost Cause assertion that prior to abolitionist influence in the South the relationship between slaves and their masters was a peaceful one. While there are numerous modern accounts of this untruth, it is possible that by reading this in a textbook at an impressionably young age led millions of Americans to believe this myth into adulthood.

Textbooks used in Tennessee during the second half of the twentieth century, like their predecessors, continued to argue the Lost Cause’s view of Southern secession. Authors strove to avoid directly attributing the secession of eleven Southern states solely to slavery. Only Rothrock indirectly identified slavery as the reason for Southern secession. In a later edition of *Discovering Tennessee*, she stated that slavery was partly the reason Southern states seceded from the United States. *Discovering Tennessee* asserts that many Southerners interpreted the election of Lincoln, “as a signal that the North meant to abolish slavery,”<sup>29</sup> and thus Southern states withdrew from the Union. *Discovering Tennessee* furthers claims that,

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<sup>27</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 259.

<sup>28</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 259.

<sup>29</sup> Mary U. Rothrock, *Discovering Tennessee* (Knoxville: M. U. Rothrock, 1951), 439.

next to slavery itself, the nation's greatest tragedy has been that its leaders, both in the North and the South were not strong and wise enough to find peaceable and just ways of freeing the slaves...when they failed to solve the problem peaceably, the War between the States followed, bringing conflict and bitterness which hurt everybody.<sup>30</sup>

Only with these brief references, does an author consider slavery the reason for Southern secession. Significantly, *Discovering Tennessee* lessens the importance of the Civil War by referring to it as merely a War Between the States. With this title, the war appears a minor dispute—not a life-altering event that transformed the lives of millions of white Southerners and African Americans.

Similar to books published in prior decades, and those published during this era, Rothrock concluded that Abraham Lincoln was the cause for Southern secession. In *This is Tennessee*, Rothrock contended the election of Abraham Lincoln caused the secession of South Carolina and fellow Southern states. As previously discussed, many Southern leaders viewed Lincoln as a sectional President, as he did not receive a single electoral vote from a slave holding state. Given Lincoln's Northern backing and roots, Southerners became "convinced that he was hostile toward the South [and] withdrew from the Union."<sup>31</sup> Like previous Tennessee textbooks, *This is Tennessee* keenly omitted the main fear Southerners had was that Lincoln would abolish slavery in the South. Instead, *This is Tennessee* supports the Lost Cause by finding numerous reasons to explain Southern secession as the result of anything except slavery. Parallel to the books of previous decades, *This is Tennessee* explains the grounds for Southern secession through the election of Abraham Lincoln and the legal right of any state to withdraw from a contractual agreement.

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<sup>30</sup> Rothrock, *Discovering Tennessee*, 1951 edition, 134.

<sup>31</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 263.

In addition to crediting the election of Lincoln as the reason for southern secession, Rothrock, along with Parks and Folmsbee, addressed the Lost Cause insistence by Southerners that any state could legally withdraw from the United States at any time. As discussed in textbooks of the previous decades, “southern states, holding that they had entered the Union voluntarily, claimed the right to withdraw from it when the federal government affected adversely the sovereignty of the state or the liberties of its people.”<sup>32</sup> According to the Lost Cause, the seven Deep South states merely exercised their given right. The fact that four southern slave states remained in the Union until Lincoln’s call for troops after the fall of Fort Sumter was not because they doubted their right as a state to secede. According to *This is Tennessee*, the “border states of the Upper South...while convinced of their right to secede, still clung to the old Union, hoping against hope that a peaceful solution would yet be found.”<sup>33</sup> Southern leaders further asserted that because a state had the right to break its binding contract with the United States at anytime, citizens of those given states were not acting as rebels or traitors. President Lincoln, however, with backing from the North, “declared that the Constitution did not permit a state to secede from the Union,” and therefore concluded that Southerners remained citizens of the United States.<sup>34</sup> By definition, citizens of a country in a state of rebellion are rebels and traitors, so “by this reasoning the North classed the Southerners as ‘rebels.’”<sup>35</sup>

Aside from the two previously mentioned aspects of the Lost Cause that remained prominent in Tennessee textbooks during the second half of the twentieth century, *This is*

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<sup>32</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 262.

<sup>33</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 263.

<sup>34</sup> Parks and Folmsbee, *The Story of Tennessee*, 199.

<sup>35</sup> Parks and Folmsbee, *The Story of Tennessee*, 199.

*Tennessee* shows a slight reference to the Lost Cause defense of slavery. *This is Tennessee* demonstrates how Southerners attempted to defend the institution of slavery through its rooted establishment in Southern society. The importance of slavery to the Southern economy had no parallel in the North, as slavery never took root in the North as it did in the South. As *This is Tennessee* explains, “in the northern states there were few slaves anyway; but the South was a farming region...and over the generations the southern people had spent their money for slaves to supply...labor,”<sup>36</sup> thus the two sections possessed entirely different labor needs and sources. Part of Southern leaders’ defensiveness to Northern attacks on slavery was that Southerners believed they had a completely different culture in the South. This cultural difference, the Lost Cause asserts, was one that Northerners could never understand and, thus, could never tolerate.

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Countless aspects of the Myth of the Lost Cause remained prominent in Tennessee textbooks used in public schools during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Consequently, much of the information taught to children during these years about the Civil War was a falsehood. Some aspects of the Lost Cause seen in the earliest textbooks are absent in later textbooks, while others remain ever present. Over the years, authors began to replace incorrect information with true historical facts. Not all the information contained in textbooks during these years about the Civil War, however, is myth. Several prominent aspects of the Lost Cause did not appear in Tennessee textbooks. Three areas that Tennessee textbooks correlate with actual history instead of the myth, include the acknowledgement that slavery was a dividing

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<sup>36</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 258.

issue decades prior to the outbreak of the war, the division among Southerners concerning secession, and the nature of slaves in the South.

A cornerstone of the Lost Cause belittles the importance of slavery in the tensions between the Northern and Southern sections of the United States. As opposed to identifying slavery as the sectional issue, the Lost Cause focuses on lesser issues such as tariff disputes and the culture difference between the industrial and agricultural societies within the nation. Authors of both the nineteenth and twentieth century textbooks used in Tennessee, however, accurately recognized slavery as the cause for sectional tension in the country. McGee acknowledged that, “extreme men met in Congress and quarreled and fought over the slavery question, until Union men in every section of the country became seriously alarmed at the turn affairs were taking.”<sup>37</sup> Such debates began in the nineteenth century with the Missouri Compromise in 1820 and continued to the eve of the Civil War. The slavery disagreement, thus, was not one that occurred overnight, it was a brewing topic throughout the country for a minimum of fifty years before the secession of Southern states. Tensions are traceable as far back as the late eighteenth century with the differing Northern and Southern views on slavery when writing the Constitution and the resulting three-fifths Compromise. Scates, contradictory to the Lost Cause concluded that, “the bitter feeling that resulted in the Civil War arose over slavery,”<sup>38</sup> and traced the root of the slavery disagreement to slave trade while the United States was a colony under English rule. Regardless of the place in history when sectional disagreement over slavery began, the fact remains that tensions over slavery existed long before the outbreak of the Civil War.

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<sup>37</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 197.

<sup>38</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 283.

The Lost Cause idealistically portrays the South as a harmonized society, united in its cause and against Northern aggression. In doing so, the Lost Cause creates a picture of the South as a magical, peaceful society that did nothing to warrant ruthless Northern attacks. The problem with this illusion is that this South, along with most idealistic societies, never existed. Despite Lost Cause declarations, not all Southerners rallied behind the Confederate cause or the secession of Southern states. Authors of Tennessee textbooks unraveled this illusion by showing the strong divisions that existed in the South over the issues of slavery and secession. While different classes of Southerners tended to unite, such as the planter class and then the yeoman class, in several states “opinion was divided,”<sup>39</sup> on the matter of secession. When South Carolina seceded from the Union in December of 1860, the entire state did not support secession; many South Carolinians in the Up-State adamantly opposed secession from the Union.

Along with the disagreement on secession, Southerners found themselves disputing the institution of slavery. Parks, Folmsbee, and Rothrock stressed the division in the South over the issue of slavery. Perhaps the division on slavery remained greatest in Border States such as Tennessee and Virginia where the planter class was much smaller than the planter class in the Deep South. The geographic regions within a state further contributed to the division on slavery. Rothrock showed that “the anti-slavery movement was stronger in East Tennessee, where farms were small, and there were few slaveholders, than in Middle Tennessee, where farms were larger and there were more slaves.”<sup>40</sup> Although there was great debate within Border States concerning the institution of slavery, when asked to send volunteers to serve in the Union Army, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arkansas, all joined their Southern counterparts to form the

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<sup>39</sup> Phelan, *A School History of Tennessee*, 186.

<sup>40</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 258.

Confederate States of America. These states, however, possibly never fully resolved their division on slavery, as they were also among the first Confederate states to rejoin the Union after the Civil War.

A final argument of the Lost Cause not mentioned in Tennessee textbooks is the condition of slaves in the South. According to the Lost Cause, slaves in the South were content with their position and had no desire for freedom. While this statement sounds absurd, Lost Cause advocates throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries firmly supported this idea. Perhaps due to the topic's delicacy, Rothrock refrained from openly discussing the nature of slaves and the specifics of the institution of slavery and only discretely alluded to the unhappiness of slaves. She stressed the intense desire millions of slaves possessed for freedom during the Civil War era. The freedom many slaves envisioned, however, was not the freedom they found. *This is Tennessee* states that “ slaves, hearing that they had been freed by President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation...thought freedom meant being taken care of without having to work; consequently, many of them ran away from their farm homes to the cities,” in anticipation of freedom and a new life.<sup>41</sup> While this is certainly a racist statement, it illustrates the racism that still existed in the latter half of the twentieth century. Although far from equality, it shows the gradual demise of the Lost Cause depiction of the African Americans in the twentieth century, as they are no longer depicted as satisfied with their position in Southern society. Regardless of the reality slaves faced in the free North, this scenario is in direct contrast to the Lost Cause’s position on slavery. If slaves were content with their lives in the South, why did so many thousands risk their lives to escape to the free North and when discovering the harsh reality of freedom why did so many slaves choose to stay in the North? The logical answer is

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<sup>41</sup> Rothrock, *This is Tennessee*, 305.

that slaves were unhappy with their life and status in the South and, thus, jumped at the first opportunity for freedom, regardless of the risk and harsh conditions.

The presence of the Myth of the Lost Cause in authorized Tennessee textbooks reached its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At this point, there is an equal balance between historical fact and Lost Cause about the Civil War. As the twentieth century progressed, some historically accurate events replaced some of the fictional material. The presence of Lost Cause elements such as the military defeat of the South and the defense of slavery through states' rights reduced in textbooks published in the second half of the twentieth century while other elements remained ever prominent. This process is understandable, as one cannot expect the change and correction of falsehoods to occur overnight after it has been imbedding in society for over a century.

There are many reasons to explain the shift in Civil War information in Tennessee textbooks. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century authors had emotional ties that naturally affected their outlook on the Civil War. Many of these authors, if they were not alive during the Civil War, had parents who were and thus they received second hand knowledge of the events. Authors used this knowledge, regardless of its accuracy, when writing Tennessee textbooks. Most authors during the second half of the twentieth century did not have immediate family connections to the war. These authors, along with millions of Americans, were able to look at the Civil War with a more objective eye, perhaps for the first time in the nation's history.

Another possible explanation of the gradual shift from Lost Cause material to historical fact is the stability of the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. After the Civil War, the country entered a fragile state of reconciliation. To ensure the South's quick admittance into the Union, many Americans neglected to place full responsibility for the war on

the South. To cope with their defeat, Southerners developed the Lost Cause and Northerners, to aid the peaceful reconciliation, went along with the myth. By the later twentieth century however, the country had united through two world wars and a depression, thus mending the previous rift. Finally, Americans could analyze the Civil War without the fear of alienating a section of the country. As previously stated, these are only a few of many reasons why authors began to adjust their assessment of the Civil War in Tennessee textbooks. This gradual shift of information from a Lost Cause basis to a historical basis through the twentieth century, however, offers hope of a further correction in the accuracy of Civil War information in twenty-first century textbooks.

## CHAPTER 4

### CIVIL WAR MATERIAL IN TEXTBOOKS USED IN TENNESSEE SCHOOLS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Following a great event in a nation's history, such as a war, it is nearly impossible to obtain an objective analysis of the event. Having a first hand experience of the horrors of war, people often find themselves unable to separate their emotions from reality, resulting in a distorted view of the event. An example of such a situation is the reaction of the American public after the Civil War. Perhaps this war, when compared to other wars, had a greater impact on Americans because they fought against their countrymen. When the war concluded, Southerners found themselves rejoining the United States, a country that they had bitterly seceded from four years before. Naturally, Southern and Northern initial views of the Civil War were vastly different. Southerners, in coping with their defeat, constructed their own version of the Civil War, later coined the Myth of the Lost Cause. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Lost Cause peaked in Tennessee textbooks between the years 1870 and 1940, only to slightly decrease in the later twentieth century. If this decrease is the result of time healing wounds or Americans finally looking at the Civil War objectively and acknowledging the true events, then there should be a further decline in the presence of the Lost Cause in twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks.

Textbooks used in Tennessee public schools in the twenty-first century, for grades four through eight, are similar in their portrayal of the Civil War. These textbooks do not shy away from identifying slavery as the cause for the war nor do they portray slavery as an acceptable institution. This is not to say, however, that these textbooks are completely historically accurate. Some elements of the Lost Cause remain incorporated in Civil War material. The main elements

of the Lost Cause present in twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks are the legality of secession, the portrayal of Northern and Southern military leaders, and the military defeat of the South. Only slightly mentioned are the blaming of Northern abolitionists for the sectional tension in the country and the Northern attack on Southern society. Regardless of the Lost Cause material in textbooks, Tennessee children today, compared to their predecessors, receive a more accurate depiction of the war, its causes, and the people involved.

Tennessee textbooks of previous centuries include the Lost Cause elements concerning Northern abolitionists and the attack on Southern society. By the twenty-first century, however, these elements weakened compared to other Lost Cause tenets and receive minimal attention. Three textbooks that illustrate these elements of the Lost Cause are *Creating America: a History of the United States*, *The United States in Modern Times*, and *American History: the Early Years to 1877*. There are several potential reasons why these authors did not allot a great amount of their textbooks to the discussion of Northern abolitionists and the Northern attack on Southern society. Possibly, the goal of these textbooks, differing from that of textbooks used in the previous centuries, was to address the larger issues of the Civil War and not concentrate on a minor contributor to the rising tensions between the North and South. A further reason could be that modern research on the Civil War identified slavery as the major cause of the war, resulting in the authors focusing on the institution itself. While the contribution of Northern abolitionists and Southerner defensiveness relate to slavery, their effect on the Civil War is minimal compared the institution as a whole.

Although he does not dwell on the effect Northern abolitionists had on the outbreak of the Civil War, Winthrop D. Jordan, in *Creating America*, discusses the Lost Cause position on abolitionists and their effect on slavery in the South. Jordan states that, “abolitionists believed

that slavery was unjust and should be abolished immediately,”<sup>1</sup> an extreme position that was unwelcome in the South. While considerably less aggressive, this argument is similar to one made by G.R. McGee eighty-three years earlier. McGee stated,

[abolitionists] began denouncing Congress, the President, the laws, the Constitution, the Union, the flag, and everything else that allowed or protected slavery. They held conventions, made speeches, published newspapers, and printed books that declared that slavery was the sum of all villainies [sic], that hell was too comfortable a place for a slaveholder, that the Constitution was a league with hell and a covenant with the devil...that the President of the United States was a slave trader and negro driver, that the flag of the Union was a dirty rag whose stripes represented nothing but negroes' scars, and a great deal more of very ugly and very disloyal sentiments.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the time lapse, textbooks continue to blame abolitionists for the tensions between the sections that resulted in war. However, unlike McGee, Jordan acknowledges that this was a radical position, one not supported by all Northerners, for, “many Northerners who opposed slavery took a less extreme position.”<sup>3</sup> He, therefore, addresses an important fact through acknowledging that there were extreme abolitionists in the North, but that they by no means were the majority. While Jordan’s personal views on abolitionism may not align with the Lost Cause perspective, by including the myth’s portrayal of abolitionists in his textbook he aids the continuation of the myth. Because Jordan fails to state his disagreement with the Lost Cause view clearly in the material, children are unable to distinguish between what Southerners thought in the late nineteenth century and what the modern historians, such as Jordan, attribute as truth.

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus Garcia and others, *Creating America: A History of the United States* (Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2002), 458. The author background provided in the textbook identifies Winthrop D. Jordan as being a professor in Afro-American studies. Given that no other author had this background, I have attributed Jordan as the writer of the Civil War material.

<sup>2</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 195-196.

<sup>3</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 458.

Additionally, Jordan notes that many Northerners who did not consider themselves abolitionists opposed slavery.

Some Northern workers and immigrants opposed slavery because it was an economic threat to them. Because slaves did not work for pay, free workers feared that managers would employ slaves rather than them. Some workers were even afraid that the expansion of slavery might force workers into slavery to find jobs.<sup>4</sup>

The Lost Cause often overlooks this reality and division among Northerners concerning abolitionists and instead portrays all Northerners as radical abolitionists.

Although the goal of radical Northern abolitionists was to end slavery, their efforts achieved exactly the opposite. Slavery, since colonial days, took hold in the South as it did in no other section, causing Southern plantation owners to wonder if plantation life could continue without slaves. The Lost Cause argues that Southern and Northern societies were distinctly different. The South remained an agricultural society, while the North slowly moved towards a mix of agriculture and industrialization. Southern plantation owners, therefore, had various reactions to Northern abolitionists and increasingly became defensive of both slavery and their society. Jordan recognizes this unintentional outcome stating,

“when Northern attacks on slavery increased, slaveholders defended slavery. Most offered the openly racist argument that white people were superior to blacks. Many also claimed that slavery helped slaves by introducing them to Christianity, as well as providing them with food, clothing, and shelter throughout their lives. Slaveholders were determined to defend slavery and their way of life.”<sup>5</sup>

Again, Jordan’s statement is quite similar to the conclusion drawn by James Phelan 113 years earlier. Phelan concluded that despite the efforts of Northern abolitionists,

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<sup>4</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 458.

<sup>5</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 459.

the extreme Southerners seemed determined to form a separate government of the Southern States, because they thought that slavery as an institution would never be safe where it was likely to be affected by the power of the North which opposed it.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, while the goal of abolitionists was to abolish slavery in the South, they only increased the South's hold on the institution.

As stated above, Jordan discusses how Southern slaveholders affirmed they were doing blacks a favor by making them slaves and providing the food, water, and clothing needed for survival. While it is true that most slave owners provided their slaves with these items, recent historians note that slaveholders also forced slaves to work and live in horrid conditions. The Lost Cause conveniently omits this aspect of the Civil War. Though his blame on the Northern abolitionists for causing tension between the North and South is minimal, Jordan addresses the Lost Cause argument that abolitionists made Southern slaveholders more defensive about the institution of slavery and more determined to ensure its longevity.

*United States in Modern Times and American History*, in conjunction with the Lost Cause, discuss the escalation of Southern defensiveness in response to Northern attacks. According to the Lost Cause, before the war the South was in a minority position in the nation due to slavery. Southerners were defensive because of their minority position, and thus Northern attacks on the Southern culture amplified Southerners' defensiveness. Though Northern attacks, especially those by abolitionists, primarily focused on slavery, many Southerners, "thought that the problem was far greater than the question of slavery. They believed that their whole society was being attacked."<sup>7</sup> Southern leaders were correct when making such a statement. In reality,

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<sup>6</sup> Phelan, *A School History of Tennessee*, 185.

<sup>7</sup> Richard G. Boehm and others, *United States in Modern Times* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Co., 2002), 148.

the majority of Southern leaders were slaveholders whose lives intertwined with slavery. Thus, when Northerners attacked slavery, they were directly attacking Southern society and the labor source of the most powerful Southern leaders. Richard Ritchie and Albert Broussard, in *American History*, support this link stating, “the cotton economy and plantation culture [was] dependent on slave labor.”<sup>8</sup> It is important to note, however, that while slaveholders were a minority of the Southern population, most white Southerners had a stake in the institution. When considering family networks and relations throughout the South, slavery directly affected the lives of the majority of white Southerners.

This connection helps explain why the majority of white Southerners, even if they did not own slaves, became defensive against Northern attacks. *United States in Modern Times* asserts, “whether [Southerners] owned slaves or not, many felt that the North was trying to change the South. They thought the government was trying to take away their rights.”<sup>9</sup> The Lost Cause asserts that, although they had little in common with powerful plantation owners, poor whites felt they had less in common with Northern abolitionists. Many poor white Southerners who did not own slaves aspired to one day be a plantation owner. *United States in Modern Times* concludes, in agreement with the Lost Cause, that when Northern abolitionists attacked slavery, Southerners, regardless of their societal position, felt that their entire society was under attack.

Similar to Tennessee textbooks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, those used in the twenty-first century address the Lost Cause version of Southern secession. Authors hesitate to link Southern secession and the South’s desire to protect slavery. The Lost Cause offers several reasons to explain the necessity of Southern secession—none of which directly link

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<sup>8</sup> Donald A. Ritchie and Albert S. Broussard, *American History-the Early Years to 1877* (New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2001), 569.

<sup>9</sup> Boehm et al., *United States in Modern Times*, 159.

secession to slavery. The textbook authors attribute Southern secession to a combination of events. The election of Abraham Lincoln as President, Southerners' fear of losing their rights and influence in the national government, and the Southern interpretation of the Constitution are all factors that authors avow led Southern states to secede from the United States.

The election of 1860 was a crucial point in United States history. Prior to this election, various presidents and Congressional leaders attempted to settle the slavery issue in the country. The early 1800s saw the Missouri Compromise, Wilmot Proviso, Compromise of 1850, and Kansas-Nebraska Act attempt to resolve the debate. In 1860, the Southern and Northern sections of the country desired completely different qualities in the future President. These differences resulted directly from the failures of the earlier compromises concerning slavery. The South wanted a man who would support slavery and its expansion, while much of the North wanted a man who would oppose the expansion of slavery if not completely outlaw the entire institution. James M. McPherson, in *The American Journey*, illustrates the division in the country with the South's skepticism of the Republican Party, which received large support in the North. McPherson states, "many Southerners feared that a Republican victory would encourage abolitionist radicals...to start slave revolts."<sup>10</sup> In other words, Southerners, according to McPherson, feared that Northern abolitionists would view a Republican victory as a victory for themselves and thus continue their encouragement of revolts by Southern slaves and free blacks. Although McPherson relates the fear Southerners had concerning the Republican Party to the growing detestation of Northern abolitionists, he implies that the underlying concern of Southerners was the protection and continuation of slavery. To compound this fear, the

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<sup>10</sup> Joyce Appleby, Alan Brinkley, and James M. McPherson. *The American Journey: Beginnings to 1877*, vol. 1. (New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2002), 454. Being that James M. McPherson is a noted Civil War historian and the author of several Civil War books, I assume that the Civil War material in *The American Journey* is his work. When referring to the Civil War material in this textbook, I identify McPherson as the author.

Republican Party openly expressed its “opposition to the ‘legal existence of Slavery in any Territory,’”<sup>11</sup> which furthered Southern hesitance towards the party and its candidate.

The Lost Cause identifies the election of President Lincoln as furthering the rift between Northern and Southern states. Womack states in *Tennessee: the History of an American State* that the presidential election of 1860 “was the first time a candidate supported by only one section of the country won the presidency.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Abraham Lincoln became president without receiving a single electoral vote from a slaveholding state. The defensiveness that Southerners possessed concerning their society and Northern influence only heightened with the election of a President from the North. McPherson affirms, “the vote was along purely sectional lines...Lincoln’s name did not even appear on the ballot in most Southern states, but he won in every Northern state.”<sup>13</sup> McPherson’s statement echoes the Lost Cause assertion by McGee nearly a century earlier when he stated that when Lincoln was elected, “some of the southern states decided that they would not be safe in the Union with a sectional President.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, the election of a president whose name was not on the ballot in Southern states, further convinced the South of its decreasing political power in the nation and the need to secede. While both authors link Lincoln’s election with Southern secession, there is an important distinction between the two. In direct agreement with the Lost Cause, McGee stated Lincoln’s election was a primary reason for secession. McPherson, on the other hand, refers to the election as merely the last straw in a line of disagreements the Deep South had with the North.

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<sup>11</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 454.

<sup>12</sup> Terry Weeks and Bob Womack, *Tennessee: the History of an American State* (Selma, AL: Clairmont Press, 2002), 246. The author bibliography in *Tennessee: the History of an American State* states that Bob Womack is the author of a Civil War history book. Therefore, I attribute the Civil War material in this textbook as his work.

<sup>13</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 454.

<sup>14</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 198.

The Myth of the Lost Cause asserts Southerners began to fear that the national government would no longer protect their rights and interest. This fear prompted Southern leaders to seriously consider secession. McPherson states, “many people in the South mistrusted the party, fearing that the Republican government would not protect Southern rights and liberties.”<sup>15</sup> Although not specifically stated, the right and liberty Southerners were most concerned that the new administration would not protect was their right to have slaves. The Lost Cause attests that Southern leaders, however, had several rights and liberties they wanted the national government to protect, all of which they declared were equally important.

While some Southerners directed their fears towards the Republican Party in general, textbook authors show how other Southerners addressed their wariness specifically towards Abraham Lincoln. Ritchie and Broussard assert, “many Southerners thought of Lincoln as an abolitionist and believed the Republicans wanted to make war upon the South...they feared that if Lincoln became President, they would lose their voice in the national government.”<sup>16</sup> For this reason, many Southerners began to support the theory of states’ rights, where the states had more power than the national government and states decided on matters, such as slavery, themselves. The Lost Cause also shows that not only did Southerners not want the government deciding on slavery in the South, they did not want the government tampering with slavery in the North or West. Briefly stated, Southerners wanted the right to take their slaves anywhere in the country and still have them regarded as slaves. This, however, infringed upon Northern states’ rights. By declaring slaves legal property in all states, the South prohibited Northern states from deciding on the slavery issue themselves and instead imposed their belief in the North.

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<sup>15</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 454.

<sup>16</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History*, 558.

Ironically, this is exactly what the South complained the North continually attempted to do in their section. The Lost Cause conveniently overlooks this infringement of Northern states' rights. While both Northern and Southern states had supported states' rights since the American Revolution, slavery brought a rebirth of the notion to the South before the Civil War. Thus, the Lost Cause attributes Southern secession to, among other matters, the South's desire for states' rights and the protection of its interests with no connection to slavery.

As seen in the previous chapter, a final Lost Cause argument explaining Southern secession is the legal right of the South to secede from the United States. Authors of twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks, in conjunction with the Lost Cause, explain both the Northern and Southern view on the legal right of one state, or a group of states, to secede from the United States. Jordan states that Southerners "argued that the states had voluntarily joined the Union...[and] consequently, they claimed that the states also had the right to leave the Union."<sup>17</sup> This statement is nearly identical to the one made by S. E. Scates in his 1936 Tennessee textbook. There, Scates affirmed that

most of our Southern leaders contended that the states had voluntarily entered the Union in the beginning and that they could withdraw from it if the Federal government acted illegally.<sup>18</sup>

Tennessee textbooks, throughout the decades, have supported the Lost Cause assertion that Southerners viewed the Constitution as a voluntary contract, one which individual states could void at any given time. Upon this interpretation, Southerners declared they were not acting rebelliously or illegally, they were merely exercising their given right. Regardless if specific authors, such as Jordan and Scates, support the Lost Cause interpretation of the Constitution,

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<sup>17</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 473.

<sup>18</sup> Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 286.

they included it in Civil War material in their textbooks. Whereas a mature adult might realize the author is merely attempting to show what Southerners thought in the late nineteenth century, and not their personal views or the modern interpretation of events, a young child is unlikely to make such a distinction. By including the viewpoint of ordinary people Southerners in the late nineteenth century, which often aligned with the Lost Cause, authors unwillingly led students to accept this information as truth and not simply a popular belief of the time.

The Lost Cause asserts that Northerners did not interpret the Constitution as a voluntary agreement between states. The North viewed the Constitution as a binding contract. Jordan states that Northerners “considered the secession of the Southern states to be unconstitutional...states did not have the right to withdraw from the Union because the federal government, not the state governments, was sovereign.”<sup>19</sup> The Lost Cause the Northern viewpoint that declared that the Constitution was not a voluntary contract, for if viewed that way it would serve no purpose as states could withdraw and join as they pleased. In contrast to Southerners, Northern leaders felt it was imperative that the federal government, not the state government, be sovereign. In *Young Nation*, James Banks shows that President Lincoln and the Northern position are similar to Lincoln’s observation, “that to secede was not legal and would not happen.”<sup>20</sup> Half a century early, James Parks and Stanley Folmsbee, making the same connection, asserted, “President Lincoln declared that the Constitution did not permit a state to secede from the Union.”<sup>21</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the legality of Southern secession has never been fully decided upon within the Lost Cause. Despite whether or not

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<sup>19</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 474.

<sup>20</sup> James A. Banks and others, *Young Nation: Adventures in Time and Place* (New York: McGraw-Hill School Division, 2001), 465.

<sup>21</sup> Parks and Folmsbee, *The Story of Tennessee*, 199.

secession was legal, eleven Southern states seceded from the United States, resulting in a bitter war.

An aspect of the Myth of the Lost Cause that textbooks of previous centuries neglected to mention is the portrayal of the military leaders. As stated later in this chapter, a possible reason for this omission is the desire of authors of earlier decades to concentrate on the cause and outcome of the war. As historians have thoroughly analyzed these aspects of the war over the past century, present day historians and authors chose to focus on other aspects of the war, such as the military segment. The Lost Cause, as discussed in Chapter 1, credits the South with having superior military leadership, a position echoed by authors of twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks. McPherson states the Southern belief that, “the military leadership of the South...was far superior to the North’s. Southern families had a strong tradition of military training and service, and military college graduates provided the South with a large pool of officers.”<sup>22</sup> The Lost Cause uses the excellent military leadership of the South as a way to portray the South as being the superior section, despite its ultimate defeat.

In declaring that the South had superior military leadership, the Lost Cause insists that Confederate General Robert E. Lee was the most skilled general in the war. Authors of Tennessee textbooks offer the Lost Cause representation of Lee as the best general in the Civil War. They describe Lee and his decision to accept a position in the Confederate Army as one of personal turmoil that ended with an honorable, but difficult, decision. The Lost Cause quickly points out that both the North and South asked Lee to lead their respective armies—a fact that only further shows his greatness. *United States in Modern Times* sets the stage for readers to accept Lee as one of the most honorable officers in the war by discussing how Lee faced this difficult decision. *United States in Modern Times* states,

Lee was a United States Army colonel. The day before, President Lincoln had asked him to take command of a Union army. Just hours later Lee had learned that his home state of Virginia had seceded. Lee loved his country. He was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He had fought in the war with Mexico and served his country for 32 years. Yet Lee also loved Virginia. Could he lead an army that would fight his family and neighbors?...He turned down Lincoln's offer and quit the Union army. A few days later he took command of Virginia's troops. Lee knew he would be fighting old friends who were fighting for the Union. Even so, he decided to serve Virginia. 'I cannot raise my hand against my birthplace, my home, and my children,' he said.<sup>23</sup>

Jordan continues with the Lost Cause assertion that Lee was a great asset to the Confederacy, insisting that a great Confederate advantage was that "it began the war with able generals, such as Robert E. Lee."<sup>24</sup> Having identified that the Confederacy had the advantage of having great generals, Jordan states that the Lost Cause implies that Northern generals were inferior. The Lost Cause asserts that Lee's greatness went well beyond his honorable decision to fight for the Confederacy and followed him onto the battlefield. Ritchie and Broussard affirm, "Lee understood the battlefield as well as anyone in the military,"<sup>25</sup> including those in the Union military. This knowledge is only another area in which the Lost Cause asserts Lee's overall greatness. Perhaps the best tribute to Lee through the Lost Cause comes in Jordan's declaration that, "Lee seemed destined for greatness."<sup>26</sup>

The Lost Cause asserts that Lee agreed to fight for the Confederacy when he did not truly support the Southern cause. Ritchie and Broussard, in accord with the Lost Cause, assert, "Lee

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<sup>22</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 463.

<sup>23</sup> Boehm et al., *United States in Modern Times*, 161.

<sup>24</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 484.

<sup>25</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History* 571.

<sup>26</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 516.

disagreed with slavery and secession.”<sup>27</sup> Jordan echoes, “although Lee opposed slavery and secession...he eventually became the commanding general of the Army of Northern Virginia.”<sup>28</sup> Despite historians like Nolan proving the falsehood of Lee’s opposition to slavery, as discussed in Chapter 1, authors continue to assert its validity. Portraying Lee as a person who struggled with the idea of Southern secession and did not condone the practice of slavery only further enhanced the Lost Cause’s depiction of Lee. Depicted as a man who, against his moral convictions, remained loyal to his home state and the Confederacy, Lee symbolizes the ultimate soldier—willing to place his country above himself.

While the Myth of the Lost Cause declares Lee the best general in the war, it portrays Ulysses S. Grant in an unfavorable light. Authors of Tennessee textbooks used in the twenty-first century and the Lost Cause are similar in their depiction of Grant. The Lost Cause belittles Grant’s ability as a general, a viewpoint shared by many authors of Tennessee textbooks as very few offer significant information about Grant. The textbooks spare no details in glorifying Lee and offering readers insight into his life but do not offer similar information about Grant. Of the twenty-first century textbooks examined, only *Creating America* devotes a minuscule discussion of Grant in its analysis of the Civil War. Jordan affirms that the North did not have a general equal to the military greatness of Lee, for, “Lincoln’s generals failed to finish off Lee’s army...[and] Lincoln wondered when he would find a general who would defeat Lee once and for all.”<sup>29</sup> When the Union Army under General Grant began to win battles against Lee, Jordan slights Grant asserting, “Grant was an unlikely war hero...[who] often failed to impress his

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<sup>27</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History*, 571.

<sup>28</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 482.

<sup>29</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 513.

fellow officers.”<sup>30</sup> Although Grant became the victorious general in the war, the Lost Cause refuses to attribute his victory to anything but luck. A final blow to the portrayal of Grant is that, as previously stated, many authors neglect to mention Grant in any detail. Instead of crediting Grant, McPherson states, “both sides greatly underestimated Abraham Lincoln...his dedication, intelligence, skill, and humanity led the North to victory.”<sup>31</sup> While the leadership of Lincoln throughout the war is commendable and authors should not disregard it, McPherson attributes little of the Northern victory to the military leadership of Ulysses S. Grant.

A final aspect of the Lost Cause that remains present in twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks is the military defeat of the South. The Lost Cause asserts that the South was never truly defeated. The Lost Cause further declares that not only did the South have superior generals, but also that the entire Southern military was superior to its Northern counterpart. These arguments, as discussed in the previous chapters, are strong elements of the Lost Cause and the authors of twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks support them. Ritchie and Broussard affirm, “Southerners, skilled with rifles and horses, had a tradition of military service that made them excellent soldiers,”<sup>32</sup> in contrast to their Northern counterparts. The Lost Cause states that greater Northern resources simply overwhelmed the South, despite its alleged military superiority. McPherson asserts,

the South faced material disadvantages. It had a smaller population of free men to draw upon in building an army. It also possessed very few factories to manufacture weapons and other supplies, and it produced less than half as much food as the North. With less than half the miles of railroad tracks and vastly fewer trains than the North, the Confederate government had difficulty delivering food, weapons, and other supplies to its troops.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 516.

<sup>31</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 463.

<sup>32</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History*, 569.

<sup>33</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 463.

Ritchie and Broussard, in agreement with McPherson, assert, “the North enjoyed superiority in resources of every sort—population, money, transportation, food, and manufacturing.”<sup>34</sup> This is very similar to the assertion by McGee in the previous chapter. He stated, “the Confederate Army had been literally worn out by the superior power of the Union in men, money, and war supplies of every kind.”<sup>35</sup> While the South did have fewer resources than the North, the Lost Cause spin on the lack of materials places the South in a vulnerable position. Thus, the Lost Cause argues that the South faced incredible odds at the onset of the war, only increasing the nobility of its soldiers’ willingness to fight when all evidence stated they would surely lose.

The Lost Cause, as shown in McGee’s textbook, asserts that the North simply wore down the South with its overwhelming resources. *A Young Nation* reinforces this fact stating, “Lee was running out of soldiers and supplies,”<sup>36</sup> and thus Southerners were not able to continue fighting. Using this information, the Lost Cause states the Union did not defeat the Confederacy, the South simply lacked the necessary resources and men to continue. The lack of soldiers became an increasing problem for the South as one-third of the Southern population was enslaved African Americans, whom the Confederacy refused to enlist to fight. Whereas the Union enlisted black soldiers in 1862, the South did not consider enlisting slaves until the last few months of the war. The war ended before Southerners decided how to use black soldiers, or if black soldiers should serve in the Confederate Army at all. Finally, *United States in Modern Times* completes the picture of Confederate soldiers being rundown, but not defeated, by declaring, “Lee’s troops were starving, and their clothes were in rags. Grant’s soldiers...were

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<sup>34</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History*, 569.

<sup>35</sup> McGee, *A History of Tennessee*, 206.

<sup>36</sup> Banks et al., *Young Nation*, 492.

well armed and well fed.”<sup>37</sup> Even through obvious defeat, the Lost Cause refuses to acknowledge the outright defeat of Confederate forces by the Union and instead attributes the surrender to other elements such as the lack of resources and men in the South.

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Despite the presence of Lost Cause material in the Civil War section of Tennessee textbooks, the twenty-first century is seeing vast improvement in the Civil War material contained in the textbooks. At the conclusion of the twentieth century the Myth of the Lost Cause maintained a strong presence in textbooks used throughout Tennessee. While the aforementioned elements of the Lost Cause remain present in textbooks used in the current century, there is a great reduction from the amount of material present in textbooks used in the prior two centuries. Consequently, textbooks published in the twenty-first century contained the largest amount of accurate information about the Civil War. Absent from these textbooks are the Lost Cause assertions of the adequate condition of slaves in the South and the denial that slavery was the true cause of the war. Authors of textbooks authorized for use in Tennessee public schools in the twenty-first century offer students accurate information about the cause of the Civil War, the nature of slaves in the South, division among Southern states concerning slavery, and the goals of the North during the war.

The cornerstone of the Lost Cause is the declaration that slavery was not a dividing factor in the nation prior to the Civil War, and thus it was not the cause of the war. Several authors of Tennessee textbooks contradict this myth in stating the historically accurate fact that slavery

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<sup>37</sup> Boehm et al., *United States in Modern Times*, 178.

caused a huge division within the country before the Civil War, and it was the major factor in Southern secession. *Tennessee: Adventures in Time and Place*, declares, “the North and South had become divided over the question of slavery...the North wanted to end it while the South did not.”<sup>38</sup> *A Young Nation* concludes, “this country became more and more divided on one issue—slavery. This and other conflicts between the North and South would cause the Southern states to form their own country.”<sup>39</sup> Again, the authors assert that slavery was not the sole reason for the war, the North and South differed on many issues, however, the main one being slavery. These are not the only textbooks that denounce this Lost Cause element in declaring slavery the main reason for the struggle between the two sections of the United States. Jordan affirms, “the issue of slavery caused tension between the North and South,”<sup>40</sup> while McPherson concludes that in reference to the entire war, “for the South the primary aim was to win recognition as an independent nation. Independence would allow Southerners to preserve their society—one that included slavery.”<sup>41</sup> More than 100 years later, authors are finally beginning to acknowledge that the main, if not the sole, cause for the Civil War was the differing view between the North and South concerning slavery.

Authors of twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks directly attack the Lost Cause assertion that slaves were happy, content workers. *Tennessee: Adventures in Time and Place*, states, “some slaveholders treated the enslaved African Americans terribly. They would

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<sup>38</sup> James A. Banks and others, *Tennessee: Adventures in Time and Place* (New York: Macmillian McGraw-Hill, 2002), 92.

<sup>39</sup> Banks et al., *A Young Nation*, 442.

<sup>40</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 458.

<sup>41</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 464.

sometimes beat or even kill enslaved people.”<sup>42</sup> While there were some slave owners who did not practice cruel treatment on their slaves, they, unfortunately, were the exception, not the norm. Due to the cruel treatment slaves endured, it is no wonder many resisted their masters. The Lost Cause often overlooks the resistance of slaves throughout the South as it contradicts the contentment slaves had with their position. *United States in Modern Times* and *Creating America* address slave resistance in their accounts of the Civil War. *United States in Modern Times* states,

most enslaved Africans did whatever they could to resist, or act against, slavery. Some resisted in quiet ways, secretly damaging the plantation. They broke tools, making the damages look like an accident. They left gates open so that farm animals could escape. They let boats drift away. They hid household goods...Other slaves chose a more violent way to resist—they rebelled.<sup>43</sup>

Jordan stresses the effect slave revolts had on the Southern economy in stating,

another factor that affected the South was the growing resistance from slaves. To hurt the Southern economy, slaves slowed their pace of work or stopped working altogether. Some carried out sabotage, destroying crops and farm equipment to hurt the plantation economy.<sup>44</sup>

Accounts of slave resistance throughout the South, like the ones *United States in Modern Times* mentions, were common. While there is no solid evidence that links slave revolts and abolitionists, it is clear that slaves were discontented with their status long before the influence of abolitionists. Before and during the Civil War, slaveholders throughout the South, for the most part, treated their slaves unbearably cruelly, causing slaves to resist, a fact that contradicts the Lost Cause.

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<sup>42</sup> Banks et al., *Tennessee*, 93.

<sup>43</sup> Boehm et al., *United States in Modern Times*, 137.

<sup>44</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 509.

Further evidence that authors of twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks offer to contradict the Lost Cause assertion that slaves were happy workers is the reaction of slaves during the Civil War. Jordan contends,

after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the number of slaves fleeing Southern plantations greatly increased. By the end of the war, as many as half a million had fled to Union lines.<sup>45</sup>

Aside from the half million slaves fleeing North, there were several thousand free blacks in the North who wanted to help fight for the Union cause in hopes of gaining some form of equality. As previously stated, at first the Union Army was hesitant to enlist black soldiers, but as the war continued, African Americans began to serve in the Union Army. McPherson states, “by the end of the war, African American volunteers made up nearly 10 percent of the Union army and 20 percent of the navy.”<sup>46</sup> Although these African American soldiers did not receive the same treatment or duties as white Union soldiers, their presence in uniform greatly raised the morale of slaves in the South. Jordan states “slaves were overjoyed when they saw that the Union army included African American soldiers,”<sup>47</sup> thus further disputing the claim that slaves were content with their status in the South.

As in the textbooks examined in the previous chapter, twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks dispute the Lost Cause assertion that the South united in the protection of slavery and in the matter of secession. McPherson, Ritchie, and Broussard recount the true history of Southern division in their respective textbooks. McPherson discusses that while, “most white Southerners favored secession. Still, pockets of Union support existed in Eastern Tennessee and

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<sup>45</sup> Garcia et al., *Creating America*, 510.

<sup>46</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 475.

<sup>47</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 475.

western Virginia. People in the Appalachian region generally opposed secession.”<sup>48</sup> Ritchie and Broussard echo this division, stating, “not all Southerners seemed as eager to leave the Union as the people in Charleston,”<sup>49</sup> thus there was strong division, especially in the Upper South, concerning secession. Part of this division is due to the low number of grand plantations in the Upper South. Tennessee textbooks accurately show that land in the Appalachian Mountains was not suited for large plantations and, thus, it consisted of mainly small farms. In the Deep South, especially in South Carolina, there were many sprawling plantations and, thus, more slaves. Southerners in the Deep South, therefore, were more eager to secede for they had the larger slave population to protect.

Authors of the Tennessee textbooks discussed in the previous chapter identified abolitionists as only being in the North. The Lost Cause focuses on Northern abolitionists, especially those after 1840, because they were the most radical. However, what these authors and the Lost Cause neglected to mention is that in the early 1800s there were abolitionists living in the North and the South. *A Young Nation* identifies an abolitionist as “someone who wanted to abolish, or end slavery. Abolitionists were both black and white, Northern and Southern, and male and female.”<sup>50</sup> Abolitionists, therefore, were not just white Northerners; they not only existed in the South but also included females and free blacks. There was a strong group of abolitionists in the South, however, before the 1830s. *Tennessee: Adventures in Time and Place* states that during the early 1800s, “many people in both the North and South thought slavery was wrong. They worked for abolition, or an end to slavery.”<sup>51</sup> *Tennessee: Adventures in Time and*

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<sup>48</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 462.

<sup>49</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History*, 560.

<sup>50</sup> Banks et al., *A Young Nation*, 452.

<sup>51</sup> Banks et al., *Tennessee*, 94.

*Place* attributes the Nat Turner revolt in the early 1830s as the event that caused Southern abolitionists to refrain from speaking out against slavery. It claims that, “after Nat Turner’s rebellion in 1831 it became dangerous for Southerners to speak out against slavery.”<sup>52</sup> While there were some Southerners who continued to privately believe in the abolitionist cause, they, in fear of their lives, chose to remain silent in the decades before the Civil War.

A final area of accurate history found in twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks is the initial goal of the Union Army. The Lost Cause portrays Northerners as consumed with ending slavery and states slavery is the reason the North fought the Civil War. Authors of twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks, however, accurately note that ending slavery was not the initial goal of the Union Army. McPherson states, “the main goal of the North at the outset was to win the war and bring Southern states back into the Union. Ending slavery was not a major Northern goal at first, but this changed as the war continued.”<sup>53</sup> Northerners, therefore, fought to restore their country not to end the Southern institution. *United States in Modern Times* in a similarly asserts,

most Northerners supported the Union. They believed that it was wrong that the Southern states had broken away from the Union. They were willing to go to war and save their flag and all that it stood for.<sup>54</sup>

Northerners, regardless of their view on slavery in the United States, had a problem with Southern secession. They, like their leaders, believed secession to be illegal and thus fought to preserve their country. Ritchie and Broussard affirm, “many Northerners did not consider the

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<sup>52</sup> Banks et al., *A Young Nation*, 453.

<sup>53</sup> Appleby, Brinkley, and McPherson, *The American Journey*, 463.

<sup>54</sup> Boehm et al., *United States in Modern Times*, 159.

elimination of slavery important,”<sup>55</sup> only furthering the argument against the Lost Cause that the North was determined to end slavery.

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Authorized Tennessee textbooks published in the twenty-first century still contain some elements of the Myth of the Lost Cause in their discussion of the Civil War, but it is a vast improvement when compared to textbooks used in the late nineteenth century. The main element of the Lost Cause that remains present in Tennessee textbooks examined from the late nineteenth century through the twenty-first century is the matter of Southern secession. The Lost Cause asserts that Southern secession was legal as they viewed the Constitution as a voluntary contract. Northern counterparts, however, argued the Southern interpretation of the Constitution was incorrect as they viewed the Constitution as a binding contract, thus making secession illegal. As stated in Chapter 1, this is an area of the Lost Cause based on interpretation and thus remains unresolved. It is understandable, therefore, that it remains in textbooks used throughout Tennessee.

Other elements of the Lost Cause present in twenty-first century textbooks deal with the military aspect of the war—an area not thoroughly discussed in textbooks used in the previous centuries. Perhaps its absence in earlier textbooks is due to the desire of those authors to focus on the main aspects of the Civil War, such as the cause for the war and slavery. Another possible reason is the fond memory generations of Americans immediately after the war had for Lee. Perhaps, these authors did not feel it was wise to go against such a strong positive sentiment for Lee. This explains the appearance of this aspect of the Lost Cause in recent

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<sup>55</sup> Ritchie and Broussard, *American History*, 569.

Tennessee textbooks—Americans are beginning to separate their emotions from history and embrace the true military history of the Civil War. Given its relatively recent appearance in textbooks, it is likely that this aspect of the Lost Cause, like those seen in earlier textbooks, will give way to an even more accurate history in the coming decades. Perhaps as military scholars begin to examine the history of the Civil War, they will discover the accurate military strengths and weaknesses of the North and South and educate the American public.

The major elements of the Myth of the Lost Cause, those concerning the reason for Southern secession and the nature of slavery in the South, have virtually disappeared from twenty-first century Tennessee textbooks. As discussed in the previous chapter, part of this disappearance may result from the strong Civil Rights and Equal Rights Movements in the later part of the twentieth century. To assert that the Civil War was not about slavery and that slaves were happy with their enslavement is both degrading and embarrassing to African Americans. In an effort to set the record straight, historians, of all races, devoted much research to this topic and thus revealing the true history. By the twenty-first century, the facts about slavery in the South replaced the Lost Cause in Tennessee textbooks to prevent the passage of the myth to a new generation. As the twenty-first century continues, hopefully, the remaining elements of the Lost Cause present in Tennessee textbooks will disappear, enabling children to realize that all the elements of the Lost Cause are myth.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

American society over the past 140 years has split over the topic of the Civil War. Many Americans, particularly those in the South, continue to embrace the Myth of the Lost Cause as the true history of the war. They assert that the South was a tranquil society destroyed by Northern aggression and neglect to see the South as a culture that depended upon human bondage for labor. The Confederacy, in the eyes of the Lost Cause, was a powerful nation that met its demise only because of overwhelming Northern resources. Society, however, cannot explain the wide acceptance of this myth solely through stubbornness or ignorance on a person's part. For nearly a century, public schools in Tennessee taught the Civil War according to the Myth of the Lost Cause and not the actual history. Because several examined public textbooks used in Tennessee included the Lost Cause, it is likely that textbooks used in other states contained similar information. This resulted in generations of Americans accepting the Lost Cause as the true account of the Civil War not by choice, but by placing blind faith in the information contained in textbooks.

Tennessee textbooks over the past 140 years have experienced a significant change in their Civil War information. Immediately after the Civil War through the middle of the twentieth century, there was a steady increase in the presence of the Lost Cause in public school textbooks. By the middle of the twentieth century, the material in textbooks was a mixture of both Lost Cause and actual history. Authors intertwining the two versions made it difficult to distinguish between myth and reality, thus most students accepted all the information as truth. After this peak in the mid 1900s, actual history began to slowly replace the Lost Cause in textbooks, yet even in the twenty-first century some aspects of the myth remain in Civil War material. While

today most students continue to accept all textbook information as truth, most of the material is actually the true account of the Civil War with only slight inserts of the Lost Cause.

Fortunately, thanks to the millions of Americans who gave their time, and sometimes their lives, in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, a main component of the Lost Cause stands corrected. Today, the majority of Americans recognize the Lost Cause assertion that slaves were happy, content servants is a myth and acknowledge the true horrors that occurred in Southern slavery. No longer do textbooks and other forms of media portray slaves as ignorant workers in the South and instead portray slaves with a strong desire for freedom. Furthermore, most Americans accept the fact that slavery was a great dividing issue in the nation before the Civil War, thus putting to rest the Lost Cause claim that Northern abolitionists created the tension. No longer is the outbreak of the Civil War blamed on a single Northern group, and instead historians trace the national tension concerning slavery back to the foundation of the country. While Americans have yet to reach such a realization concerning all the aspects of the Lost Cause, hopefully as the twenty-first century continues, further research and publications will correct the current misconceptions Americans have concerning the Civil War.

Perhaps an area of the Lost Cause that will never completely yield to actual history is the matter of secession. The continuation of this portion of the myth in American society is evident in its presence in textbooks used in the later part of the nineteenth century as well as those used in the twenty-first century. A possible explanation is that this aspect of the myth deals primarily with interpretation. The reason for secession, however, has given way to true history over the years. Earlier textbooks refused to concede that Southern states seceded mainly to protect slavery, while recent textbooks identify slavery as the reason for secession. The Lost Cause assertion that Southern secession was legal, however, remains unresolved in Tennessee

textbooks. As previously stated, the main reason for this remaining element of the Lost Cause is that it deals with the Northern and Southern interpretation of the Constitution. Simply stated, the North and South interpreted the Constitution differently. The South regarded the Constitution as a voluntary contract while the North saw it as a binding contract. Because it is difficult to declare an interpretation incorrect, the issue remains unresolved. Although it is doubtful that historians will ever resolve this aspect of the Lost Cause, the debate now focuses not the legality of secession but whether it was just or unjust.

As stated in the last chapter, the main aspects of the Lost Cause that were present in nineteenth and twentieth century textbooks gave way to actual history in modern textbooks. However, the military aspects of the Lost Cause that received minimal attention in earlier textbooks remained present in those used in the twenty-first century. As stated in Chapter 3, only in recent decades have historians objectively analyzed the military aspect of the Civil War. Before this, Americans thought so highly of Robert E. Lee, and lowly of Ulysses S. Grant, and past historians only reinforced this sentiment in numerous books about the war and its generals. Thus, instead of evaluating the military component of the war, historians merely retold the same story and reinforced set prejudices. It is no wonder that textbooks revealed the same biased account of the military aspect of the war, telling the Lost Cause version and not the actual occurrences. Textbooks, along with the Lost Cause, refer to Lee as the great hero of the war and barely mention Grant. As concluded in Chapter 3, not until academic and military historians begin to truly examine the military history of the Civil War, its battles and officers, will this aspect of the Lost Cause be laid to rest.

Perhaps some of the best educators of the American public to correct the remaining elements of the Myth of the Lost Cause in American society are the teachers in America's public

schools. By understanding the difference between the Lost Cause and Civil War History and noting the misinformation in textbooks, teachers can correctly teach America's youth about the Civil War. Without passing of the Lost Cause to another generation, it is probable that at the dawn of the twenty-second century all Americans will acknowledge the Myth of the Lost Cause for what it is—a version of the Civil War that enabled a successful reconciliation of the nation that is undoubtedly a myth.

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