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# The Mint Julep Consensus: An Analysis of Late 19th Century Southern and Northern Textbooks and Their Impact on the History Curriculum

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## The Mint Julep Consensus: An Analysis of Late 19th century Southern and Northern Textbooks and their Impact on the History Curriculum

The Lost Cause perspective found its home in mythical recollections of the Civil War and in Southern-style social studies textbooks. Created initially by former Confederate veterans almost immediately after the war, by the 1960s these all-white Southern textbooks had been dubbed “mint julep” editions. These books were written and marketed for a distinctly Southern readership in contrast to “integrated” versions sold in the North (Black, 1967a, p. 119; see also Black 1967b; Zimmerman, 2017, 2004, 2002, pp. 4, 127). Mint juleps, iced drinks primarily consisting of bourbon, sugar, water, and mint, have long been associated with the South. Their refreshing taste can take the sting out of the blistering hot and balmy pre-air conditioning weather in the region, and presumably the mint julep textbooks also helped to ease the pain of the Southern defeat in the Civil War. We utilize the term “mint julep” textbooks to refer to the entire genre of Southern style history textbooks published after the Civil War. However, the term was initially noted by Hillel Black (1967b) to refer to a euphemistic phrase used by one editor at a publishing house in the Civil Rights Era that produced two different versions of their textbooks: “all-white” books for the South, e.g. “mint juleps” and “integrated” books for the North. Black, a textbook industry editor himself, was familiar with publishing houses’ practices of creating distinctive editions for Northern and Southern markets (1967b, pp. 106-126).

As historian David Blight (2001) discussed in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Southerners utilized monuments to the Confederacy as a means to declare their “victory over Reconstruction” (p. 265); the Southern textbooks offered the South another victory over the invading North. As the Lost Cause became the “tonic against a fear of social change,” Southern historians, writers, and politicians worked to ensure the textbooks that children received reflected an “appropriate” view of Southern culture and history (Blight, 2001,

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p. 266; Moreau, 2004; Zinth, 2005; Cox, 2003). These views included depictions of slaves as content and happy, as well as the war being fought for states' rights (Springston, 2018). Pro-South advocates even counted the textbook lines to make sure authors had provided balanced perspectives; thus, Jefferson Davis should be mentioned as many times as Abraham Lincoln, and Robert E. Lee should be portrayed as often as Ulysses S. Grant (Cox, 2003; Rutherford, 1919). With the growth of public schooling in the South as a result of Reconstruction, a sectional textbook industry emerged and Southern educational leaders advocated for the adaptation of school materials that met the unique "circumstances of the South" (Moreau, 2004, p. 60). Thus, the mint julep textbook publishing industry was born.

The purpose of this study is to offer a detailed examination of the tension between mint julep and Northern textbooks and to trace their evolution towards a 20th century consensus. We did this by comparing how six textbooks—three Southern and three Northern—depicted three historical figures: John Brown, John Wilkes Booth, and Nathan Bedford Forrest. We employed mixed methods in making these comparisons. On the one hand, we used a narrative approach, aware that both Southern and Northern textbooks in the late-19th and early-20th century saw history as a means for moral instruction. We also used content analysis, measuring the ratio of words dedicated to these individuals relative to the overall chapters on the Civil War. The ratios, we presumed, would reflect the relative importance that Southerners and Northerners placed on individuals and events. Both the narrative and content methods led us to a clear conclusion: by the early 20th century, Northern textbooks had adopted mint julep Lost Cause narratives in an apparent attempt to appease Southern readers.

### **Textbook Selection**

We sought to balance Northern and Southern perspectives, and thus selected three textbooks from each region by prominent authors. The textbooks chosen for this study were products of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. The Gilded Age was a time period from the

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1870s through 1900 that was marked by rapid economic growth, massive immigration, as well as serious social problems such as abject poverty. Whereas the Progressive Era spanned the 1890s through the 1920s, it was characterized by social activism and reform. Paradoxically, the Progressive Era also marked the height of scientific racism and Jim Crow legislation. Many progressives at the time would have cited science as a justification for segregation (Woodward, 1951, p. 369).

We read several sources in secondary literature (Blight, 2001; Cox, 2003; Loewen, 1995; Moreau, 2004; Zimmerman, 2017, 2004, 2002) and then narrowed down the list to well-known authors, making sure to include diverse individuals and popular publications. For instance, Alexander Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederate States of America (CSA) and a Georgia native, authored one of the first mint julep textbooks. Stephens' *Compendium History of the United States* (1872) was published just seven years after the Civil War ended. Twenty years later, Southern authors still felt compelled to publish the Southern perspective of United States history; thus, we also examined Joseph Derry's *History of the Confederacy* (1895) and Susan Pendleton Lee's *A School History of the United States* (1895). Joseph Derry was a Confederate veteran, historian, poet, and professor at Wesleyan Female College in Macon, GA. Susan Pendleton Lee was an author and educator and the wife of Confederate Brigadier General Edwin Lee and daughter of Confederate General William Nelson Pendleton (Lee, 1895).

With the growth of public schooling in the South as a result of Reconstruction, a sectional textbook industry emerged due to the increasing readership of school age children. Thus, the mint julep textbook publishing industry blossomed. Rather than print their own books, however, most Southern states selected state adoption as the route to safeguard against Northern monopolies and Yankee perspectives. Today, the majority of the approximately 20 states with statewide textbook adoption policies are still located in the South (Association of American Publishers, 2015; Webb, 2016). Because authoring, printing, and distributing textbooks could be

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difficult and expensive, the Southern state textbook committees could control content by demanding changes to narratives, wording, and images, or by threatening to cancel book contracts, which could close down smaller publishing firms (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 63)

Not all Gilded Age and Progressive Era textbooks offered mint julep perspectives. Northern authors such as Thomas Wentworth Higginson's textbook, *Young Folks' History of the United States* (1875), provided a strong contrast to its mint julep counterparts. A native of Massachusetts who took command of the Union's first African American regiment, Higginson was a Harvard graduate and an ardent abolitionist (Moreau, 2004). As an African American author living and working in the South, Edward Austin Johnson offered an additional perspective to the 19th century textbook. Johnson was born enslaved in North Carolina, and educated as a teacher and lawyer at Atlanta and Shaw Universities. He later moved to Harlem and founded the National Negro Business League with Booker T. Washington (Logan & Winston, 1982, pp. 349-350). His text, *A School History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1890*, would be adopted in public and private African American schools in North Carolina and Virginia (*The Crisis*, 1933) and later republished in Chicago for a national audience (Johnson, 1891/1895). Andrew Cunningham McLaughlin, born to Scottish immigrants, grew to be a successful educator and historian at the University of Chicago. McLaughlin's (1899/1911) *A History of the American Nation* preceded the numerous books on the American Constitution that he would publish in his later career.

Our conclusion focuses on two additional books as a means to evaluate the extent to which the narratives of the Southerners and Northerners merged: Mildred Rutherford's (1919) *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges, and Libraries* and David Saville Muzzey's (1936) *A History of Our Country: A Textbook for High School Students*. Rutherford served as the official "historian general" of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). As James McPherson (2004) pointed out, the UDC and the United Confederate Veterans

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(UCV) adopted her book for “all authorities charged with the selection of text-books for colleges, schools and all scholastic institutions” to assess and check the pro-North bias in textbooks (pp. 71-72). Southerners at the time feared a colonial-swamping by the North, meaning Southerners felt threatened by the North’s cultural and economic post-war advantage (Silliman, 2012, p. 124). Seventeen years later, David Saville Muzzey, a Harvard-educated historian, wrote *A History of Our Country*. Moreau considered Muzzey’s textbook a “mainstay of high school courses for much of the twentieth century” and McPherson described the textbook as “an all-time best seller among high school American history textbooks” (Moreau, 2004, p. 23; McPherson, 2004, p. 76).

### **Brief Historiography of Textbooks and Textbook Authors**

Why do we focus on textbooks? As Woysner and Schocker (2015) noted, “textbooks remain the primary source of instruction in secondary classrooms, even though problems with them are well documented” (p. 443). Certainly, textbooks have long dominated the educational landscape (Black, 1967b) especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries, a time period long before the advent of standards-based education and multimedia resources. Furthermore, textbooks have provided a basic roadmap of the curriculum (Dagbovie, 2014). Although textbooks were not the only medium for conveying historical information, they were certainly an important component of late 19th century teaching and learning history.

Several scholars have examined the role of textbooks in the history curriculum. David Blight (2001), James Loewen (1995, 2010), Jonathan Zimmerman (2002, 2004, 2017), and Joseph Moreau (2004) provided considerable insight with respect to the influence of textbooks on history education and memory. All four authors are cited throughout this manuscript; Zimmerman’s research introduced the concept of mint julep textbooks to us. Diane Ravitch’s *The Language Police* (2003) demonstrated how special interest groups influenced textbook publishers from both the right and left. In the wake of the more recent debates over the

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Confederate legacy, current textbook literature included representations of race and racism in Southern Black schools from 1861-1876 (Brosnan, 2016), fighting the Lost Cause (Bausum, 2017), and the teaching of Black history to White Southern students in the 1930s (Woyshner, 2018). A gap exists, however, in the analysis of late 19th and early 20th century history textbooks. Our research fills this gap.

Peter Novick's (1988/2005) *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* documented the professionalization of the historian in the late 19th century. Pre-professional historians did not primarily earn their living through the creation of history texts; the "gentleman amateurs" led the discipline in the pre-professional era (Novick, 1988/2005, p. 50). Pre-professional historians—apt to insert flowery language, opinion, and controversy into their writings—were not restrained by the obsession for objectivity that later dominated professional historians' attentions. Many of these pre-professionals also saw the purpose of their work as moral instruction, not a scientific search for truth. Reich explained another purpose of the pre-professional textbooks: the building of "collective memory" in order to facilitate "people's orientation in time and place" (2015, p. 500). At the turn of the century, professor of history at Columbia University William Dunning led the professional historical dialog regarding the Reconstruction era. Dunning's strict and often bigoted analysis of Reconstruction promulgated the reconciliation approach to post-war historiography and the Dunning school remained dominant for two decades (Grob and Billias, 1992). His attitudes were reflected in so many scholars and writers at the time, such as James Ford Rhodes and Thomas Dixon, that it was difficult to find anyone to critique let alone contradict the reconciliation dogma (Franklin, 1980). Dixon wrote *The Clansman*, upon which the film *Birth of a Nation* was based. When African American historians Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. DuBois spoke out against the racist "objectivity" put forth by the professional historians, the Dunning school

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dismissed their research as being overtly biased—due to the supposed limitations of their race (Novick, 1986/2005, p. 231).

The textbooks examined for this study reflect this transitional period of the historical profession. The first two authors examined in our study, Alexander Stephens and Thomas Higginson, were examples of “gentleman amateurs,” while last two authors in our study, Andrew McLaughlin and David Saville Muzzey, were professors of history at major universities. This study’s six authors purposely reflect this transition as they range in backgrounds, from pre-professional to professional historians, as well as revealing differences in geography, gender, ethnicity, and political allegiances. Pre-professional authors such as Susan Pendleton Lee and Edward Austin Johnson—whose sex and race excluded them from graduate education—would not find their textbooks accepted by professional historians, and thus, the voices of many were replaced by the voice of well-educated “objective” White men (Novick, 1988/2005, p. 231).

### **Research Design and Methods**

In order to understand the convergence of mint julep and Northern textbooks, in this research we employed methodologies of both historical narrative and content analyses. We sought answers to the following research question: How did late 19th century Southern and Northern textbooks depict controversial events and figures of the Civil War? Three historical figures are examined in our mixed-methodology: a) John Brown and the events leading up to Harpers Ferry; b) John Wilkes Booth and the events leading to the assassination of Lincoln; and c) Nathan Bedford Forrest and his involvement in the Battle of Fort Pillow. We chose these three figures because we believed that they would accentuate differences between Northern and Southern narratives. These three figures were particularly divisive, more so than even Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant, for example.

For narrative analysis, the works of several contemporary historians provided the theoretical framework upon which this investigation rests. Feminist historians such as Ellen



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Gruber Garvey (2013), Linda Wagner-Martin (1980), Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (2012) and African American historians such as James Anderson (1988), John Hope Franklin (1980), and Christopher M. Span (2009) began to chip away at the White male monopoly of professional history. Highlighting voices that have been purposely excluded from the professional business of history, their works informed our critique of the narratives that dominated these textbooks. As there are many “schools of historical thought,” the theoretical framework in this manuscript was supported by the work of narrative historians, such as Francois Furet and Lawrence Stone (Green and Troup, 1999, p. vii, 204-213). James V. Wertsch provided a framework for understanding the construction of the types of historical narratives with which our six authors engage, including “being temporally organized, having a central subject, plot, and narrative voice, and achieving closure around a conclusion” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 80). Furthermore, we offered comparative historical methods (Lange, 2013), as we examined groups of textbooks and compared the treatment of historical figures and events. Historical methodology was an essential component of our research design; we employed primary and secondary source material in order to compose a comparative history. Secondary sources provided an overview, whereas the primary sources, which comprised the actual mint julep and Northern textbooks, provided the raw data to inform the narrative story of the history curriculum in the late 19th century.

Content analysis provided data driven information to complement the historical narrative. Klaus Krippendorff (2004) defined content analysis as the “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). According to Krippendorff, replicability is the idea that multiple researchers working at different times should obtain the same results using the same techniques. Words were our units of measurement in our content analysis. We measured the percent of words dedicated to the three individuals/events relative to the broader “context units” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 101). We used the term “context units” to describe larger sections of the textbooks such as the chapters

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covering the Civil War. For instance, we measured the units/words discussing John Brown, John Wilkes Booth, and Nathan Bedford Forrest as a percentage of the total number of words spent discussing the causes of the Civil War and the figures, events, and battles of the war itself.

Similar to the methodology employed by Woysner and Shocker in their analysis of Black women in American History textbooks (Woysner & Shocker, 2015), the effect of this method is to equalize the units for quantitative comparison. We compiled a ratio of the particular—Brown, Booth, and Forrest—in its relationship to the whole, i.e., the chapters dedicated to the Civil War.

Our postulate was that these percentages would reflect the perspectives and biases of the Southern and Northern authors. For instance, we hypothesized that Southern textbooks would deemphasize Brown and Booth while dedicating a higher relative percentage of their words to Forrest. Likewise, Northern textbooks, we believed, would dedicate a higher percentage of words to Brown and Booth and less to Forrest. We were also curious to see whether we saw a change over time in the percentages. In addition to measuring the percent of words, we coded each section on Brown, Booth, and Forrest. Krippendorff (2004) defined coding as the process in which researchers interpret what they read with “observer-independent rules” (p. 126). We therefore measured the relative emphasis that Northerners and Southerners placed on Brown’s sanity, for example, or the significance placed on Booth’s broader conspiracy to kill members of Lincoln’s cabinet. If there was an early 20th century consensus among both Southern and Northern historians, then we believed that we would see an increasing convergence of these percentages between the regional textbooks.

There are flaws in this process, of course. The role of the editors, for one, might have changed word counts and therefore the original intent of the authors. Nonetheless, we hypothesized that the content analysis would reaffirm the patterns that we found in the narrative analysis. A further limitation, as Jörn Rüsen explained, was the problematic nature of comparing two different ideals of historiography especially since both hold inherent biases (2005). We

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recognized that we have our own biases in interpreting the sources, and the sources selected for examination could be problematic. Furthermore, our own regional biases may have influenced our understandings, although we hail from both the North and the South. A final limitation rests with the challenge of apprehending sources written 120-150 years ago without being able to experience first-hand the Gilded Age or Progressive Era context. Such is the challenge all historians encounter.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **John Brown**

John Brown, the abolitionist famous for his 1856 attack on Pottawatomie, Kansas and 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia (present day West Virginia) was and remains a divisive figure in history. Even on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his famous raid, Brown divided opinions, with remembrances and editorials depicting Brown as a “national hero” and others arguing that he was a “domestic terrorist” (Gay, 2009). History teachers use Brown as a means to spark academic debate on the “efficacy of violence as a tool for change” in a democracy (Lesh, 2011, p. 46). Loewen illuminated how Brown’s sanity was in question in textbooks written between 1890 and 1970, but in textbooks written before or after those dates he was regarded as passionate and fool-hearty but otherwise sane (Loewen, 1995, pp. 172-173). Loewen noted that the insanity with which historians charged Brown was entirely “psychological” not “ideological” as his “actions made no sense to textbook authors” between 1890 and 1970 because “to make no sense is to be crazy” (Loewen, 1995, p. 174). Brown was therefore an excellent case study for comparing Southern and Northern textbooks in the wake of the Civil War because he accentuated the differences among Southerners and Northerners.

For Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1875), the former Union colonel, John Brown’s plan for the raid was thoughtful and calculated, not the whims of a madman. Higginson wrote that, “John Brown resolved to fulfill a plan he had long formed for resisting slavery in the slave

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states...He frankly announced his object to be the freedom of the slaves; and he promised safety to all property except slave property” (Higginson, 1875, pp. 286-287). Higginson even provided eye-witness testimony from Brown’s hostages which described him as “the coolest and firmest man he ever saw defying danger and death” (Higginson, 1875, pp. 287-288). After his capture, Higginson presented additional evidence in support of Brown’s sanity; he noted that even the Governor of Virginia stated that “he is a man of a clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness” (Higginson, 1875, p. 288).

Meanwhile, Alexander Stephens, the former Vice-President of the Confederacy, reduced his description of the raid on Harpers Ferry to a short passage, noting that Brown “raised arms and men and concealing his movements under the cover of night, succeeded in seizing the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry.” Stephens concluded his passage, stating that Brown “was arrested, prosecuted for his crime, and hung under the laws of Virginia” (Stephens, 1872, p. 416). Nowhere did Stephens analyze Brown’s mental state. Indeed, the mint julep textbooks first assessed Brown’s sanity in the mid-1890s. Joseph Derry’s (1895) *The Story of the Confederate States; or History of the War for Southern Independence* noted that John Brown had become “notorious” in the “Kansas War” and “was so bitter against slavery that he determined to stir up the slaves to rebel against their masters” (pp. 89-90). Susan Pendleton Lee (1895) in *A School History of the United States*, echoed Derry’s view of Brown, blaming Brown for “push[ing] the quarrel to the bloodiest extreme” (p. 317). Lee described Brown as a “fanatic” repeatedly; she only used this word in two other instances in her school textbook, both in referencing abolitionists: William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe (p. 279, p. 326).

In the 1890s, moving away from Higginson’s narrative and towards the narrative of the mint julep textbooks, Northern authors changed their approach to Brown. Edward A. Johnson (1891/1895), an African American educator in Raleigh, N.C., provided a brief summary of John Brown’s actions at Harpers Ferry. Instead of praising John Brown’s courage and racial idealism

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as one might expect of an African American schoolmaster, Johnson stated that the “anti-slavery people were led by John Brown,” who “attempt[ed] to capture the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia and arm the slaves. He was hung as an insurrectionist” (Johnson, 1891/1895, p. 99). Johnson’s emotionless telling of the raid at Harpers Ferry mirrored Alexander Stephens’ curt style. By 1899, Andrew McLaughlin—a widely published Northern textbook author—described Brown as a “fierce ... old Puritan” who “had distinguished himself for fearlessness and violence” (McLaughlin, 1899/1911, pp. 388-389). McLaughlin created not a martyr to be admired, as Higginson did, but a warrior to be feared. McLaughlin deviated further from Higginson when he described Brown’s plan at Harpers Ferry as the “scheme of a mad man” (McLaughlin, 1899/1911, p. 389). In 1936, thirty-seven years after McLaughlin’s first edition, David Saville Muzzey continued to synthesize Southern and Northern perspectives on Brown, calling him a “fanatic” and “murderous,” dismissing him as someone who “believed that he was commissioned by God to free the slaves” (Muzzey, 1936, p. 377).

[Insert Table 1 here]

The content analysis of Brown reinforces the narrative analysis. Higginson dedicated 13 pages to the causes of the Civil War, or 2,551 words. Higginson spent 699 words, or 27.4% of that section, describing John Brown (Higginson, 1875, pp. 280-292). Stephens’ description of Brown, on the other hand, was just 4.67% of the total section of the causes of the Civil War (Stephens, 1872, pp. 391-422). The difference in these percentages, we believe, is significant. The data reflected Higginson’s emphasis and importance given to Brown relative to Stephens. After the peak with Higginson in 1875, the percentage of Brown relative to the entire section on causes of the war dropped to 3.29% with McLaughlin (1899), which mirrors the relatively little space spent on Brown by Southern authors. Susan Pendleton Lee (1895) was the exception to

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the rule of Southern textbooks deemphasizing Brown. Nearly 12% of her words on the causes of the war section were dedicated to discrediting Brown as a fanatic and to implicating Northerners in the Harpers Ferry Raid. Muzzey's (1936) percentage spent on Brown, meanwhile, mirrored that of Southern authors like Stephens and Derry.

Perhaps the most interesting insight into the Brown content analysis came from the relative weight authors gave to the North's response to the Harpers Ferry Raid. To Stephens, the Northern support for Brown after his capture and execution was the most significant component of Brown's story. Of the 358 words that Stephens dedicated to Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid, 152 of those words, or 42.58%, were spent describing the North's reaction to and support of Brown (Stephens, 1872, pp. 416-417). Susan Pendleton Lee (1895) continued to implicate the North in Brown's raid. She wrote that the North "extolled" Brown "as a martyr" and "compared" him "to the savior dying for his people" (pp. 338-339). Lee even went so far as to say that many prominent politicians and "respectable Abolitionists" knew of his "wicked design" but did nothing to "hinder" Brown's actions (p. 337). Meanwhile, our first two Northern textbooks, Higginson (1875) and Johnson (1891/1895), made no mention of Northern support or attitudes towards Brown in the wake of his capture. As time passed, however, Northern textbooks converged on the Southern analysis of the Northern response to Brown. Both McLaughlin (1899/1911) and Muzzey (1936) dedicated around 14% of their section on Brown to the Northern response. This aspect of the Brown story changed over time, reflecting movement among Northern textbooks towards the Southern perspective.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Loewen missed this point in his popular book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995). His emphasis centered on the debate over Brown's sanity. Instead, and Alexander Stephens

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recognized this perspective as early as 1872, the debate should focus on whether or not the South was justified in its concerns about abolitionist conspiracies in the North. If the North held Brown up as a heroic martyr, the South could argue that their secession just over a year later was an existential necessity. In this way, more than any debate over Brown personally, the mint julep perspective seeped into mainstream history. The evolution of Muzzey's textbooks demonstrated this point. Muzzey's *An American History*, published in 1911, mentioned that "men in the north... were jubilant to see a blow struck for freedom," referring to Brown's raid (Muzzey, 1911, p. 322). "Abolitionists like Emerson and Theodore Parker," Muzzey wrote in 1936, "glorified Brown as a martyr, and Thoreau even compared him to Christ on the Cross." The 1936 textbook also had a 28% increase in the number of words dedicated to the Northern support for Brown after his death, from 56 words in 1911 to 72 words in 1936. As the decades progressed, Muzzey increasingly adopted the Southern narrative of the North supporting Brown, albeit in subtle ways.

### **The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln**

Unlike John Brown, there was and is a historical consensus on John Wilkes Booth. Booth was a 26-year old actor when he assassinated Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater in April 1865. He was universally condemned by both Southern and Northern textbooks; even the staunchest Lost Cause Southerners distanced themselves from Booth's murder of Lincoln. Despite that fact, Southerners and Northerners differed in their points of emphasis while describing Lincoln's assassination. Southerners placed less emphasis on the event altogether. Northerners dedicated more space to the assassination and tended to note that Booth was part of a broader conspiracy.

Mint julep author Alexander Stephens did not mention the assassination of Lincoln at all. In contrast, Northern author Higginson related that "there was joy, with thanksgiving, over the greater part of the nation" when news of the end of the war "came over the telegraph wires." But

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only “five days after...the same wires sent far and wide another message, turning joy into mourning...the news that President Lincoln had been shot while sitting in the theatre at Washington, by an assassin, Wilkes Booth” (Higginson, 1875, p. 322). Higginson then paid tribute to Lincoln for eight pages following the description of his death, listing his accomplishments and their significance to the nation, but did not dedicate any time to discussing the motivations behind Booth’s actions. Like Higginson, African American author Edward Johnson (1891/1895) dedicated numerous pages to describing the accomplishments of Lincoln, and his impact on the history of African Americans in the United States. Yet Johnson chose not to include any information as to the details of the assassination of Lincoln in his text.

While mint julep authors in the 1890s distanced themselves from the actions of John Wilkes Booth by publicly denouncing the assassin, their Northern contemporaries chose to describe Booth’s broader conspiracy. Southern textbook author Joseph Derry (1895) described Booth as an “actor of considerable note” and remarked that “the Southern people were as much shocked by the horrible crime as were the people of the North” (p. 419). They had “waged war like honorable men and did not countenance brutal and cowardly murder” (Derry, 1895, p. 419). Fellow mint julep author, Susan Pendleton Lee (1895), noted “Mr. Lincoln’s murder excited rage throughout the civilized world” and she claimed outrage that people in the “North believed that the murder had been instigated and planned by the Southern people” (p. 534). Yet, she did add details about how Booth’s body “was subjected to indignities unworthy of a civilized age or people” after he was killed evading capture (p. 535). Northern textbook author, Andrew McLaughlin, contrasted with mint juleps like Derry and Lee because of his emphasis on Booth’s broader conspiracy. McLaughlin stated that, “There proved to be a plot, in which there were a number of conspirators, whose purpose seems to have been the assassination of several of the more prominent men” (McLaughlin, 1899/1911, p. 469). McLaughlin’s detail implicated, by extension, many Southerners in Lincoln’s death.



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Both Muzzey's 1911 textbook and his 1936 textbook ignored many details about Booth. Muzzey's analysis of the assassin was limited to calling him "half-crazy" in 1911 and a "demented actor" in 1936 (Muzzey, 1911, p. 373; Muzzey, 1936, p. 420). He ignored the issue of a broader conspiracy and did not indict the South as a whole in the murder. Muzzey also dismissed Booth as insane, and thus reflected the general opinions of the South. Once again, Muzzey represented a slow merger of the perspectives between North and South regarding Booth and a concession to 20th century Southerners.

[Insert Table 3 here]

The content analysis of Lincoln's assassination reinforces the narrative analysis, showing a general trend towards convergence of Southern and Northern authored textbooks. This perspective is especially true for our coding of Booth's conspiracy to murder other members of the cabinet. We hypothesized that Southerners deemphasized Booth's accomplices in order to distance the South as a whole from Lincoln's murder and we expected to see that Northerners spent more time on the topic. Susan Pendleton Lee (1895) was the only Southern textbook that mentioned the conspiracy. Out of the 630 words describing Lincoln's assassination, 88 words, or almost 14%, were dedicated to the conspiracy. For Northern authors like Higginson (1875) and McLaughlin (1899/1911), the conspiracy was the focus of the section on Lincoln's death: approximately 66% for Higginson and nearly 85% for McLaughlin. By 1936, however, Muzzey's textbook made no mention of the conspiracy at all, representing, once again, a convergence of opinion.

### **Nathan Bedford Forrest and Fort Pillow**

With Nathan Bedford Forrest, we return to a divisive figure. To the Confederates he was a swashbuckling cavalry commander, famous for fighting at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and

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Murfreesboro. To Union soldiers and African Americans, Forrest was a war criminal, who, propelled by a deep racism, committed one of the great crimes of the Civil War at Fort Pillow. During his attack on Fort Pillow, Forrest's soldiers reportedly killed several hundred African American soldiers attempting to surrender. Furthermore, Forrest's post-war association with the Ku Klux Klan solidified his status as a villain to Northerners.

Northern textbook author Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1875) offered the most damning interpretation of Forrest and Fort Pillow, noting that "the Confederate General Forrest, made a raid into Tennessee and Kentucky, captured Fort Pillow (April 12) and massacred three hundred colored soldiers who formed a part of its garrison (p. 311)." The use of the word "massacre" hinted at Higginson's view that Forrest murdered Union soldiers as they tried to surrender. The Southern mint julep textbooks offered a starkly different interpretation, justifying Forrest's actions. Joseph Derry (1895) stated that,

Forrest attacked the fort and captured the outer line of works...Forrest sent a demand for a surrender of the fort and the garrison...Major Bradford refused the demand for a surrender. The Confederates then carried the fort with a rush. The Federals, half of whom were colored troops, fled towards the river, firing as they ran. The result was that at least half of the force were killed and wounded. Fortunately, for those Federals who still survived, one of Forrest's men pulled down the flag that was still flying over the fort, when at once the firing ceased (p. 294).

Lee's Southern textbook (1895), like Derry's, emphasized the narrative that it was the Union army that refused Forrest's initial call for a surrender (Lee, 1895, p. 475). She went on to state how the "negroes who escaped told frightful tales of the barbarity of their assailants" causing the North to utilize "slander" by calling the event "massacre at Fort Pillow" (pp. 475-476). In her account, Forrest's actions were that of a "brilliant" general who was slandered with misrepresentation of the events at Fort Pillow by untrustworthy sources (p. 475).

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Both Southern author Stephens (1872) and Northern author McLaughlin (1899/1911) omitted the taking of Fort Pillow by Confederate forces. Johnson (1891/1895), the African American author from North Carolina, mentioned the battle but made no mention of Forrest's "massacre" of Black troops (Johnson, 1891/1895, pp. 118-119). Several questions as to why this omission occurred arise: Did they not see the event as important? Did they believe the event was too controversial? Did they choose to dedicate the space needed to explore the battle to other areas of interest? With twenty-three years separating the publication of the Southern and Northern text, this omission provided evidence that the desired influence of Southern textbook authors was taking effect. The event would no longer be remembered.

[Insert Table 4 here]

The content analysis of Nathan Bedford Forrest and Fort Pillow, like the narrative analysis, demonstrates that increasingly Northern textbooks had little interest in the Confederate general or in the massacre. Higginson and Johnson were the only authors who mentioned him. Higginson dedicated 39 words to Forrest and Fort Pillow, or .35% of his section on the Civil War; Johnson had 293 on Fort Pillow, or 3.84% of his Civil War section. After Johnson, though, Northern textbooks made no mention of Forrest or Fort Pillow. Meanwhile, Southerners increased the amount of words spent describing Forrest. In 1875, Stephens wrote just 48 words on Forrest. Twenty years later, Derry wrote 1,683 words on Forrest and Fort Pillow, or 2.39% of his Civil War section. That same year, Lee wrote 1,123 words about Forrest, comprising 1.56% of her Civil War chapter. As time passed, Nathan Bedford Forrest's importance increased in the memory of Southerners. The historian Gary Gallagher noted the outsized role that Forrest began to play in the Lost Cause mythology of the South (Gallagher 1998, pp. 259-260). While Northern reconciliation narratives adopted elements of the Lost Cause to appease Southern

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Whites, including the decision to ignore the Fort Pillow Massacre, the romanticizing of Forrest was not adopted by Northern textbooks. Forrest became a singularly Southern hero, even though, as Gallagher argued, he played relatively minor roles in the actual course of events. The Northern authors obliged in this Lost Cause mythology by ignoring Forrest's alleged war crimes. This decision to drop Fort Pillow from Northern textbooks may also reflect the scientific racism that pervaded both North and South at the time.

### **Importance of the late 19th century textbook analysis**

Based on our narrative and content analyses, Southerners succeeded in changing the Northern version of the war. Our study fits with other recent authors who explored how Southern history became romanticized and whitewashed (Bausman, 2017; Levin, 2016) in comparison to an "unvarnished counterpart" (Kytte & Roberts, 2018, p. 4). Likewise, James A. Cobb detailed the evolution of Southern identity and how, increasingly after the Civil War, Southerners defined themselves in opposition to the North (Cobb, 2005, pp. 4-5).

There is another lens through which we can judge the Northern acquiescence to the Southern narrative: applying UDC historian-general Mildred Lewis Rutherford's "measuring rod" (1919) to David Saville Muzzey's most popular textbook (1936) as well as the six textbooks we analyzed in this research. Rutherford's criteria for acceptable history textbooks, officially adopted by the United Confederate Veterans, included the following six demands:

Reject a book that speaks of the Constitution other than [as] a compact between

Sovereign States.

Reject a text-book that... does not clearly outline the interferences with the rights

guaranteed to the South by the Constitution, and which caused secession...

Reject a book that says the South fought to hold her slaves.

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

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Reject a text-book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln and vilifies Jefferson Davis.

Reject a text-book that omits to tell of the South's heroes and their deeds (McPherson, 2004, p. 72; Rutherford, 1919, p. 5).

Of our six Gilded Age and Progressive Era texts, the three texts written from a Northern perspective all failed (Higginson (1875), Johnson (1891/1895), McLaughlin (1899/1911)), and the three mint julep texts (Stephens (1872), Derry (1985), Lee (1895)) all passed Rutherford's measuring rod test. Yet just a few years later, Muzzey's 1936 textbook, *A History of Our Country*, complied with four of Rutherford's six demands, mostly through omission. For instance, Muzzey never claimed that the South fought the war in order to protect slavery; not once did Muzzey depict slaveholders as cruel, nor did he even dedicate extended passages to describing life on a Southern plantation at all; and there was no vilification of Jefferson Davis or any other Confederate. Muzzey also complied with Rutherford's demand to include Southern heroes. For instance, he mentioned Robert E. Lee 22 times, while Ulysses S. Grant's wartime actions were mentioned 13 times (Muzzey, 1936, pp. 392-450). Even by the standards of the UDC, the South won the textbook war. That victory, however, was not enough for many Southerners in the early 20th century. Despite Muzzey's compromises, the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans still led efforts to prevent Muzzey's textbook from being accepted in Virginia schools (Zimmerman, 2002, pp. 32-33).

Perhaps, such findings should not be altogether surprising given Fallace's (2015) recent scholarship on race and progressive education. In his ground-breaking scholarship on the theory of recapitulation's influence on educational theory, he traces the origins of views that people of color were less developed than Whites. Fallace's research reinforces the notion that most adult Americans likely were taught a romanticized version of the Civil War in both the North and the South (Raymond, 2017). Reich and Corning (2017) demonstrated that the Lost Cause has

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adapted to new contexts and continues to be an influence on what Black and White college students believe about the Civil War today.

What was gained in the rush to form this romanticized consensus? Historian David Blight (2001), argued that the nation was willing to sacrifice its historical memory (with particular emphasis on race) in the name of reconciliation. American historians chose reconciliation, reunion, and historical “objectivity” in the place of careful, divergent, oppositional historical discord. African American activist Frederick Douglass remarked on this phenomena during a memorable address on Decoration Day in 1871. Speaking before the graves of Union soldiers, he stated:

We are sometimes asked, in the name of patriotism, to forget the merits of this fearful struggle, and to remember with equal admiration those who struck at the nation's life and those who struck to save it, those who fought for slavery and those who fought for liberty and justice... Fellow citizens: I am not indifferent to the claims of a generous forgetfulness, but... I shall never forget the difference between those who fought for liberty and those who fought for slavery; between those who fought to save the republic, and those who fought to destroy it (Coates, 2011; Foner & Taylor, 1999, pp. 609-610).

Douglass seemed to recognize the emerging consensus of White historians, both Northern and Southern, and the implications of that consensus for African Americans. In order to appease the South, the African American narrative was being sacrificed. Northern textbook authors demonstrated an increasing willingness to accept the mint julep narrative on John Brown, to separate John Wilkes Booth from the Confederacy as a whole, and to “forget” events such as Fort Pillow.

Douglass’ warning still echoes today. When is it appropriate for educators to compromise their understanding of historical truth for the sake of political and social harmony? In this moment of deep polarization, therefore, the story of mint julep textbooks seems all the

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more relevant. It reminds social studies teachers that assumptions must be questioned, competing narratives must not be ignored, and complexity must be embraced. This study of mint julep and Northern textbooks reinforces the notion that most adult Americans were likely taught a romanticized version of the Civil War in both the North and the South. Such whitewashed history explains why more than 700 Confederate monuments were erected around the nation, not only in Southern cities, but also in Northern and Western locations, as well (Raymond, 2017). Chipping away at the mint julep consensus began with the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s: it continues into the present as Confederate monuments are removed from places of prominence and contextualized so that future generations develop a more complex understanding of the causes, events, and figures of the American Civil War.

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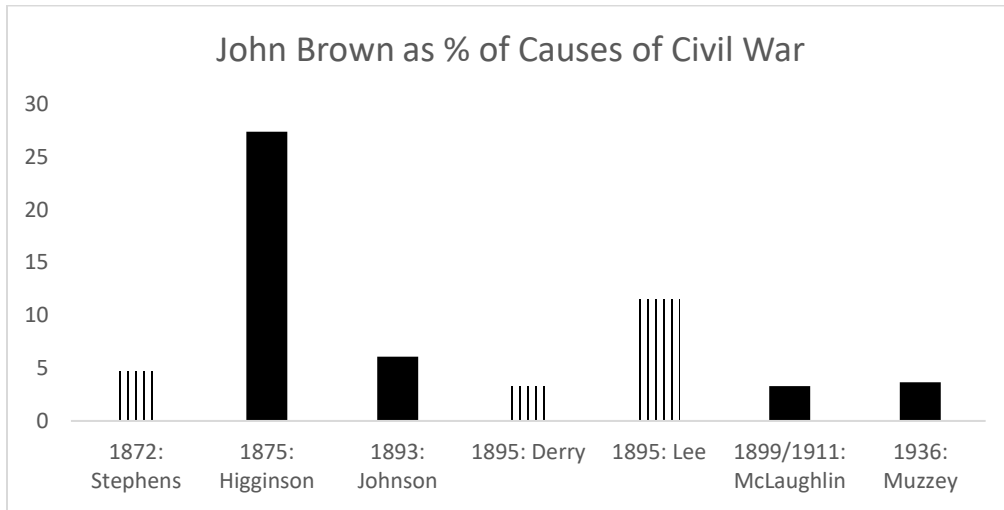
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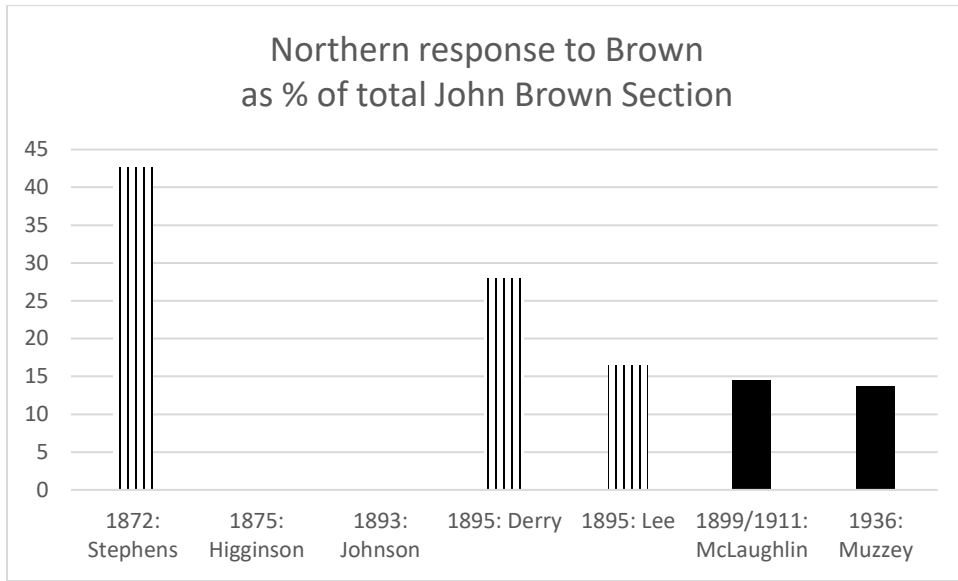
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Table 1



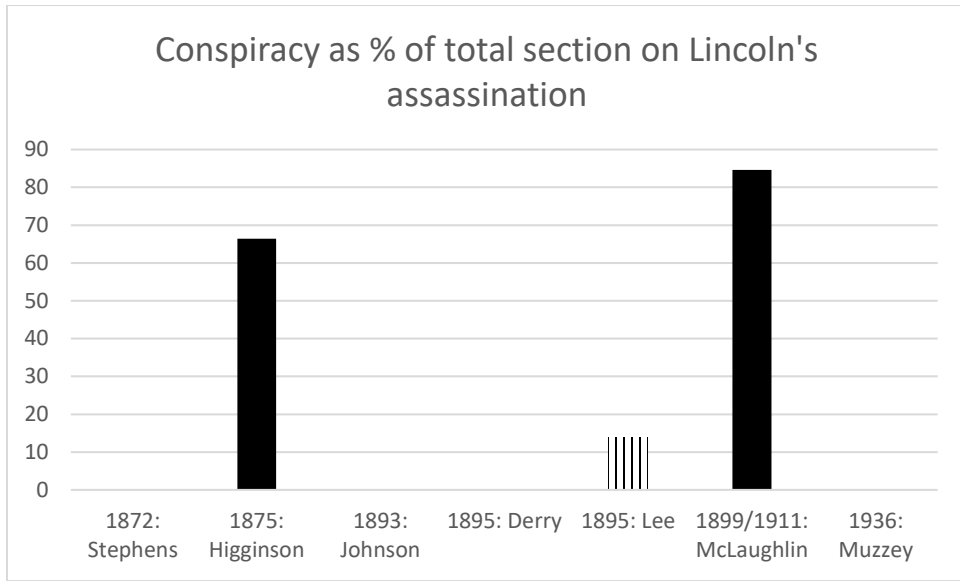
This graph represents the words dedicated to John Brown as a ratio of the chapters on the causes of the Civil War. The solid black columns represent Northern authors and the striped columns represent mint julep textbooks. Higginson, the former abolitionist and Union army commander, emphasizes Brown the most. As the years progress, however, Northern authors dedicate fewer and fewer words to Brown.

Table 2



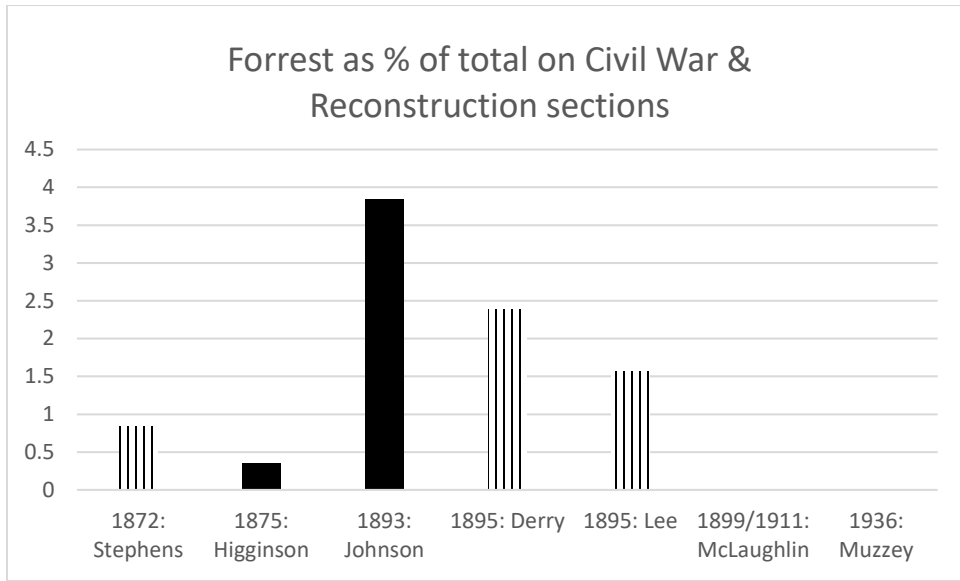
One important difference between Northern and Southern depictions of John Brown was the emphasis on Northern support for the Harpers Ferry Raid. Mint Julep textbooks dedicated a considerable portion of their sections on Brown, between 15% and 43%, to examining the North's sympathies for Brown in the wake of his trial and execution, which implicated the region in Brown's use of violence. Northern authors eventually adopted this Southern narrative.

Table 3



Northern authors tended to emphasize the fact that Booth had accomplices and that Lincoln's assassination was part of a wider conspiracy. Booth could therefore not be dismissed as a lone, insane actor but a logical extension of common Southern sentiments. By the 1930s, nonetheless, the conspiracy narrative had been dropped from mainstream textbooks.

Table 4



The data here reflects the notion that Nathan Bedford Forrest became a standard Confederate hero. Despite playing a relatively minor role in the war, Southern authors in the 1890s dedicated between 1.5% and 2.4% of their Civil War narrative to Forrest. Northern authors increasingly ignored Brown, including his alleged massacre at Fort Pillow.