



# Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History

*David Goldfield*

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Newcomers to the South often remark that southerners, at least white southerners, are still fighting the Civil War -- a strange preoccupation considering that the war formally ended more than one hundred and thirty-five years ago and fewer than a third of southerners today can claim an ancestor who actually fought in the conflict. But even if the war is far removed both in time and genealogy, it survives in the hearts of many of the region's residents and often in national newspaper headlines concerning battle flags, racial justice, and religious conflicts. In this sweeping narrative of the South from the Civil War to the present, noted historian David Goldfield contemplates the roots of southern memory and explains how this memory has shaped the modern South both for good and ill.

He candidly discusses how and why white southern men fashioned the myths of the Lost Cause and the Redemption out of the Civil War and Reconstruction and how they shaped a religion to canonize the heroes and reify the events of those fated years. Goldfield also recounts how blacks and white women eventually crafted a different, more inclusive version of southern history and how that new vision has competed with more traditional perspectives.

As Goldfield shows, the battle for southern history, and for the South, continues -- in museums, public spaces, books, state legislatures, and the minds of southerners. Given the region's growing economic power and political influence, the outcome of this war is more than a historian's preoccupation; it is of national importance. Integrating history and memory, religion, race, and gender, *Still Fighting the Civil War* will help newcomers, longtime residents, and curious outsiders alike attain a better understanding of the South and each other.

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