

Historiographical Essay: The Lost Cause Myth

Myth

1a : a traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon **b** : PARABLE, ALLEGORY **2a** : a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; *esp*: one embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society <seduced by the American ~ of individualism – Orde Coombs> **b**: an unfounded or false notion **3** : a person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence **4** : the whole body of myths¹

There is not a person in the world that does not believe in some type of myth. The myth is an essential tool that is used to create loyalties, rules, and on a larger scale, nationalism. Not swimming for an hour after you eat, going outside with wet hair will make you sick, or not to swallow your gum because it will stick to your ribs are all good examples of myths. The Marine Corps embellishes its birth by stating that Tun Tavern, “the wildest bar in Philadelphia,” only played host the meanest of the mean and from this group two naval officers selected the first Marines. In actuality, Tun Tavern is the place where the contracts were signed to form a new branch of service called the Marine Corps. What matters here is what people believe. Marines get motivated when they hear the story, and kids, as well as parents, think they may drown if they swim too soon after eating or get sick if they go out in the cold with wet hair. The Lost Cause Myth applies this definition to an entire geographical area, creating a way of life that still has its roots imbedded deep in Southern beliefs.

The Lost Cause Myth does not have any specific beginning. Most recognize its dominance immediately after the war, but its roots developed slowly over the course of the Civil War

¹Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. “myth.”

eventually becoming a powerful force in the years following Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The term "Lost Cause" was coined by a historian/journalist named Edward A. Pollard. Pollard wrote a book titled *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* where, regardless of the photo of Jefferson Davis on the inside cover of his book, he relentlessly blamed the loss of the war on the former president.

The term reveals how the people of the South, the Confederates and their supporters, dealt with the loss of a major conflict and a way of life. It is their way of interpreting, in the best possible way, how they came out on the losing end of the war. This was done in order to maintain the dignity of the South for those who fought, lost their lives, or lost family members. Caroline E. Janney lists "six tenets," or assertions that are characteristically associated with the Lost Cause:

1. Secession, not slavery, caused the Civil War.
2. African Americans were "faithful slaves," loyal to their masters and the Confederate cause and unprepared for the responsibilities of freedom.
3. The Confederacy was defeated militarily only because of the Union's overwhelming advantages in men and resources.
4. Confederate soldiers were heroic and saintly.
5. The most heroic and saintly of all Confederates, perhaps of all Americans, was Robert E. Lee.
6. Southern women were loyal to the Confederate cause and sanctified by the sacrifice of their loved ones.²

Jubal Early vehemently supported Southern beliefs by jumping at every opportunity given to him to speak to crowds of veterans as well as civilians. Early presented numerous articles in the *Southern Historical Society Papers*, defending Lee and Lost Cause beliefs. Southern veterans began to organize immediately after the war, even though it was against all of the rules of

²Caroline E. Janney, "The Lost Cause," Encyclopedia Virginia, last modified July 30, 2009. http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Lost_Cause_The (accessed Sept. 8, 2009).

Reconstruction. Walls began to adorn pictures of Robert E. Lee, “Stonewall” Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and the term “rebel” began to find meaning among veterans. Women’s leagues were formed, and they pushed to remember those who had fallen through memorials and grand statues of Confederate leaders. Stone Mountain is a perfect example of how adamant Southerners were to complete the carving of Lee, Jackson, Davis, and their favorite horses, on the side of a mountain. The carving began in 1916, abandoned in 1923, started again in 1963 when the Governor urged Georgia legislation to approve the purchase of Stone Mountain and the completion of the carving. It passed and the carving was finished in 1972.

The Lost Cause found its way into text, movies, and song over the generations that followed the war. The song “Dixie” became somewhat of an anthem for the Confederates during the Civil War and gained even more popularity after the war. Over the period of the war and immediately after, different versions of “Dixie” were written to coincide with the war and afterward the song made every “rebel” proud.

Books were printed in support of the Lost Cause. Schools began to print history books that endorsed many of the six tenets suggested by Janney. Mary Tucker Magill aided in writing the first history book titled *History of Virginia* in 1908, followed by Francis Butler Simkins, Spotswood Hunnicutt Jones, and Sidman P. Poole’s book titled *Virginia: History, Government, Geography* in 1964. Schools throughout the state of Virginia found in both versions the same sentiment toward slavery stating that “a feeling of strong affection existed between masters and slaves in a majority of Virginia homes.”³ Books like *Gone with the Wind* found their way

³ Caroline E. Janney, “The Lost Cause,” Encyclopedia Virginia, last modified July 30, 2009. http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Lost_Cause_The (accessed Sept. 8, 2009).

into movie theaters in later years, supporting this depiction of affection between master and slave.

Edward A. Pollard and his brother H. Rives Pollard supported Jubal Early and the Lost Cause through the *Richmond Examiner* and the *Southern Opinion*, both of which were used to spread and express a unique Southern culture. Women's organizations used Pollard's paper to advertise and get support for Confederate memorials throughout Virginia. Pollard encouraged veterans "to foster in the hearts of our children the memories of a century of political and mental triumphs."⁴

This historiography is going to look at the changing attitudes of historians toward the Lost Cause Myth over the decades following the Civil War. It will chronologically follow how schools of thought vary over time and attempt to show how interpretations of the Lost Cause have changed in correlation with specific events in United States history.

Historiography: The Lost Cause

For the first forty years after Edward A. Pollard's book *The Lost Cause* was published, the largest group that spent any time arguing its legitimacy lay in the Northern states. Most Southerners supported Pollard's ideas and were active in publishing articles in *The Richmond Examiner* and the *Southern Opinion* concerning support for the Lost Cause. Historians themselves kept under the radar while politicians and ordinary people duked it out in magazines, newspapers, and public forums. Pollard laid out the original ideas dealing with the Lost Cause in his book, but it was Jubal Early and the Ladies' Memorial Associations who

⁴Ibid.

ultimately argued and pushed the belief that caused Southerners to look at their own culture and commit to recapturing the pride that once was the South.

Thousands of books have been written on the Civil War and Reconstruction. It would not be too far-fetched to say that hundreds have been written on the Lost Cause, however, before a historiography can be written on this particular topic, a focus needs to be placed on the man who originated the term and laid the ground work for people like Jubal Early and the Ladies' Memorial Associations.

Edward A. Pollard's schooling was focused mostly on journalism and law. He strongly believed in the right of secession and loyally supported the Confederacy. When Robert E. Lee surrendered it could be easily understood why Pollard took it as hard as anyone who lost a family member did; he then decided to express himself the best way he knew how, in writing.

In Pollard's book the earliest views of the Lost Cause were first published, in which the finger pointing took center stage. Pollard immediately turned to his education in law and defended the right to secede. He states that the South quietly recognized and appreciated the North, whereas the South was "entirely foreign to the Northern mind." Pollard continues his argument by stating "to the North the Union was therefore a mere geographical name, a political designation which had no peculiar claims upon their affection." Pollard suggests that the term "Union" is like the term "South," it simply describes a geographical area and does not legally bond the North and South together. This, in addition to the importance of states' rights in the South, are Pollard's most convincing arguments for succession.⁵

⁵Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (New York: E. B. Treat & Company Publishers, 1867), 52.

Jefferson Davis and the Southern government are large targets in *The Lost Cause*. Pollard blames them for failures in specific battles like Gettysburg and Vicksburg and initiating conscription immediately after. He blames “Mr. Davis,” as he calls him, for turning the entire South into a base camp and allowing people to starve in a plentiful agricultural land. It is odd that Pollard criticizes Davis so much considering his photo is inside the cover of his book. Pollard’s criticism of Davis did not go over well with many of the Confederates, but it was overlooked because of his support of the South. Pollard attacks Davis’ character stating that he was unbecoming to Southern chivalry and that once he became president, he showed no encouragement to his countrymen.

Pollard argues that the main premise of the term “Lost Cause” was the lack of resources in the South. The North had more money, more support from foreign countries, and a larger population which enabled a larger army. From this point of view, scattered throughout the entire book, Pollard praises Southerners for their sacrifices and their unforgiving love of their country. His views on slavery are that it was a “logical” institution, and that the North was intending to “Africanize the South” by freeing and educating black people. Many of Pollard’s accusations are completely false, but knowing that aside from slavery almost all whites in the North and South did not believe that black people were equal to whites. Many began to agree that slavery was wrong, but equality was another issue all together.⁶

While Pollard’s focus was wide and attempted to answer questions for Southerners as to why the war was lost, William A. Dunning found his specialty in Reconstruction. Dunning led the way in the early twentieth-century writing about the problems of Reconstruction. He was raised

⁶Ibid, 753-756.

in the North and his views are consistent with many Northerners that slavery is wrong, but blacks are not equal to whites. At Columbia University he founded the Dunning School of Reconstruction which taught and believed that African Americans had no right getting involved in government.

After merely forty years it is easy to see a change already taking place among historians of the time. Pollard thought slavery to be a logical institution, was extremely productive, and supported a respected way of life. On the other hand, Dunning thought that slavery was wrong, needless to say he did not run through the streets shouting it, he simply thought that it was not a way for people to treat others. What Dunning believed was that the Northern states were much too aggressive in their attempt at reuniting the Union, and was especially destructive in the Reconstruction of the South. Slavery was coming to an end and would have eventually become extinct and the aggression of the North was simply uncalled for.

Dunning also believed that the Northern states profited off of the destruction of the South. Reconstruction continued to bring profit to the North while in Border States like Kentucky “conservatives . . . successfully resisted to the end every effort to abolish slavery.”⁷ As for the heart of the Confederacy, “chaos was universal.”⁸ After the war ended crops were left to rot and newly freedmen roamed “aimlessly, but happy” throughout the South testing their new rights, leaving their sustainability up to the Confederates.⁹

⁷William Archibald Dunning, *Reconstruction: Political and Economic, 1865-1877*, vol. 22 of *The American Nation: A History* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1907), 8-9.

⁸Ibid, 10.

⁹Ibid, 10-11.

What is hard to get a grasp on is why Dunning so vehemently hated what the North did during Reconstruction, considering that he was raised in the North. He detested “Carpet-baggers” (developers of Southern constitutions consisting mostly of freedmen, but led by Northern whites.) and “even more detested scalawags” (Union veterans living in the South who still hate ex-Confederates and rebels who completely gave up on the South). These groups of people, in addition to freedmen, ruined the South with their hatred and vengefulness during the Reconstruction period. This mindset only encouraged the Lost cause and drew the people of the South even closer together.¹⁰

During this period is when a new opposition arrived on the scene, the educated African American W. E. B. Du Bois. Fredrick Douglas did a lot to get the word out and push to abolish slavery, but W. E. B. Dubois was the next generation to become a thorn in Dunning’s school of thought. Du Bois is the first African American to speak out and publish his opinions on the Dunning School of thought. As stated before, many people did this through small articles in newspapers columns and spoke out in public forms, but Du Bois was not only speaking against Dunning and his ideas, but he was also speaking for all freedmen and women against Southern laws that

One can understand a bit of sarcasm coming from Du Bois and according to many of his supporters, he was full of it. In the last chapter of *Black Reconstruction in America*, titled *The Propaganda of History*, Du Bois attacks the entire population of prominent writers of Civil War and Reconstruction history beginning with James Fords Rhodes, which Du Bois brushes to the side because Rhodes has no training or education in history. Rhodes is claimed to be self-

¹⁰Ibid, 115-118.

educated, but according to Du Bois he simply “accumulated a fortune . . . surrounded himself with a retinue of clerks and proceeded to manufacture a history of the United States by mass production.”¹¹

When speaking of Dunning, Du Bois admits that Dunning was less dogmatic in his writing, but “the work of most of the students whom he had taught and encouraged has been one sided and partisan to the last degree.” Du Bois continues by criticizing John Hopkins and Columbia Universities for “systematically discouraging” Negro students, “thus a nation-wide university attitude has arisen by which propaganda against the Negro has been carried on unquestioned.”¹²

In *The Journal of Negro History*, A. A. Taylor wrote that not all Du Bois’ characteristics of these authors have had unanimous approval, but overall, they were fair. Taylor argues that many of the works written on the Civil War and Reconstruction in the late nineteenth-century, early twentieth-century, have “not met the requirements of historical scholarship,” due to obvious bias in each work. He is referring to the majority of bias from white authors, and a reference to some black authors as well.¹³

Taylor brings up a good point about how the writing of history is and has been seen from a bias point of view. This can be seen in its racial form from Pollard’s era into the sixties. What is interesting is that the racism that is seen in many of the works written during this period was considered a good account of the events that took place. James Fords Rhodes won the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *History of the Civil War, 1861-1865*, in 1918. Rhodes, as Taylor and Du Bois

¹¹W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1935), 717.

¹²Ibid, 719.

¹³A. A. Taylor, “Historians of the Reconstruction,” *The Journal of Negro History* 23 (Jan. 1938): 17-20.

point out, is self-educated and rich and used the narrative form; insinuating that it was the wrong way to write history. His racist opinions on emancipation and the public's acceptance of it, attest to the public's belief that blacks are not and will never be equal the superiority of the white man. These general racist beliefs, pointed out by Taylor and Du Bois, do not favor the Lost Cause Myth that the war was fought over succession; it actually supports later beliefs that it was fought over the institution of slavery.

Up until the 1960s the Dunning school of thought reigned dominant over the heads of American historians. From 1866 to the 1940s many of the self-proclaimed historians pointed fingers and instead of giving the reader their interpretation of events, they gave "facts" and only spoke the "truth" in their writings. Unfortunately, the greater percent of the population bought what many of them were saying. Because many of the viewpoints among Americans at the time were similar, these early writers of what could be called out country's worst moment enforced Lost Cause values. The Northern states began to believe in the Myth mostly because they found it easier to communicate and interact with Southerners. One could argue that it was a sort of translation used to aid in enforcing matters of reuniting the South and re-establishing the Union.

The 1940s and 50s brought little change. The Civil War and the Lost Cause were placed by the wayside due to World War II, as they were during the Great Depression and WWI. For the most part the Dunning school still held a grasp on many of the historians that did write on these topics. E. Merton Coulter is one of the prominent historians during this period. A supporter of segregation and a white supremacist, many of Pollard's and Dunning's beliefs are found in Coulter's writings. Wirt Armistead Cate argued that Coulter simply searched for what he was

looking for in “Southern Democratic newspapers without sufficient regard for Northern sources and viewpoints for that period.”¹⁴

In the 1950s there were some exceptions to the Dunning School and these exceptions began a streak of historians beginning to look at Reconstruction and the South from an objective point of view. John Hope Franklin succeeded at this very task, when compared to W. E. B. De Bois. Franklin, unlike Du Bois showed notable restraint in *Reconstruction: After the Civil War*. This restraint, however, has led to a somewhat vague picture of Reconstruction. In a sense it could be argued that it is what *Annals* historians would call a good example of narrative history; simply a “good read.” What Franklin does not accomplish, Kenneth Stampp does, in his book *A Peculiar Institution*.

Kenneth M. Stampp argued against the previous interpretations of historians who claimed that slave’s owners acted in a paternal way toward their slaves and that their slaves wanted to be there. Stampp showed how slaves disliked the situation they were in and fought back every way they knew how. Stampp reveals how slaves rebelled by breaking tools, acting sick, working slow, theft and even armed uprisings. This type of activity on the part of slave defies Coulter’s belief that slaves did not do a thing for their freedom, they simply accepted it. This also contradicts the Lost Cause belief that slaves were happy in their situation.

Finally in the 1960s, real change found its way into the history books when Stampp revised and brought an end to the Dunning school of thought. Stampp directly argued the “tragic legend” ideals set forth by Dunning and his students, “is romantic nonsense that still fills the

¹⁴Wirt Armistead Cate, review of *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877*, by E. Merton Coulter, *The American Historical Review* 53, no.3 (April 1948):566.

mind of many Americans about their Civil War.”¹⁵ *The Peculiar Institution* and *The Era of Reconstruction* placed Stamp in front of the revisionist historians. They were both published at a time when blacks were fighting for equality. These two books did two things: they attacked the Dunning school of thought head on, and many historians followed suit, and they gave agency to a group of people that were only seen as assets or victims. This came as a blessing during a period in history when African Americans needed to be recognized as people with families, thick with culture, and life, not as property.

The 1960s also brought an end to the indirect approach to the Lost Cause Myth. The beliefs and ideals of whites remained the same for nearly one hundred years. To this point references to the Lost Cause negated the term and only spoke of the beliefs. As the Civil Rights movement drew closer these beliefs either began to change, disappeared behind closed doors, or became a whisper while pointing in “their” direction, imposing the “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” rule. why it remained such a strong belief, or to document what channels people went through to spread the Lost Cause beliefs and who exactly spread them? Revisionists will cover the Lost Cause with more impartiality than ever before.

The 1970s brought a more focused history to the center stage, including an overdue introduction of one of the first female historians to write on the subject as well as a focus on the involvement of women’s organizations. Rollin G. Osterweis wrote the first book that looked directly at the Lost Cause Myth. In *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900*, Osterweis looks at the development of the Myth and how it evolved up to the twentieth-century. It is clear that historians are now beginning to dissect the Myth from different angles and different points of

¹⁵John Hope Franklin, review of *The Era of Reconstruction*, by Kenneth M. Stamp, *The Journal of Negro History* 50, no. 4 (October 1965):286.

view. By this time historians are claiming their work as an argument or interpretation. Osterweis suggests that there is an artistic appeal to the Lost Cause Myth that not only attracted those of the South, but it attracted Northerners and even those descendants of Southern slaves. There is one discrepancy that Osterweis seems to have gotten wrong and that is the title of professional American historian given to James Ford Rhodes, who did win a Pulitzer Prize, but that does make him a professional considering the ideals of those handing out the awards.¹⁶

Susan Speare Durant focused on the development of the Lost Cause Myth in her 1972 unpublished dissertation titled *The Gently Furled Banner: The Development of the Myth of the Lost Cause*. Durant's dissertation focal point is on the development of the Myth through periodicals. Her outlook on the topic is the first of its kind and Durant is one of the first female historians to put out a fully-fledged, wonderfully researched, dissertation on this topic. Durant focused on periodicals to gather a wider range of opinions and "reflected more sensitivity to the flux of contemporary events."¹⁷

What is admirable about Durant is that she chose a topic that has never been written about and that that topic had mostly to do the common Southerners after the war. How most of the veterans and civilians felt about the Lost Cause and the after effects of the war were not all written in books, most of them were small articles in periodicals stating a personal opinion on current events and popularity; this is where Durant hits the nail on the head:

¹⁶Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1973): 90-91.

¹⁷Susan Speare Durant, "Gently Furled Banner: The Development of the Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1972): ii.

“All those who reveled in Confederate memories were not moaning poets, Bible toters, or conscience-salving soldiers. But, apparently, those who did early and heartily unfurl the banner of the Lost Cause did so for compelling personal reasons in addition to the general southern experience of defeat and reconstruction. These men did not wish to forget the war. Rather they relived it and stimulated others to do likewise. Eventually public manifestations of sympathy for the Lost Cause became fashionable and hence less individualistically motivated.”¹⁸

Durant speaks volumes about the local commoners in the Southern states. These were the majority of the population that were not involved in politics or any type of government, granted there are always politicians trying to force their opinions on the masses, and this was one of the only outlets they could possibly afford to speak their minds. Durant does not try to label these people; she categorizes them as vague as possible, but the paragraph exposes their importance.

Other historians focused on the development of an icon and others just seem to keep trying to find a way to justify the ideals of a past belief. Thomas L. Connelly reveals the real Robert E. Lee in his book *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society*. In a general sense, Connelly depicts Robert E. Lee as the husband, father, and commander that he was and that Southern states dominated print on the Lost Cause and Lee. “To justify Lee was to justify the Southern cause.”¹⁹ Connelly’s attraction to Lee is understandable simply due to the myth surrounding him, but there is still a hint of Dunning in the air via Philip r. Muller.

¹⁸Ibid, 66.

¹⁹Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977): 108.

Muller wrote an article titled *Look Back Without Anger: A Reappraisal of William Dunning*. Originally thought to be an article showing William Dunning from a different angle or his personal life, but soon found out it was full of excuses as to why Dunning wrote some of the racial comments he did. Muller does cover a bit of Dunning's life and explains that his early work is masterful and popular among his students, but Muller then explains Dunning's illness that makes him unable to write anymore in which he is forced to use a typewriter. Muller states that *Reconstruction, Political, and Economic* was written in such haste that Dunning did not have the time to proofread and rewrite some of his phrases and use different words. Muller suggests the Dunning was "unable to take the project seriously, he chose words without the care which characterized his other published works; even his informal, witty book reviews seem models of precision and care by comparison."²⁰

Muller continues to defend Dunning by stating that Dunning hated idealist and the reason that "radicals and defenders of black suffrage receive rough treatment" is because they were idealists, and it was idealism that Dunning "had little faith and which he thought played no significant role in motivating action."²¹

John David Smith writes of the missing elements in literature on the topic of the Lost Cause. He points out that Durant, Osterweis, Connely and Barbara L. Bellows book *God and General Longstreet*, and Gaines M. Foster's book *Ghosts of the Confederacy* do not discuss slavery at all. His argument is that "not subject, except that of their beloved Lost Cause, Captured the

²⁰Philip R. Muller, "Look Back Without Anger: A Reappraisal of William A. Dunning." *The Journal of American History* 61 (September 1974): 332.

²¹Ibid, 333; No information could be found on Muller to try to fully understand his point of view.

attention of white southerners as did slavery.”²² Is this an example of some type of inner racism found among Southern historians, or is a matter of guilt? Both of these scenarios are probable, reasons for leaving out any discussion of slavery in their books. In their defense, regardless of if they are from the South, slavery is not the center piece that these authors are focusing on. Susan S. Durant is focusing on the people’s reaction, through periodicals, on the development of the Lost Cause Myth. Riley Osterweis is focusing on the overall development of the Lost Cause through “defeated people over identity.”²³ Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows are arguing two Lost Causes: an Inner and Outer Lost Cause, the Outer being a National Lost Cause.²⁴ Gaines M. Foster is focusing how Southerners came to terms with Confederate memory.

Now if Smith is suggesting that these Southern historians neglected to choose slavery as their topic because they are from the South, he may have a point. By suggesting this, Smith is saying that the topic of slavery is prominently covered by Northerners. This may be true, but until there is actually some research done on the subject, it is merely speculation.

One thing that needs to be noted is the sarcasm that has been found in Foster’s book. The histories that have been written in the first forty or so years after the war were full of bias, cynicism, and sarcasm. It seems unprofessional to see this kind of sarcasm in a professional historian today. Foster is comparing the Lost Cause to the Ghost Dance among the Plains Indians and imagining what it would look like:

²²John David Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985): 58.

²³Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900*, ix.

²⁴Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982): 1-7.

“One can easily imagine a gathering of Early and company, wearing their gray ghost shirts and clutching volumes of the SHSP [Southern Historical Society Papers] the Jones promised would be impervious to the slings and arrows of northern slander. Formed in a circle about a statue of a recumbent Lee, the true believers dance in and back, chanting, on one foot, “overwhelmed by numbers,” and on the other, “betrayed by Longstreet” — waiting for an undefeated, marble Lee to rise and lead them to victory.”²⁵

Charles Reagan Wilson’s book *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* is the first full length book to cover religion and its connection to the Lost Cause Myth. Contrary to the quote from Susan Durant, Wilson states that Christian Clergymen were the “prime celebrants of the religion of the Lost Cause.”²⁶ His grasp on religion and the topic of the Lost Cause is outstanding and his bibliography is full of variety. Wilson’s religious history of the Lost Cause is one that still has not seen many challenges and is vital in the overall picture of the Lost Cause Myth.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s little difference in scholarly books found their way into the hands of eager students. The Lost Cause school is still mostly focused on the iconic praise of Robert E. Lee, Jubal Early’s need for the spotlight, and the discrediting of Longstreet. William C. Davis and Gary W. Gallagher hold up their ends of the school in *The Cause Lost* and *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*.

It is in the twenty-first-century that some change takes place among historians. Women’s histories are becoming more and more popular as are women historians of the Civil War. In addition, the recent events concerning the symbols of the Confederacy may have sparked

²⁵Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987): 60.

²⁶Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980.): 11.

further interest in the topic of the Lost Cause. Interesting topics arise during this century that have been sparking debates for years and they just seem to never go away.

In a review of the book, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* by Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, William Garret Piston praises many of the historians for their knowledge of the Lost Cause and the detail in which they write about it. In his comments on Nolan's opening chapter in the book Piston uses the phrase, "the lawyer Nolan" and states that "Nolan approaches Southern history as if presenting an indictment. His self-righteousness and lack of objectivity tend to detract from the many good points he makes."²⁷ Piston is not alone in his criticism of Nolan, Charles Reagan Wilson and Anne Sarah Rubin argue that Nolan is being too aggressive and making impossible claims.

Women historians have been successful in writing in the twenty-first-century as well. Karen L. Cox is the first historian to give The United Daughters of the Confederacy full scholarly treatment in the book named *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*. Cox discusses how the conservative, mostly prominent women of the South influenced other in creating thousands of movements across the Southern states. Cox also argues that the United Daughters of the Confederacy "raised the stakes of the Lost Cause by making it a movement about vindication, as well as memorialization."²⁸

This shift to women's history in the South continues with Jane Turner Censer's book, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895*. Censer focuses on how white Southern women adapted to the changing South with reference to the Lost Cause. Censer

²⁷William Garret Piston, review of *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, by Gary w. Gallagher and Alan t. Nolan, *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1537.

²⁸Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003): 1.

discusses the impact women had on the memorials throughout the South as well as their active involvement in sanitizing cemeteries and aiding with unwed mothers.²⁹

Carline E. Janney takes women's history after the Civil War one step further in her book, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*. Janney concentrates on the Ladies' Memorial Associations from the beginning, immediately after the war over the life of the organization. Janney argues that Appomattox was the beginning of the growth for women and not the beginning of the decline and earlier historians have suggested.³⁰

This interest and growth in women's history during this period is a far cry from the early works Edward A. Pollard and William A. Dunning. As new discoveries and interests grow in the discipline, new arguments will arise creating a long lasting and engaging discussion on the topic of the Lost Cause. With the added controversy over Confederate symbolism continues to grow, so too will interest find spark among young historians on the Myth of the Lost Cause.

²⁹Jane Turner Censer, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003): 275.

³⁰Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008): 5.

