

**A Battle Over 20th Century Textbooks:
How the Civil War is Still Fought in American Classrooms**

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Textbooks are central to the American K-12 education system, perhaps more so than anywhere else in the world. In the formative years of common schools, beginning in the 1840s lasting through the rest of the century, teachers received less education than the present-day standard. Textbooks were a vital tool to ensure proper history teaching.¹ They guide what teachers should focus on in their curriculums, as there is no national standard laying out the fundamental concepts of any given history class. This lack of direction gives textbooks great power in deciding how each generation understands history. With this kind of influence, a concerned parent or student may wonder how to ensure that textbooks are honestly depicting an accurate history. The short answer is that there is limited oversight nationally. States can implement or ban specific standards, and this creates discrepancies from state-to-state. Much of the decision about what goes into a school history textbook relies on individual textbook publishing companies and the groups that lobby textbook publishing companies with concerns.

From the 1890s through the 1920s, these lobbying groups were Confederate societies. They had a mission to uphold certain ideas of the Civil War to maintain a positive image of the South. For the South, there were several topics that could get a textbook rejected from southern schools. Prominent United Daughters of the Confederacy historian Mildred Rutherford recommended the following for southern schools who desire historical truth:

- “1. Reject a book that calls the Confederate soldier a traitor or rebel, and the war a rebellion.
2. Reject a book that says the South fought to hold her slaves.

¹ Joseph Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, accessed September 22, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/calpoly/reader.action?docID=3414737&ppg=1>.

3.Reject a book that speaks of the slaveholder of the South as cruel and unjust to his slaves.

4.Reject a text-book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln and vilifies Jefferson Davis, unless a truthful cause can be found for such glorification and vilification before 1865.”²

These are a few of the many rule’s textbooks had to abide by to be considered truthful and fair histories of the South. These guidelines solely governed southern education standards in the late 19th through the mid-20th century. In fact, it was not until 2018 that the Texas Board of Education voted to teach that “slavery was the central issue of the American Civil War, and not, as previous standards had dictated, a cause eclipsed by states’ rights and sectionalism.”³ This Texas Board of Education was authorized by law in 1917, just two years before Rutherford’s *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books* was published, to purchase all public school textbooks. With this authorization, the Texas board gained the ability to control what is taught in Texan schools. A curriculum that was thoroughly crafted by the UDC in 1919 is one that remained pervasive in Texan education. These guidelines are one example of a successful attempt by Confederate societies where they created a propagandist history.

In a Pew Research Center study that asked, “What Caused the Civil War,” 48% of Americans said the cause was state’s rights, 38% said it was slavery, and 9% of Americans said it was about both equally.⁴ The split between Americans on this key historical issue is

² Mildred D. Rutherford, *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries*, Athens, Georgia, 1919. accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t1pg2229x>. Hathi Trust.

³ Jason Daley, “Texas Will Finally Teach That Slavery Was Main Cause of the Civil War,” Smithsonian.com (Smithsonian Institution, November 19, 2018), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/texas-will-finally-teach-slavery-was-main-cause-civil-war-180970851/>.

⁴ Russell Heimlich, “What Caused the Civil War?,” Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, December 30, 2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2011/05/18/what-caused-the-civil-war/>.

significant. An understanding of the causes of the Civil War translates to an overall sense of the war itself. Most Americans believe this war is still relevant to present-day politics, so these differences in understanding can lead to sharp political divides.⁵ Since most Americans learn most about history in their school years, textbooks are essential to address these historical discrepancies. Attempts to influence the historical narrative will continue. Understanding them can make Americans better advocates for the next generation of students.

One of the earliest and most significant examples of lobbying efforts over textbook content was the battle between Confederate societies and northern textbook publishing companies in the 1890s-1930s. The efforts saw a peak at the end of World War 1, after the war effort bound the nation together and created a brief hiatus on this textbook battle. This Lost Cause effort is one of the first campaigns on education, but it certainly was not the last. Confederate groups revealed how lobbying for specific textbooks could be beneficial, and they saw history textbooks that favored southern interest implemented throughout southern public schools. Their efforts to endorse and suppress textbooks, and their successes in doing this, raise the question of who can impact textbooks. The actions of Confederate groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) revealed how groups with a particular interest can sway the historical narrative in schools.

Historiography

The various textbook wars occupied a significant portion of the historiography of education. This historiography discussed two sides of the textbook lobbying efforts of the late 19th- and early 20th centuries. The first, which is prevalent in general books on U.S. education history, analyzed southern groups' role in influencing the Southern textbook movement.

⁵ Ibid.

Historians argued that southern groups played a vital role in influencing this era's textbook and educational landscape.⁶ They also emphasized the connection between the Southern textbook movement and the increased of public-school attendance across the United States.⁷ During this era, the southern public-school movement's growth acted as a catalyst for the disdain towards northern textbooks. This northern school system that encouraged northern textbooks posed a threat to the southern way of life.⁸ Northern education thinkers such as Catherine Beecher and Horace Mann pushed the common school movement to "create a state-by-state effort to fund universal elementary education."⁹ The South allowed this northern common school movement to replace the previously private-school-dominated area, but they still found ways to assert influence primarily through textbooks.

The economic lens is another way historians have examined textbook history. Several historians have analyzed how economics shaped textbook publishing companies' roles, including how textbooks are received and then published. Further, these sources examined how the increase in public school attendance across the U.S. led to the establishment of textbook markets

⁶ Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the "Lost Cause": Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (1991): 507-33, accessed October 6, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582363>.; Sarah H. Case, "The historical ideology of Mildred Lewis Rutherford: a confederate historian's New South creed," *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (2002): 599+, accessed February 18, 2021. *Gale Academic OneFile*. https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/apps/doc/A90471647/AONE?u=calpolyw_cs&sid=AONE&xid=8382a8a3.; Alice Fahs and Joan Waughn eds, "Memory of the Civil War in American Culture," Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, accessed November 25, 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/calpoly/reader.action?docID=413216&ppg=63>. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁷ Robert I. Curtis, "Confederate Classical Textbooks: A Lost Cause?" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, no. 4 (1997): 433-57, accessed February 18, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30222300>.; Charles Eagles, "Textbooks: Their History, Role, and Importance," In *Civil Rights, Culture Wars: The Fight over a Mississippi Textbook*, 12-36. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017, accessed September 23, 2020. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469631165_eagles.4.

⁸ Mark Groen, "Teaching, learning, and emerging national identity in the Antebellum South," *American Educational History Journal* 40, no. 1-2 (2013): 21+, *Gale Academic OneFile*, accessed November 18, 2020. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A370031187/AONE?u=calpolyw_cs&sid=AONE&xid=01c12c39

⁹ Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars: a History of America's Most Embattled Profession* (New York City, NY: Anchor Books, 2015).

and their commodification.¹⁰ These sources illuminated how the desire to turn a profit on textbooks enabled lobbying to become an effective strategy because these publishing companies had to appease potential buyers.

Another part of the historiography analyzes Confederate societies' ability to perpetuate the "Lost Cause" ideology because they created a more positive image of the South during the Civil War with the South. It was an intellectual movement that sought to portray the South as heroic and correct in their actions during the Civil War. Confederate societies such as the UDC and UCV played pivotal roles in perpetuating the "Lost Cause" ideology and cultivating positivity towards southern Civil War veterans.¹¹ These Confederate societies sought to preserve southern ideals and the southern way of life.¹² Historians analyzed the tireless efforts to censor or uplift specific textbooks depending on what arguments they made. This historiography fits into the broader historiography of the "Lost Cause" and post-Civil War attempts to influence historical memory. Textbooks were just one of these Confederate societies' many strategies to control the Civil War's memory in previous generations.

This paper examines popular textbooks from both the North and the South, excerpts from the *Confederate Veteran*, well-known work by UDC historian Mildred Rutherford, and newspaper articles. This paper's focus centered around how northern and southern textbooks differed in their content on the Civil War. Literature from the UCV and UDC historical

¹⁰ Charles Eagles, "Textbooks: Their History, Role, and Importance," In *Civil Rights, Culture Wars: The Fight over a Mississippi Textbook*, 12-36. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017, accessed September 23, 2020. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469631165_eagles.4.

¹¹ Sarah H. Case, "The historical ideology of Mildred Lewis Rutherford: a confederate historian's New South creed," *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (2002): 599+, accessed February 18, 2021. *Gale Academic OneFile*. https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/apps/doc/A90471647/AONE?u=calpolyw_csu&sid=AONE&xid=8382a8a3.

¹² Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the "Lost Cause": Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (1991): 507-33, accessed October 6, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582363>.

commissions will provide insight into these textbooks' reactions, often splitting along northern and southern lines. Since textbooks between the 1890s-1920s were primarily written and published by northerners, the analysis will focus on the reactions against these textbooks and the measures taken to censor them. These textbooks also showed how the Civil War and the South's depictions changed from the 1890s to the 1920s. I selected this period because it reveals the rise and fall of Confederate societies to influence history textbooks. It also is the general timeframe used in the historiography, with one prominent author citing the dates as 1895-1912 and 1921-1926.¹³ The 1890s marked the beginning of concerns over textbooks for many southerners. By this point, most southern children entered public schooling, bringing these concerns to the forefront. Over the next two decades, the South's textbook campaign's success, with a short hiatus during World War I, was evident. The 1920s revealed a peak and then solidification of influence over textbooks. The changes over this period indicate how the UDC and UCV shifted the historical narrative and what historical topics the North was unwilling to compromise.

The end of these Confederate campaigns with an apparent success for these societies came by the end of the 1930s. However, beginning in the 1920s, it was evident that the South would face pushback from the northern and Black writers on the accuracies of these histories. One of the first examples of this was Bessie Louise Pierce's book *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States*. This second part of this book has a chapter titled "Attempts to Control Textbooks" which sought to analyze which propaganda agencies have looked to influence school textbooks. She asserted that the South has shown consistent tendencies of having propagandist influences on textbooks, with Confederate societies leading the charge. She said that these southern textbooks often serve slave-holding and sectional

¹³ Bessie Louise Pierce, 1926, *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States*. New York: A.A. Knopf, accessed November 16, 2020. [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b60535](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b60535). Hathi Trust.

interests. This book provides evidence of Confederate success by showing the extent of their influence in American schooling, while also calling into question how these problems can be addressed.

Another work that challenges the idea of propaganda history is W.E.B DuBois's "Propaganda of History", an essay in his book *Black Reconstruction in America*. In this essay, he analyzed several history textbooks written by white Americans to see what they taught American students. In his takeaway of these textbooks, he said:

"In other words, he would in all probability complete his education without any idea of the part which the black race has played in America; of the tremendous moral problem of abolition; of the cause and meaning of the Civil War and the relation which Reconstruction had to democratic government and the labor movement today."¹⁴

In this essay he describes United States history as "lies agreed upon" by all the white textbook writers, regardless of their regional origins.¹⁵ DuBois revealed the negative impacts of these textbook battles for Black schoolchildren. The majority of the prominent authors he cited are white northerners, and within these citations he called out writers who were blaming the problems of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Black Americans.¹⁶ One of the authors he referenced for a thesis statement was David Muzzey, an author who was a northern textbook writer and enemy of the Lost Cause crusade. This essay was an example of the long-term implications of what textbooks from this era discussed, and he called into question that accuracy of these white American history books and how they were all influenced by racist beliefs.

The textbook's historiography battles from 1890-1930 split between the social and economic conditions that led to the campaign's success. Some sources argued that these

¹⁴ W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction: an Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (Temecula, CA: Reprint Services Corp., 1935).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Confederate societies were vital in influencing the U.S. textbook system.¹⁷ In contrast, other sources say that the economic system that led to a textbook market caused textbooks to be vulnerable to outside influence.¹⁸ I agree with both of these analyses, but I aim to explore how social and economic forces were necessary for these textbook wars to exist in American education. I argue that Confederate societies like the UDC and UCV influenced individual books and historical memory and influenced the market that enabled textbooks to be vulnerable to outside lobbying campaigns. Their tireless campaigns, coupled with a Union seeking to heal its Civil War wounds, led to significant influence and subsequent changes within these books. They influenced individual books and the broader market by making textbook lobbying the norm that is still apparent today.

The Common Schools Take Over the South

Reconstruction revealed many differences between northern and southern systems, in an era of disagreement and suspicion between these two sections of the United States. Education was no exception. The South did not implement community-based schooling at the same rate the

¹⁷ Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the "Lost Cause": Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (1991): 507-33, accessed October 6, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582363>. Sarah H. Case, "The historical ideology of Mildred Lewis Rutherford: a confederate historian's New South creed," *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (2002): 599+, accessed February 18, 2021. *Gale Academic OneFile*. https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/apps/doc/A90471647/AONE?u=calpolyw_csu&sid=AONE&xid=8382a8a3 Alice Fahs and Joan Waughn eds, "Memory of the Civil War in American Culture," Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, accessed November 25, 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/calpoly/reader.action?docID=413216&ppg=63>. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁸ Michael W. Apple, "Textbook Publishing: The Political and Economic Influences." *Theory Into Practice* 28, no. 4 (1989): 282-87, accessed October 10, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476725>; Robert I. Curtis, "Confederate Classical Textbooks: A Lost Cause?" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, no. 4 (1997): 433-57, accessed February 18, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30222300>; Susan L. Schramm-Pate, "Disrupting the North/South binary: a deconstruction of two social studies textbooks portrayal of the reconstruction era in America (1861-1877)," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, vol. 22, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 139+, accessed February 18, 2021. *Gale Academic OneFile*, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A148369005/AONE?u=calpolyw_csu&sid=AONE&xid=e2fac8e5.

North did during the early 19th century.¹⁹ The field of education was at a crossroads over where to go next during this period. In the decades preceding the Civil War, common schools emerged as the primary school system throughout the North and West.²⁰ Common schools were a state-by-state movement to fund universal education for children and establish a state board of education to supervise these schools.²¹ It was the beginning of what is now considered K-12 public education. The years after the Civil War only solidified this trend further with increased westward migration and an influx of European immigration.²² The nation was growing and seeking a new opportunity, and these factors led to a significant spike in common school enrollment.

The growing enrollment in common schools throughout the 19th century led to a subsequent demand for textbooks.²³ Textbooks had consistently been the primary mode of education in the United States. Particularly in the early stages of common schooling, textbooks were vital for the majority female teaching population who received little education or support from their districts and male counterparts.²⁴ Often textbooks acted as a substitute for giving female teachers a proper education to teach their students.²⁵ This necessity for textbooks created a thriving market in the North. To southerners, it seemed that the North had control over all

¹⁹ Mark Groen, "Teaching, learning, and emerging national identity in the Antebellum South," *American Educational History Journal* 40, no. 1-2 (2013): 21+. *Gale Academic OneFile* Accessed November 18, 2020. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A370031187/AONE?u=calpolyw_csu&sid=AONE&xid=01c12c39.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars: a History of America's Most Embattled Profession* (New York City, NY: Anchor Books, 2015).

²² Charles Eagles, "Textbooks: Their History, Role, and Importance," In *Civil Rights, Culture Wars: The Fight over a Mississippi Textbook*, 12-36. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017, accessed September 23, 2020. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469631165_eagles.4.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars: a History of America's Most Embattled Profession* (New York City, NY: Anchor Books, 2015).

²⁵ Robin Lindley, "Textbooks and History Standards: A Historical Overview," History News Network, accessed February 18, 2021. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/130766>.

aspects of this education system. This apparent control raised a lot of suspicion in southerners about how the North might indoctrinate southern students against a so-called “southern way of life.”

Initial Objection

J.W. Morgan’s section of *DeBow’s Review* titled “Our School Books” portrays white southerners concerns over Northern influence in common schools. DeBow’s review was a popular southern magazine during the mid- to late-19th century.²⁶ He described how the North “exercised the utmost power in the furtherance of this system,” citing their motives as corrupting young southern children.²⁷ He conveyed how the northern textbook operates with a bias against the South, and only discussed them in the context of racist, sinful slaveowners.²⁸ The remainder of the article acted as a call to action for southerners to combat these narratives and start providing textbooks of their own. This 1860 article conveyed the growing frustration of southerners and how they felt northern textbooks disserved their histories. His tone throughout expressed frustration, concern, and disappointment over what southern students could be learning. His passion for southern historical memory is one that Confederate societies post-Civil War would also share. It is Confederate societies that responded to his call for textbooks that reflect more positively on the South.

The post-civil war brought a new dynamic to conflict over the common school movement. While the differences in ideology remained, there was an effort to bind a divided

²⁶ J.W. Morgan “Our School Books,” *Debow’s Review*, Vol 28, no.4, October 1860, accessed February 12, 2021. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moajrnl/acg1336.1-28.004/438>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

nation. Sectional differences, especially about Civil War history, became the topic of discussion in this textbook debate. Northern publishing companies' goal was to minimize sectional differences in textbooks to make strides towards greater unity.²⁹ With sectional concerns being the core difference, depictions of race and racism often fell through the cracks.³⁰

While this paper's focus will be on the textbook wars over sectional differences, it is important to emphasize what a battle over these issues meant for race at the time and even to this day. The reality is that a common theme in the textbooks of this time is negative portrayals of black people, the downplaying of the horrors of slavery, and a perpetuation of white supremacy.³¹ The white northerner and the white southerner's common ground was not to be over-concerned with how textbooks will discuss slavery and race. Jonathan Zimmerman described how there were two competing textbook struggles in the United States, one spearheaded by neo-Confederates and one by Black Americans.³² Ultimately, Confederate influence would permeate white classrooms throughout America leaving any chance of anti-racism in education behind for years to come.

²⁹Robin Lindley, "Textbooks and History Standards: A Historical Overview," History News Network, accessed February 18, 2021. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/130766>.

³⁰Robin Lindley, "Textbooks and History Standards: A Historical Overview," History News Network, accessed February 18, 2021. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/130766>.; Anne Marie Brosnan, "Representations of Race and Racism in the Textbooks Used in Southern Black Schools during the American Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1861–1876," *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 52, no. 6, 2016. doi:10.1080/00309230.2016.1223703.

³¹Anne Marie Brosnan, "Representations of Race and Racism in the Textbooks Used in Southern Black Schools during the American Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1861–1876," *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 52, no. 6, 2016. doi:10.1080/00309230.2016.1223703.

³²Zimmerman, Jonathan. *Whose America?: Culture Wars in the Public Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

The Lost Cause Mission

This effort to bind the nation did not mean there was no conflict. The Lost Cause ideology exacerbated sectional differences between the North and South. Following the Civil War, the South began to search for a justification for this conflict. In the face of defeat, southerners sought to create a heroic narrative about their war efforts. The Lost Cause created a chivalrous story of southerners trying to protect their way of life against the North, who supposedly attempted to push their supposedly inferior life practices upon the South.³³ The Lost Cause ideology was apparent in all parts of southern life. Several primary sources preceding the war indicated a southern intention to fight to maintain the institution of slavery, namely Confederate Vice-President Alexander Stephens's "Cornerstone Speech."³⁴ However, following the Civil War, a shift occurred in the South where the war's cause became state's rights. This vision of history tweaked multiple historical narratives of the Civil War in inaccurate and potentially harmful ways.³⁵

The post-Civil War era, particularly starting in the 1890s, saw a formation of Confederate societies such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the United Confederate Veterans (UCV). The United Daughters of the Confederacy was founded on September 10, 1894 by Mrs. Caroline Meriwether Goodlett of Tennessee as the founder.³⁶ The UDC is described as an outgrowth of many women's circles that helped the Confederate effort during the Civil War.³⁷

³³ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ Press, 2000).

³⁴ Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech," American Battlefield Trust, July 11, 2020, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/cornerstone-speech>.

³⁵ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ Press, 2000).

³⁶ "History of the UDC," United Daughters of the Confederacy, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://hqudc.org/history-of-the-united-daughters-of-the-confederacy/>.

³⁷ Ibid.

One of their goals was to “To collect and preserve the material for a truthful history of the War Between the States.”³⁸ This led them to be engaged in a lot of historical activism through several means. The UCV was founded on June 10, 1889 and had a very similar mission to the UDC. During this period of Reconstruction, the two organization would work closely together to fulfill the aforementioned goal of the UDC.³⁹

These neo-Confederate societies found great opportunity in this period to instigate the changes they saw fit. Republican leaders were worn down from southern pressure and eventually became complacent to the fraud and violence occurring around Southern elections and voting rights for Black citizens.⁴⁰ With decreased political interference from the North and a diminishing memory of the war, neo-Confederate societies quickly implemented southern ideas.⁴¹

Influencing the historical narrative, especially as it pertained to Civil War history, was of utmost importance to Confederate societies. A significant amount of emphasis was placed on teaching the Lost Cause version of the Civil War to Southerners’ next generation.⁴² With common schools popping up throughout the South and a more significant population of southerners getting educated from a common curriculum, it was clear that this would become an

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ Sarah H. Case, “The historical ideology of Mildred Lewis Rutherford: a confederate historian’s New South creed,” *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (2002): 599+, accessed February 18, 2021. *Gale Academic OneFile*. https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/apps/doc/A90471647/AONE?u=calpolyw_csu&sid=AONE&xid=8382a8a3.

⁴¹ James W. Loewen and Sebesta, Edward H., eds, “Confederate and Neo-Confederate Reader: The “Great Truth” about the “Lost Cause,” Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010, accessed February 3, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴² Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh eds, *Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, accessed November 25, 2020.

easy way to influence this generation.⁴³ In particular, the United Daughters of the Confederacy became involved in the southern educational sphere. Southerners used education as a tool to justify their economic and social systems.⁴⁴ The southern textbook movement was fueled and funded by rich, white southerners that had vested interest in perpetuating a positive Southern narrative.

The most active UDC member who influenced southern textbooks and broader education was Mildred Rutherford. Mildred Rutherford was an educator, author, and amateur historian who had a vested interest in protecting the Confederacy's legacy. She was a member of Georgia's United Daughters of the Confederacy for the majority of her life. She was historian general for the UDC from 1911-1916 but was active in her textbook crusade until her death in 1928.⁴⁵ Another critical part of Rutherford's identity was her socioeconomic class. Rutherford was born in 1851 and grew up in the southern patrician class. She was born in the antebellum South, so she had experienced slavery, the Civil War, and the subsequent aftermath. Her upbringing led to a vested interest in maintaining a positive history of the South. She had a mission to uphold the aristocratic southern class.⁴⁶ A critical analysis of the planter class by northern textbook writers threatened their ability to preserve the patrician class of the late 19th/early 20th centuries.⁴⁷ Both of these identities were pivotal to understanding her dedication to fostering a positive southern textbook curriculum. Some of her notable works related to textbooks include *A Measuring Rod*

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Robert I. Curtis, "Confederate Classical Textbooks: A Lost Cause?" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, no. 4 (1997): 433-57, accessed February 18, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30222300>.

⁴⁵ Zimmerman, Jonathan. *Whose America?: Culture Wars in the Public Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

⁴⁶ Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the 'Lost Cause': Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (1991): 507-33, accessed October 6, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582363>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges, Libraries, Truths of History, and Four Addresses by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford.

Mildred Rutherford was one of the most prominent members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Like many other Confederate societies, the United Daughters of the Confederacy wanted to uphold a positive image of Southern soldiers. These goals extended beyond historical memory, however, and the UDC also became very politically involved.⁴⁸ Mildred Rutherford is an excellent example of how someone can use a society like the UDC for a political agenda. For Rutherford, she planned to push a “historical truth.”⁴⁹ In 1890 there is a big transition of southern students who attended common schools rather than just private schools.⁵⁰ This transition to public schooling led the South to depend on their Northern counterparts, who had started the Common School Movement in the 1840s.⁵¹ One of these dependencies was with Northern textbooks. Mildred Rutherford says Northern portrayals of the South and the Civil War to be unjust and untrue, which led her to publish this textbook guide in 1920.⁵² This book intended to reach textbook writers, school administrators, and librarians to develop what she perceived as accurate lesson plans about the South and the Confederacy.

Perhaps her most influential book was *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books*, published in Athens, Georgia in 1919. It is a series of suggestions on how to write a textbook that fairly

⁴⁸ Sarah H. Case, "The historical ideology of Mildred Lewis Rutherford: a confederate historian's New South creed," *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (2002): 599+, *Gale Academic OneFile* accessed September 22, 2020.

https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/apps/doc/A90471647/AONE?u=calpolyw_csu&sid=AONE&xid=8382a8a3.

⁴⁹ Fred Arthur Bailey, "Mildred Lewis Rutherford and the Patrician Cult of the Old South," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (1994): 509-35, accessed September 22, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40583086>.

⁵⁰ Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Mildred D. Rutherford, *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries*, Athens, Georgia, 1919. accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t1pg2229x>. Hathi Trust.

portrays the Confederacy and the South. The primary goal of this book was to impact the historical memory of the Confederacy. The United Daughters of the Confederacy ensured that the North didn't taint the historical memory of the South. This book compiles a list of what Mildred Rutherford considered Confederate truths that Northern textbooks did not implement. These topics included that secession was not a rebellion; the North started and maintained the Civil War; the Civil War was not about the matter of slaves, etc.⁵³ In her foreword to the book, Rutherford described how it is her duty as a Historian General of the UDC that she challenges the historical status quo of the North.⁵⁴ She argued that publishers should reject a textbook not on the grounds of personal historical opinion but rather because of incorrect portrayals of the events listed in her index.⁵⁵ Therefore, this book's main point is that it is time for Southern historians to rise and challenge what they see as historical inaccuracies and omissions. This new mission reveals a turning point in a Southern view towards education. Mildred Rutherford insisted that it is now the time to have tools to impact their student's educational experiences and not let the Northern Common School Movement win the day.

This book has great relevance to my research question. In part, this question asked to what extent outside groups like the UDC have sway in educational standards and principles. Rutherford used this textbook guide to show how her curriculum ideas have the historical evidence to become textbook standards. This book encapsulated the Lost Cause mythology and backed it up with evidence selected to reinforce her points. Her arguments initially seem backed up by evidence, but further research into each of her points reveals handpicked quotes to support

⁵³ Mildred D. Rutherford, *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries*, Athens, Georgia, 1919. accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t1pg2229x>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

her argument and claimed that just these quotes gave her ideas full authority.⁵⁶ An excellent example of her cherry-picking quotation strategy comes from two sections by Charles Beecher regarding the topic “The Republican Party that Elected Abraham Lincoln Was Not Friendly to the South.” Charles Beecher was the brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. His relation to the abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe is meant to illustrate that even anti-slavery figures had potential concerns with the Republican party. Rutherford’s desire to emphasize this sibling connection is evident with her calling him Charles Beecher Stowe, despite Stowe being the surname of Harriet’s husband Calvin Ellis Stowe.⁵⁷ In the first quote, he described how the Republican Party was “avowedly hostile to the institution of slavery.”⁵⁸ To contradict this first statement, Rutherford took a passage where he described how the anti-slavery vote would be a “danger” and “a menace” and that about the start of the Civil War the South, “certainly had on their side the Constitution and the laws of the land.”⁵⁹ Within these two quotes, Charles Beecher Stowe contradicted himself, but this is undeterminable without the greater context of his additional statements.

The Sons of the Confederate Veterans put together the committee that also approved this book.⁶⁰ This committee gave the book even more legitimacy, as she can claim that publishers read and analyzed the book before Rutherford submitted it to publishing. Her arguments provided enough evidence at face value, and most importantly, they were accessible. The UDC used these strategies to show why their standards were most favorable to the South and were “fair”.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 13.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 13.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 3.

At less than 30 pages, this book is concise and straightforward. Its clarity makes it an ideal tool to address the accuracy of textbooks in the South. Her flawed historical methodology is inconsequential to the school administrators who implemented this curriculum in the South. Tools like this enabled this trend of pro-Confederate textbooks to continue into the 20th century. In 1904, Mrs. W.C.H proclaimed that because of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, every state of the Confederacy implemented a “sound history.”⁶¹ The textbook guide of the 1920s maintained what the United Daughters of the Confederacy had already succeeded in doing. By the 1920s, the UDC held their power in the educational sphere and used books to make their ideas a written standard.

A Tale of Two Kinds of Textbook

In 1890 the transition of southern students who attended common schools rather than just private schools solidified.⁶² This transition to public schooling led the South to depend on their Northern counterparts, who had started the Common School Movement in the 1840s.⁶³ One of these dependencies was with Northern textbooks. However, many Confederate societies argued northern portrayals of the South and the Civil War to be unjust and untrue.⁶⁴ Concerns of misrepresentation led to many pushing southern historians to publish southern-friendly histories. Thus, the battle between northern and southern textbooks began. The foundation of this battle came from differences in how to portray this era of history. Topics that the North and South

⁶¹ Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the "Lost Cause": Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (1991): 507-33, accessed October 22, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582363>.

⁶² Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Four Addresses by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford*. Washington DC., The Mildred Rutherford historical circle, 1916, accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t8jd55547>. Hathi Trust.

disagreed on included how to represent President Lincoln, the cause of the Civil War, and discussions of slavery. An author's direction on any of these topics could indicate whether it was a northern or Lost Cause textbook.

Textbooks by northern authors dominated the market and schools throughout the United States. These typically had many similarities between them from decade to decade, but slight changes are evident in these books over time. During the late-19th and early 20th centuries, there are three prominent authors who wrote textbooks that would be used for decades to come. These include John Bach McMaster, David Muzzey, and Henry Elson.

John Bach McMaster's textbook was one of the first examples of a widely distributed and used textbook, reaching great popularity in the early 20th century. It was published in 1897 by the University of Pennsylvania making it an example of a northern textbook. Regarding the Civil War, McMaster argues that the South seceded because they saw Abraham Lincoln's election as a threat to slavery. He uses quotes from Jefferson Davis, Howell Cobb, and Alexander Stephens that cite slavery as the reason for secession to prove this. The quote by Jefferson Davis says:

"Your votes refuse to recognize our domestic institutions [slavery], which preexisted the formation of the Union, our property [slaves], which was guaranteed by the Constitution. You refuse us that equality without which we should be degraded if we remained in the Union. You elect a candidate upon the basis of sectional hostility; one who in his speeches, now thrown broadcast over the country, made a distinct declaration of war upon our institutions."⁶⁵

The Vice President of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens, also said that Personal Liberty laws to counteract Fugitive Slave Laws "constitute the only cause, in my opinion, which can justify

⁶⁵ John Bach McMaster, "A School History of the United States," Gutenberg, March 6, 2021, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11313/pg11313.html>.

secession."⁶⁶ McMaster concludes “the South seceded, then, according to its own statements, because the people believed that the election of Lincoln meant the abolition of slavery.”⁶⁷

Southern Confederate societies rejected this book as it broke one of their most essential textbook rules: McMaster said that the Civil War was over slavery. This book provided one of the first examples of how the North challenged a southern understanding of the war. According to Mildred Rutherford’s *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books* this section on the causes of secession in McMaster’s book was enough for it to be rejected. His book broke one of Rutherford’s main rules: “reject a book that says the South fought to hold her slaves.”⁶⁸

History of the United States of America was a United States history book written by northerner Henry Elson. Elson was a northern textbook writer and history professor who wrote several schoolbooks. E.L. Kellogg and Co. In his preface, he makes a point of mentioning that he tried to treat the Civil War with “the utmost care.”⁶⁹ He said that he has refrained from using terms such as “rebel” and “traitor” to describe the South.⁷⁰ Elson recognized that his book may still contain bias but has tried his best to avoid it. Despite this, his book is met with backlash by southerners which revealed a prejudice against northern textbook writers in the South. In an article in the “Confederate Veteran”, UCV members took turns expressing grievances towards Elson’s textbook. They referenced a public statement from the UDC regarding the implementation of Elson’s textbook at Roanoke College that said:

“Considering these facts, it seems to us, looking at it from the standpoint of the ordinary citizen and the man in the street, that Roanoke College should repudiate and condemn the

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Mildred D. Rutherford, *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries*, Athens, Georgia, 1919. accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t1pg2229x>.

⁶⁹ Henry Elson, *History of the United States of America*. London: Macmillian Company, 1906, accessed November 16, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044010392942>. Hathi Trust.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Elson history as emphatically and thoroughly as possible. For our part, we would like to see a fire kindled on the campus and every copy of the book formally and carefully committed to the flames, with the full and unanimous approval of ' the faculty.'"⁷¹

Unlike other authors, he tried to make concessions in his writing revealing the very real threat these writers and publishers saw these “Lost Cause” attacks. For many authors and publishers, compromise would be necessary to have any chance of making textbook revenue in the South. However, these Confederate societies made it evident from this quote that they were committed to expelling any northern textbooks they deemed unfit for their schools, and that northern writers and publishers would have to play by their rules.

An American History by David Muzzey was another popular textbook for its time published by Ginn and Company. In fact, this book was a bestseller well into the 1950s, and nearly every schoolchild in the United States was assigned his book at some point.⁷² The same company that published many other northern history textbooks during this period. In the editorial preface, James Harvey Robinson described how Muzzey has done something many refuse to do, which was to write the histories of the Civil War and Reconstruction.⁷³ The editor said that his recent historical era’s treatment is an admirable aspect of his specific textbook. This editorial preface was useful evidence of how much pressure surrounding textbook writers and publishers to discuss the Civil War and Reconstruction. Muzzey takes a fascinating approach in his textbook because he listed historical events and provided a brief description for each chapter.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Connor King, “Lost Cause Textbooks: Civil War Education in the South from the 1890s to the 1920s,” Master’s Thesis, University of Mississippi, 2018, accessed November 18, 2020. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/159487827.pdf>.

⁷³ David Saville Muzzey, *American History*. New York: Barnard College Columbia University, 1911, accessed November 19, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.14925530>. Hathi Trust.

One element of his textbook was that he maintained a positive image of Lincoln saying, “Lincoln was undeviatingly honest in thought, making his speech always the servant of reason.”⁷⁴ This created a positive image of Lincoln as an honest and faithful public servant. He also describes how Lincoln saw slavery as “a great moral, social, and political evil, and never hesitated to say so.”⁷⁵ He set Lincoln up as an emancipator of the slaves, which reinforces the role of slavery within the Civil War. According to Rutherford’s *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books*, this broke the rule that stated “reject a book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln and vilifies Jefferson Davis...” by praising Abraham Lincoln with little mention of Jefferson Davis’s contributions.⁷⁶

He was also critical of slavery and emphasized its role in starting the Civil War.⁷⁷ This broke her rule on the depictions of slavery that said to “reject a book that says the South fought to hold her slaves.”⁷⁸ He described slavery as a horrible institution throughout the book. Muzzey argued the reason for secession was slavery saying, “the only ‘right’ for which the South was contending in 1860 was the right to have the institution of slavery recognized and protected in all the territory of the United States.”⁷⁹ Muzzey also questioned the right of the South to secede. Rutherford said:

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 374.

⁷⁶ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Four Addresses by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford*. Washington DC., The Mildred Rutherford historical circle, 1916, accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t8jd55547>. Hathi Trust.

⁷⁷ David Saville Muzzey, *American History*. New York: Barnard College Columbia University, 1911, accessed November 19, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.14925530>. Hathi Trust

⁷⁸ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Four Addresses by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford*. Washington DC., The Mildred Rutherford historical circle, 1916, accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t8jd55547>. Hathi Trust.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 330.

“Reject a text-book that does not give the principle for which the South fought in 1861, and does not clearly outline the interferences with the rights guaranteed to the South by the Constitution, and which caused secession.”⁸⁰

Muzzey could have potentially broken this rule because he did not “clearly outline the interferences” at play for the South. Instead, he said:

“We may believe, as many men of the South do believe today, that the causes of the revolt of the Southern states in 1861 were not sufficient to justify secession and war; but the right to revolt, if the South thought it has just cause, is beyond argument.”⁸¹

This complicates the common “Lost Cause” argument that secession was legal and protected, given that no such protection is enumerated in the Constitution.⁸² This book was the most pivotal example of how northerners wrote the Civil War history that contradicted the southern perspective. Muzzey contradicted and undermined many “Lost Cause” ideas. His ideas of U.S. history were read by generations of American students on a wide scale, making him a prime example of why the South fought northern textbooks.

Lost Cause textbooks were a reactionary movement to concerns over how northern textbooks were writing about the South. They typically only took issue with the Civil War and the historical discussion that surrounded that topic. This led them to consist of topic-centered history books or regional histories, given that the concern wasn’t over the entire U.S. history curriculum. Lost Cause textbooks were also confined to the South. Many of these books were published by the South and were not distributed and used by the North. Overall, they failed to become a significant movement on their own.

⁸⁰ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Four Addresses by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford*. Washington DC., The Mildred Rutherford historical circle, 1916, accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t8jd55547>. Hathi Trust.

⁸¹ David Saville Muzzey, *American History*. New York: Barnard College Columbia University, 1911, accessed November 19, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.14925530>. Hathi Trust

⁸² Connor King, “Lost Cause Textbooks: Civil War Education in the South from the 1890s to the 1920s,” Master’s Thesis, University of Mississippi, 2018, accessed November 18, 2020. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/159487827.pdf>.

This lack of momentum does not mean these books didn't play a large role in confederate societies' mission to implement Lost Cause histories. On the contrary, these books provided an example that confederate societies could use to show what a "southern friendly" history looks like to publishers. It also made this Lost Cause movement appear more legitimate, with published books by southern historians. Susan Lee Pendleton was an example of a Lost Cause writer and her book *New School History of the United States* will act as an example of a history book that kindly portrays southern history for years to come.

This textbook's discussion on the different parts of the Civil War-era gave insight into the messages that many of these Lost Cause textbooks portrayed. Pendleton Lee opens her 1900 textbook by saying her book would provide an "unprejudiced and truthful history of the United States."⁸³ The chapter on the Civil War began with topics on secession and its legality. Pendleton Lee asserted:

"The Southern States had no desire for war, and no purpose of trespassing on the rights and liberties of other States; but they felt it their duty to vindicate their own, and they determined to reclaim the powers they had yielded to the Federal Government in ratifying the Constitution."⁸⁴

This reinforced Rutherford's rule for discussing secession by maintaining that it was an allegedly legal action, and that the South was left with no choice, but to secede. She contended that Southern states did not secede from the Union because of slavery, and instead the Union was the one to start the war due to their goal of preserving the Union.⁸⁵

On the topic of slavery, she followed the measuring rod guideline to not describe slaveowners as "cruel" or "unjust". She instead says that "the kindest relations existed between

⁸³ Susan Pendleton Lee, "New School History of the United States.," HathiTrust (B.F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1900), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t9959wt92>.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 253

⁸⁵ Ibid, 263.

slaves and their owners. A cruel and neglectful master or mistress was rarely found.”⁸⁶ She goes further to say that slavery was recognized by the Constitution and that the opinion that it was a moral wrong “did not prevail before the days of Garrison and his followers, who pronounced it to be the ‘sum of all iniquity.’”⁸⁷ Additionally, in her book she does not glorify Lincoln and vilify Jefferson Davis which followed another measuring rod guideline. Instead, she gave both an equal amount of space in her textbook with a one-page biography for each of these leaders.⁸⁸ These arguments align with many of the Measuring Rod standards that the United Daughters of the Confederacy encouraged.

The late 19th century and early 20th century saw a significant uptick in popular textbooks. With this increase in available books also came a movement to set more standards. Prominent historians wrote textbooks and provided textbook guides to ensure teachers are advocates for a proper textbook. Additionally, these guides were also in place because they the teacher suggestions on how to teach a lesson. Two guides to preface this analysis between northern and southern textbooks included Henry Elson’s *How to Teach History, A Manual of Suggestions for the Teacher*, and Mildred Rutherford’s *Truths of History*.

Elson opened his 1901 guide by arguing that his book is only meant to provide suggestions to teachers, and not revolutionize how history is taught.⁸⁹ Recommendations included making history lessons teacher-led through storytelling and not utilizing textbooks.⁹⁰ He argued that students should learn the many stories and perspectives of history and implies that

⁸⁶ Ibid, 262.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 262.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 252-255.

⁸⁹ Henry Elson, “How to Teach History: A Manual of Suggestions for the Teacher ,” Google Books (E.L. Kellogg and Co., 1901), https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Henry_William_Elson_How_to_Teach_History?id=V-WfAAAAMAAJ.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

textbooks inhibit this process. This argument was relevant because it shows how by 1901, there was already a realization that standard textbooks hold their own biases. The basis of his suggestions has a common thread of putting the power in the teacher's hands. He emphasized the role of the teacher and their ability to come up with engaging and informative lessons.

This guide also highlighted the importance of student/teacher discussion. In his "Miscellany" chapter, Elson encouraged teachers to ask questions that required critical thought or research. Some questions that challenge the Lost Cause educational standards include:

1. "Why did the Northern States emancipate their slaves soon after the Revolution, while the Southern States retained theirs?"⁹¹
2. "Which is more important, Liberty or Union?"⁹²
3. "...how does a federal differ from a Confederate government."⁹³

These questions sparked discussion about the Civil War and lead students to critically think about what history truly means. This suggestion would likely be considered a threat by Confederate societies who were trying to control the curriculum. These questions may highlight faults in southern practices and governments, making it a threat to maintaining the Lost Cause. This teachers guide is showing a shift to uplift teachers in a time where more and more female teachers were entering Normal (Teaching) Schools to gain an adequate education while fighting for their rights for equal pay and education.⁹⁴ Professionalizing the teaching profession was at the forefront of teacher activism, so placing more responsibility on the teacher was timely.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Ibid, 39.

⁹² Ibid, 39.

⁹³ Ibid, 39.

⁹⁴ Chara Haeussler Bohan and J. Wesley Null, Gender and the Evolution of Normal School Education: A Historical Analysis of Teacher Education Institutions," *Educational Foundations*, 2017, accessed February 19, 2021.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ831197.pdf>

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Mildred Rutherford's guide *Truths of History* differed greatly on the role of textbooks and teachers in the classroom. This is a historical guidebook created to give the South the credit she believes it deserves in the making of the United States. To achieve this, she gathered a series of statements by several prominent people hoping that history teachers will use this in conjunction with their textbooks to ensure full accountability.⁹⁶ These statements acted as an authority for rebuttal against several claims that she believed are unfair to the South but are apparent in textbooks. Rutherford emphasized the role of the teacher in the classroom. However, it is not for freedom in lesson planning and facilitating discussions on complex issues like Elson suggests. In her introduction, Rutherford requested that teachers remain vigilant about the textbooks they bring into the classroom and that the books do not speak poorly of the South.⁹⁷ The goal of this guide is to tell teachers what topics should be taught, rather than how they should teach them.

This guide attempted to make historical arguments based on out of context quotes. Each argument is based on these quotes making it a weak argument. However, as a teacher's guide, it is once again accessible and legitimate at first glance. This is the same strategy she used when cherry-picking quotes for her book, *A Measuring Rod to Test Textbooks, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries*. In *Truths of History*, she referenced David Muzzey who wrote *An American History*.⁹⁸ She takes his quote, "Lincoln had no idea of forcing the South to give a single slave political rights," to justify the argument that Lincoln wanted to not give slaves full

⁹⁶ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Truths of History*, Athens, Georgia, 1920, accessed November 11, 2020. <https://archive.org/details/truthshistory00ruthrich>. Hathi Trust.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 8. In Rutherford's opinion, speaking down to or poorly of the South was rampant throughout Northern textbooks. Examples of unjust textbooks topics against the South include that the South started the Civil War, that the war was fought over slavery, or that Abraham Lincoln deserves to have a greater place in history than Jefferson Davis. She elaborates on even more topics, but the common themes are that the South's history is being erased in textbooks and that an incorrect version of the Civil War is being portrayed.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 73.

rights when they were free.⁹⁹ Before this quote, the context includes Muzzey who discussed that there was no way to ensure the right to vote for Black Americans, “or the stability and peace of Southern states.”¹⁰⁰ Muzzey goes on to say that Lincoln might have been convinced to provide suffrage to Black Americans, but that the South provided significant push back to any foreseeable Reconstruction policies. This context changed the meaning of the quote for Rutherford’s argument and makes it faulty. This is one example in a plethora of other sections that may also be taken out of context in a way that creates an inaccurate lesson.

Significant Backlash

The publishing and implementation of northern textbooks was not met with grace by the South, and neither were “Lost Cause” textbooks in the North. However, the reality of the publishing sphere was that it was dominated by the North.¹⁰¹ By the 20th century, five publishing companies had created a complete monopoly in the industry.¹⁰² All of these companies were northern based and made a significant chunk of their revenue off of the respective textbook industry.¹⁰³ These circumstances created considerable hostility against northern writers and these northern publishing companies from the southerners.

These publishing companies also facilitated conditions where they were extremely susceptible to lobbying. By commodifying textbooks and depending on them for a significant portion of profits, publishers made themselves vulnerable to numerous lobbying efforts.¹⁰⁴ This is because the highest priority is that the textbook gets sold, and these publishers are under

⁹⁹ Ibid, 73.

¹⁰⁰ David Saville Muzzey, *American History*. New York: Barnard College Columbia University, 1911, accessed November 19, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.14925530>. Hathi Trust, 387.

¹⁰¹ Donald Sheehan, *This Was Publishing: a Chronicle of the Book Trade in the Gilded Age*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1952.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Apple, Michael W. “Textbook Publishing: The Political and Economic Influences.” *Theory into Practice* 28, no. 4 (1989): 282-87. Accessed October 10, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476725>.

significant pressure to do so. In a 1923 New York Times interview, these realities are made clear. In this article, reporter John Rosser emphasized how the capitalist concept of competitions runs rampant in the textbook industry.¹⁰⁵ He described how the method of textbook banning and expulsion was significant and could stem from “some picture or assertion presented in utter innocence by the author and publisher.”¹⁰⁶ One, that may offend or upset another consumer. In the case of the “Lost Cause” textbook crusade this included an entire region of the United States operated together. This is especially troublesome when the southern and southwestern region of the United States were able to choose their own textbooks. They had an autonomy for buying textbooks that the North, who gets theirs chosen by the Board of Education, does not.¹⁰⁷

Confederate societies were instrumental in drumming up this sense of public hostility. Mildred Rutherford was a significant figure in this undertaking, but she was one of many UDC and UCV members who were making efforts to change the textbook narrative. However, it was her *Four Addresses* that initially called out these textbook companies. In her speech, Mildred Rutherford showed great disdain for the Book Trust that controls Southern Boards of Education.¹⁰⁸ She explained how Northern textbooks publish most history textbooks, many that get used in Southern classrooms.¹⁰⁹ Her first address acted as a call to action for the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the rest of the South, to become more involved in education. This speech would provide a framework that others would use to dictate a threat to southern historical memory.

¹⁰⁵ John E Rosser, “Adventures of the Schoolbook Salesman; Civic Virtue and the Empty Order Book (Published 1923),” The New York Times, November 4, 1923, <https://nyti.ms/1Hs2ujB>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Four Addresses by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford*, Washington DC.. The Mildred Rutherford historical circle, 1916, accessed October 12, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t8jd55547>. Hathi Trust.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

These societies quickly realized the power that lies in the education sphere and how easily they could influence the curriculum in public schooling. Simultaneously with the emergence of common/public schooling in the South in the 1890s, committees popped up. The United Confederate Veterans created the Historical Committee where they analyzed how southern school histories could improve. This committee was formed in the early 1890s and was vigilant in the years to come about addressing issues in the education world.¹¹⁰ Each year they created a report to state their positions on historical events and gave their take about northern shortcomings in writing histories of the South.¹¹¹

Further reports conveyed frustration from the UCV that went beyond general concerns. In this statement from the United Confederate Veterans Historical Committee, there was grievance from the UCV that their “truth” of history is not portrayed. The UCV Historical Committee even called it an “invasion” of their homes, schools, libraries, bookstores, and newsstands with so-called unfair depictions of the Civil War.¹¹² They described how in 1894, they called out partisan school histories, where textbooks are chiefly to blame.¹¹³ A report in 1895 goes further and asserted that until the Civil War’s history is divested of interest and prejudice in the North, southerners should not adopt their textbooks.¹¹⁴

As Americans entered the 20th century, Confederate societies began taking action. The standards of what they hoped to see in a “southern friendly” textbook were established and they were ready to implement it nationwide. There were varied approaches to this, but all tie back to influencing the publishing monopoly of the time.

¹¹⁰ “Report of the Historical Committee.” *The Confederate Veteran* III (June 1895): 163-173.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² “From Report of the Committee on History.” *The Confederate Veteran* VI (October 1898): 476-478.

<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=confedvet>

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The first course of action was barring certain textbooks from the classroom. Using the southern standards, such as Rutherford's measuring rod, there was an effort to ban the use of books that don't meet these standards throughout the South. This happened throughout several states on a consistent basis, making revenues of northern textbooks continue to shrink. For example, the New York Times published a piece on how textbooks were thrown out in Richmond, Virginia by the UCV's historical committee.¹¹⁵ The same committee who wrote the reports every year on textbook standards. This article documented an example of Confederate societies intervening in schools to ensure that textbooks were up to their standards. They deemed the textbooks thrown out were unfair.¹¹⁶ There was a resolution by the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction that declared against the implementation of these books.¹¹⁷ This revealed a growing connection between UCV/UDC and public interest. The ability for Confederate societies to resonate with the public against northern textbooks and publishers proved to be an effective coalition. One that hurts an entire industry by expelling all of their books.

Another example, at Roanoke College in Virginia, featured a professor who was ostracized by the public for implementing Henry Elson's *History of the United States of America* in their class. The college faculty put forth a statement about the incident and recognized how it went against southern public interest.¹¹⁸ They also described how the professor who chose the book for the college defended the alleged historical errors from Elson. The professor who selected Elson's book was condemned, revealing how passionate people were regarding textbook accuracy in the classroom. Further, it shows more considerable public sentiment about these

¹¹⁵ "School Histories Condemned.," Textbooks Thrown Out at Richmond for Unfairness to the South. (Published 1899)," The New York Times, June 6, 1899, <https://nyti.ms/1PO1QMK>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ "Faculty of Roanoke College Makes a Statement." The Confederate Veteran XIX (May 1911): 194-196. <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=confedvet>.

textbook wars and how Northerners' textbooks were seen as a threat to preserving truthful southern history. This event made it clear that it would be problematic for teachers to choose one of these northern books and that it may be in their interest to choose others approved by Confederate societies. In one report from the UDC they described their successes by that point:

“From a careful examination of their reports and their lists of text books, she gathers that the United Daughters of the Confederacy in all of the States formerly under the Confederate States' Government have done excellent work in having histories which are just to the South, placed in their public schools; some of them have extended their work to colleges and private schools. In several States she found good results from similar work done by Sons of Confederate Veterans.¹¹⁹

By this 1917 Convention, it was evident that the UDC had succeeded in their task. They had gotten state and local southern governments to comply with their standards and implement books that met their recommendation standards. The key to a successful movement was to get state Boards of Education to purchase the necessary Lost Cause textbook to ensure a uniform curriculum that positively reflected the Confederacy. With entire states backing their mission, they had the ability to place an extraordinary amount of pressure on textbook publishing companies to either get on board or lose significant business. This success was a sweeping example of how a propagandist history can infiltrate public schools throughout an entire region in a long-lasting way.

The lengths to change history textbook received respective backlash from the North. Northern newspapers began to speak up on the issues with southern influence. In particular, they expressed frustration with their demands and the distortion of historical facts. In an 1895 New York Times article, the author highlights a new United States history textbook written by three

¹¹⁹ Esther Carlotta, Cornelia Branch Stone, and Nelly C. Preston, “Report of Committee on Endorsement of Books,” Minutes of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Chatanooga, TN), Nov. 14-17.

southern writers who are writing a fair to the South history for southern schools.¹²⁰ The New York Times was quick to argue that these concerns over sectionalism in textbooks are not a significant problem.¹²¹ The article discussed that book is written specifically to provide justice to the South and highlighted how the textbook's primary focus is on the Civil War, with a minimal mention of the institution of slavery.¹²² The argument emphasized that their fight is unneeded and frankly unnecessary, and that this limited history is not sufficient either.

The attempts to control the historical narrative were also evident in Bessie Louise Pierce's book, *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States*. This book was published in 1926, only a few years after Confederate societies had reached their peak of exerting influence.¹²³ This second part of this book has a chapter titled "Attempts to Control Textbooks" which sought to analyze which propaganda agencies have looked to influence school textbooks. She asserted that the South has shown consistent tendencies of having propagandist influences on textbooks. She said that these southern textbooks, "to propagate a history favorable to slave-holding interests often serve slave-holding and sectional interests."¹²⁴ She cited DeBow's Review of 1855 to express these concerns.¹²⁵ She argues that the most active groups in this textbook battle are Confederate societies such as the United Confederate Veterans and their historical committees.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ "From the Southern Point of View.; *History of Our Country. A Textbook for Schools*. By Oscar H. Cooper, Henry F. Estill, and Leonard Lemmon. 16mo. Illustrated. Boston: Ginn & Co. (Published, 1895)." The New York Times, October 5, 1895. <https://nyti.ms/1LATmJp>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Bessie Louise Pierce, 1926, *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States*. New York: A.A. Knopf, accessed November 16, 2020. [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b60535](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b60535). Hathi Trust.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 136.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 137.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 148.

Pierce also touched on the revival of propagandist histories post-World War 1, primarily due to Rutherford's *Truths of History*. She described how these propagandist histories were "unanimously received" by the public, and how this "ultra-southern history" caused protest in the North.¹²⁷ There was a general fear that history was becoming a medium of propaganda, and these actions from Confederate societies only generated greater concern about this notion. An increase in historical falsehoods was becoming the norm from a northern perspective and it was understandably leading to significant concerns that were highlighted throughout Pierce's chapter. Public opinion of the North about these endeavors was overwhelmingly negative, with great concerns of how this would impact historical study and the nation as a whole.

How the Historical Narrative Can Change

Ultimately, Confederate societies were successful in their endeavor to change the historical narrative. Several historians argued that Confederate societies were able to change the curriculum throughout the United States. Notable changes include portrayals of the South becoming more positive and slavery became a less mentioned topic.¹²⁸ These successes were enabled by a vulnerable textbook industry. By commodifying textbooks and relying on them to make a profit, the economic side of textbooks led to a watering down historical narratives to make them appealing for the whole country. It was essential for them to listen to their customers, especially when these customers comprise an entire region of the United States and have the freedom to pick textbooks to their liking.

The 1890s saw an emergence in Confederate societies ready to safeguard southern memory. In a field that is meant to be guided by evidence, there was a movement to change the

¹²⁷ Ibid, 156.

¹²⁸ Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh eds, *Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, accessed November 25, 2020.

Civil War narrative. This continued well into the Jim Crow era into the 1920s. While this textbook crusade centered around preserving historical memory, it is clear that the education perpetuated in these textbooks justified future policies. Confederate standards included downplaying slavery, justifying secession, negatively portraying Abraham Lincoln, and that the South was honorable in their actions during the Civil War. All of these topics are rooted in preserving southern memory but also in upholding white supremacy.

In the present-day, the impacts of these societies are still evident. While “Lost Cause” ideas may have left American textbooks, the white supremacy and erasure of so many histories remained prevalent for years to follow.¹²⁹ It is still something that is being addressed in textbooks today. For example, in a New York Times analysis, Dana Goldstein compared eight textbooks from California and Texas to see how they differed.¹³⁰ The fascinating quality that all of these books share is that they all share the same publisher.¹³¹ Despite this similarity, Goldstein found hundreds of differences between the textbooks and discovered ways that states could push out an individualized historical narrative. While discussions on the Civil War and Reconstruction are less divided in present-day textbooks, Goldstein found discrepancies on present-day political issues such as immigration to vary significantly.

Goldstein found one example in a California and Texas McGraw Hill textbook. In California’s textbook, an excerpt from the novel “How the García Girls Lost Their Accents”

¹²⁹ W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction: an Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (Temecula, CA: Reprint Services Corp., 1935). His essay “Propaganda of History” is a work that exemplifies how white supremacy manifested in textbooks and how both northern and southern writers were both guilty of perpetuating these incomplete histories.

¹³⁰ Goldstein, Dana, “Two States. Eight Textbooks. Two American Stories.” *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, January 12, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/01/12/us/texas-vs-california-history-textbooks.html>.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

receives an entire page. California was also more likely to indicate whether a historical figure was an immigrant. In Texas textbooks, the author conveys a border control agent's story and his warnings against undocumented immigration. These are two states who represented different sides of the American political spectrum, and these differences revealed how politics are ever-present in textbook development. These differences are becoming harder to spot. They inhabit the pictures, side notes, and additional readings. However, it does not make these different perspectives any less significant. Her study reveals how new political issues will divide and differentiate textbooks, making it an unrelenting struggle.

Further, issues of incomplete and fabricated histories existing in textbooks that Confederate societies influences left substantial gaps in American historical understanding. Reckoning with this has been a challenge and has led to pushback about what constitutes real history. This pushback can be evident in present-day legislation such as the 1776 Commission signed into law by former-President Donald Trump before he left office. This legislation and the support it received from many Americans reveals confusion and frustration about seemingly new and revisionist histories emerging as previously erased histories re-emerge. As interest groups can permeate history textbooks and education even today by working with publishers, the history of "Lost Cause" textbooks provides context for how it is done and how successful it can be.

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