

# **ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM**

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## **A Railroad War**

By **George A. McLean, Jr.**

### **Resources**

**If you can read only one book**

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Turner, George Edgar	<i>Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War.</i> Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953.

### **Books and Articles**

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Black III, Robert C.	<i>The Railroads of the Confederacy.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952.
Bonds, Russell S.	<i>Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and the Medal of Honor.</i> Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2007.
Clark, Jr., John E.	<i>Railroads in the Civil War: The Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat.</i> Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001.
Johnston II, Angus James	<i>Virginia Railroads in the Civil War.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961.
Meredith, Roy and Arthur Meredith	<i>Mr. Lincoln's Military Railroads: AS Pictorial History of the United States Civil War Railroads.</i> New York: W. W. Norton, 1979.
Noe, Kenneth W.	<i>Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis.</i> Champaign: University of Illinois Press,

	1994.
Thomas, William G.	<i>The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.
Ward, James A.	<i>That Man Haupt: A Biography of Herman Haupt</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973.
Weber, Thomas	<i>The Northern Railroads in the Civil War: 1861-1865</i> . Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1970.

## Organizations

## Web Resources

## Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
<i>Rails to Oblivion: The Decline of Confederate Railroads in the Civil War</i> by Dr. Christopher R. Gabel	This is a booklet published by the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for the Combat Studies Institute. It can be accessed here: <a href="http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/car1/download/csipubs/gabel6.pdf">http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/car1/download/csipubs/gabel6.pdf</a>

## Scholars

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## Précis

Confederate troops were rushed by rail to confront the Union army led by Brigadier General Irwin McDowell at Bull Run. Among those who rode by rail was a brigade under an eccentric professor from Virginia Military Institute. That brigade delivered the battle's knockout blow and its general, Brigadier General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, would gain his sobriquet "Stonewall". From the very first the Civil War was a railroad war. Compared to the Union the Confederacy had one-third of the freight cars, one fifth of the locomotives, less than one half of the miles of rail, one eighth of rail production, one tenth of the telegraph stations and one twenty fourth of locomotive production. Soon the Confederate system was in a shambles while the Union system was strengthened. The efficiency of moving men and supplies by rail was diminished by the poor quality of roadbeds and rails,

inconsistent gauges used by different companies and company railroads not connected to each other. Nevertheless, railroads played a prominent role in battles as far flung as Chickamauga, Chattanooga, the Peninsula Campaign, Gettysburg, the Atlanta Campaign, and Appomattox. Throughout the war while the Federal Government took control of the railroads and established the United States Military Railroads, the Confederacy left control in the hands of private companies up until February 1865 by which time it was too late to make a difference. While the United States Military Railroads improved existing railroads and built new ones, Confederate railroads fell apart because the Confederacy could not maintain them. At the end of the war, railroads played a role no one would have anticipated –helping a country grieve. It was the sad duty of the railroad to take home the body of the assassinated president. By the time Lincoln was laid to rest in Springfield an estimated seven million people had seen his casket. The train that took Abraham Lincoln home was the last train operated by the United States Military Railroad.

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