The American Civil War in Fiction

The continuing popularity of Jeff Shaara's Civil War series of books has focused attention on the many other novels in the Newton Free Library written about the bitterly fought American Civil War. Some of the novels are sad and bittersweet. Others write about the battlefields and the home-front. However, all of the stories tell something about the experiences of the men and women, white and black, who endured those tragic years.

The novels on this listing are shelved in the Fiction section on the second floor. The books are arranged on the shelves by the author's last name. To find other books of a similar interest, you can do a Subject search by using one or more of the following subjects: United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Fiction, or, (Type a State name) - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Fiction. Ask a Reference Librarian, if you need help in locating a particular book.

Bacon, Karl A. An Eye for Glory: The Civil War Chronicles of a Citizen Soldier. A true-to-life novel based on first-hand accounts of the 14th Connecticut Infantry gives a personal and accurate picture of the times, culture, and tragedy of the Civil War.

Boggs, Johnny D. Wreaths of Glory: A Western Story. The fictional story of William Quantrill and the border wars in Kansas and Missouri.

Brooks, Geraldine. March. The fictional life of Captain March, the father in Louisa May Alcott's Little Women.

Brown, Bertrand. A Slave Insurrection. A group of Negro slaves try to develop a council as a means of dealing with the chaotic times of the Civil War.


Charyn, Jerome. I Am Abraham: A Novel of Lincoln and the Civil War. The novel culminates with to his 1865 visit to war-shattered Richmond only days before his assassination.

Chiaverini, Jennifer. The Spymistress. A Quaker-educated native of Virginia, who is upset when Virginia secedes from the Union, uses her skills for gathering military intelligence to help construct the Richmond underground and help prisoners escape from the infamous Confederate Libby Prison.

Cole, Alyssa. An Extraordinary Union. A former slave leaves her new life in the North and a Pinkerton Secret Service agent risk their lives to go underground to spy for the Union and to break up a plot that is nearing success and to preserve the Union at any cost.

Crane, Stephen. The Red Badge of Courage. The classic story of young soldiers in battle for the first time trying to measure up to their comrades.

Doctorow, E. L. The March. The march in question is that of General William Tecumseh Sherman and his Union soldiers as they slash and burn their way through Georgia and the Carolinas, and the "march to freedom" as liberated slaves fall in step with the liberating army.

Frazier, Charles. Cold Mountain. A young Confederate soldier, who is injured during the explosive 1864 battle of Petersburg, Virginia, is struggling to make his way home to Cold Mountain to his farm and the woman he left behind.

Frazier, Charles. Varina. A fiction inside look inside the leadership of the Confederacy when Varina Howell agrees to wed Jefferson Davis, who is eventually appointed president of the Confederacy, placing Varina at the center of one of the darkest moments in American history.

Gear, W. Michael. This Scorched Earth. The American Civil War as seen through the eyes of one family, the Hancocks in rural Arkansas. Devastated by a cruel war, they faced down their personal hells and in spite of it all survive battles, rapes, and mental breakdowns, while others do not.

Groot, Tracy. The Sentinels of Andersonville. The Civil War atrocity at Andersonville Prison, where 13,000 Union prisoners died in a single year, is the background for this very graphic portrayal of life in the prison and the affect that the conditions have upon two soldiers and a townswoman.
Harris, C. S. Good Time Coming: A Novel of the American Civil War. Life on the home-front during the Civil War brings many changes. When the men go off to war, the women must manage plantations, keep their slaves in line, and find clever ways to compensate for the lack of food.

Hepinstall, Kathy. Sisters of Shiloh. Two sisters who disguised themselves as men and joined the Confederate army bring to life the statistics that there were approximately 400 documented cases of women serving as combatants during the Civil War in this well-written novel.

Horn, Dara. All Other Nights. A Jewish soldier in the Union army during the Civil War on a special assignment is sent to New Orleans in order to kill his uncle, a loyal southerner, who is planning to assassinate President Lincoln. The novel also explores the role of Jewish Americans in the Civil War.

Hunt, Laird. Neverhome. A harrowing story of a farmer’s wife who left home to secretly join the Union Army during the battle for the South, where she becomes a hero and then has to fight to get back home to her husband.

Jakes, John. Savannah, or, A Gift For Mr. Lincoln. It is the winter of 1864, and the port city of Savannah is about to be conquered by the Union Army. However, a daring widow is determined to prevent General Sherman from making Savannah a “Christmas gift for Mr. Lincoln.”


McCabe, Erin Lindsay. I Shall Be Near To You. Inspired by true accounts of the more than four hundred women who fought in the Civil War disguised as men, this novel is a tender love story and a hard examination of war and the dangers faced by the combatants.

McFarland, Dennis. Nostalgia. The Battle of the Wilderness was one of the most critical battles of the Civil War. This novel recounts all of its fury and the devastating effects that it had on the soldiers and how one soldier returns to health and sanity through the kindness / compassion of care-givers.

Melman, Peter Charles. Landsman. The Jewish ne'er-do-well joins the Confederate Army to escape the police. In the Third Louisiana Regiment, Elias fights for his life; the battle scenes, showing men dying from their wounds and from the dire conditions of hunger and drought, are portrayed vividly.

Miller, John J. The First Assassin. A historical thriller takes place in Washington, DC, at the outbreak of the Civil War. Col. Charles Rook's tries to insure the safety and security of the capital city and President Abraham Lincoln, whose life is being threatened by a South Carolina planter.

Nelson, James L. Glory in the Name: A Novel of the Confederate Navy. An officer in the United States Navy resigns his commission at the outbreak of the Civil War. Bowater is at quite a disadvantage in his battles with the powerful Union navy in a futile defense of New Orleans.

O'Brien, Patricia. The Glory Cloak. A historical novel that spans the years 1850 to 1888 and links the lives of Louisa May Alcott and Clara Barton and provides vivid portrayals of a wartime hospital and of Andersonville.

Oliveira, Robin. My Name Is Mary Sutter. A 20-year-old midwife who dreams of becoming a doctor is assigned to a Union hospital overflowing with the wounded and dying. The focus on often horrific medicine and the women who practiced it against all odds makes for compelling reading.

Olmstead, Robert. Coal Black Horse. When 14-year-old Robey is sent by his mother to search for his father, a doomed soldier, he witnesses the horrors of war both on and off the battlefield. Robey embarks upon a life-altering journey that will challenge him physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Peters, Ralph. The Damned of Petersburg. The grim reality that was the Siege of Petersburg comes alive in this novel through the eyes, ears, hearts, and minds of both decorated officers and common soldiers as they try to survive and make sense of the war at the most basic level.

Reasoner, James. Manassas. The first volume in Reasoner's American Civil War Battle Series, which features the Bannon family which feels the effects of the War personally and up close as it rages all over the South and when their farm becomes a battlefield.

Shaara, Michael and Jeff Shaara. **Last Full Measure; Killer Angels; Gods and Generals.** The Civil War Trilogy Series.

Wang, Daren. **The Hidden Light of Northern Fires.** With the outbreak of the Civil War, Town Line, a small town in New York on the Niagara frontier, quickly becomes a battleground as the residents try to come to grips with the reality of the War when a fugitive slave arrives and seeks protection.

Williams, Ben Ames. **House Divided.** First published in 1947, this bestselling historical novel is one of the finest retellings of the Civil War era. The novel follows the fortunes and misfortunes of five siblings of an established Confederate Virginia family and depicts the war as it really was.

* * This booklist is dedicated to four Civil War buffs – Carole, Coleen, Eddie and Joyce. * *

October 27, 2018 EJW