BOOKS FOR EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING NEW HAMPSHIRE IN THE CIVIL WAR

A Note About Sources, Literature, And History

Here are some sources that offer either information about New Hampshire in the Civil War or background and context. Much is not included here. For instance, local town and city histories of the nineteenth century often include chapters on people from the community who fought in the Civil War. Old newspapers contain letters or personal memoirs written by soldiers, sailors, nurses, and doctors.

Teachers are encouraged to range through these titles and enjoy learning about New Hampshire in the Civil War so they can decide what is important for their students to know. Not all titles are still in print but might be found in local libraries or online. And sadly, teachers of New Hampshire Civil War history searching for texts written for young readers will be frequently disappointed since most of the listed titles are written for an adult audience. Some can be excerpted, however, and some primary sources might be appropriate for younger readers. Middle and high school students can use the reference works to find clues to their own town’s or city’s history.

After reading a few of these books ranging across time, something becomes very apparent: each author’s point of view. As readers of history wanting to see clearly, we recognize how an author’s point of view might taint or slant a story. Students might benefit from noting the varying points of view, for instance, of 19th-century Northern civic authors or white soldiers from New Hampshire. How do these compare with 19th-century Black authors or Southern white authors? How do the points of view of 19th-century historians compare with more recent professional historians who have the advantages of newer research and interpretations?

Which of the authors below wrote to glorify the Northern victory or New Hampshire’s role in it? Which wrote to help the reader see what happened more clearly? Which was more interested in re-unifying North and South than in furthering the welfare of former slaves? Which of the listed works could be considered most accurate, do you think? How could your own knowledge of the causes, events, and consequences of the Civil War help you to make accurate judgments about what you read?

Most of the titles hold a specific connection to New Hampshire. Some, however, are included to give more general context, such as those on Black history, sugar, and cotton.
Bibliography


Alcott, Louisa May. *Civil War Hospital Sketches.* New York: Dover Publications, 1863 and 2006. Although Alcott was from Massachusetts, she mentioned a few New Hampshire people in *Hospital Sketches,* and her experiences reflected similar experiences of nurses from neighboring New Hampshire.


Ayling, Augustus D. *Revised Register of the Soldiers and Sailors of New Hampshire in the War of the Rebellion.* Concord, NH: Ira C. Evans, 1895. Use this to look for people from your town or city.


Billings, John H. *Hardtack and Coffee or the Unwritten Story of Army Life.* Boston: George A. Smith, 1883. Reprint University of Nebraska Press, 1993. This is a detailed classic used by many Civil War re-enactors but is not specific to New Hampshire.


Boylston, Edward D., ed. *Amherst in the Great Civil Conflict of 1861-65*. Amherst, NH: E.D. Boylston, 1893. Here’s an example of how local history written in the 19th century connected with national events. Notice the point of view.


Brink, Carol. *Harps in the Wind: The Story of the Singing Hutchinsons*. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947. The members of this famous family from Milford were the singing voices of reform. They moved West and continued their family calling.


Coffin, Charles Carleton. *Four Years of Fighting: A Volume of Personal Observation with the Army and Navy from the First Battle of Bull Run to the Fall of Richmond*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866.


Gates, Jr., Henry Lweis, and Donald Yacovone. *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross.* Smiley Books, 2013. This colorful PBS book and video narrated by a highly respected Black historian explains the connections between the cotton textile economy and slavery as well as the sweep of Black history in the U.S. The series includes the early slave trade, the Civil War, and present-day Black history.


Hale, Sarah Josepha. *Northwood; or, Life north and south: showing the true character of both*. Michigan Historical reprint Series, 2005. Born in Newport, N.H., Hale began as a freelance writer and became the long-time editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. She persuaded Lincoln to declare Thanksgiving a national holiday to fall on the last Thursday in November.


Hayden, F. Stansbury. *Military Ballooning during the Early Civil War*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1941. Adventurers experimented with hot air balloons and some even tried to persuade the Union military to adopt their techniques, but New Hampshire’s Thaddeus Lowe was the one who succeeded in establishing the balloon service of the Army of the Potomac and serve as its chief aeronaut. Lowe was born in Jefferson, N.H.


Hodes, Martha. *The Sea Captain’s Wife: A True Story of Love, Race & War in the Nineteenth Century.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006. Scholar and historian Martha Hodes discovered a large cache of family letters and used them to tell the story of Eunice Richardson Stone Connolly, who worked in the Manchester Amoskeag mills, married and moved to Alabama. Eunice’s husband and brother-in-law fought for the Confederacy while her two brothers fought for the Union. Eunice returned to New Hampshire and Massachusetts without her husband during the war. Subsequently widowed, she married a prosperous Black sea captain in 1869, and they sailed to his home in the Cayman Islands where they lived happily. They and their children were lost at sea in an unexpected hurricane in 1877.


Hudziak, Mark. “From Fredericksburg to the fall of Richmond, the 12th New Hampshire ably represented the Granite State.” *America's Civil War* 11 (November 1998): 8.


———. *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter.* Craig L. Symonds, ed. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987. From New Hampshire, Alvah Hunter was a 16-year-old ship’s boy when he served on this historic boat and kept a diary.


Jarrow, Gail. *Lincoln's Flying Spies: Thaddeus Lowe and the Civil War Balloon Corps.* Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek Books (Highlights for Children), 2010. This is a non-fiction book for young readers in the middle grades.


Page, Elwin L., and Mike Pride. *Abraham Lincoln in New Hampshire.* Concord, NH: Monitor Publishing Co., 2009. Abraham Lincoln came to Exeter to visit his son at Phillips-Exeter Academy in 1860. He made political speeches in Exeter, Concord, Dover, and Manchester. It was during this trip, some say, he was persuaded by the warm response to run for President of the United States.

Parton, James, et al. *Eminent women of the age: being narratives of the lives and deeds of the most prominent women of the present generation.* Hartford: S.M. Betts, 1868.


Pillsbury, Parker. *Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles.* Concord: Clague, Wegman, Schlicht, & Co., (printers), 1883. Abolitionist Parker Pillsbury, a lecturer and minister, wrote this account of experiences of anti-slavery lecturers in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Pillsbury shows the conflicts within the movement and from the public during the traveling lectures. Written two decades after the Civil War, this contains quite a lot of churchly editorializing that may put off some readers, but it does illustrate an otherwise untold local story.


Richardson, Leon B. *William E. Chandler, Republican.* New York: Dodd, Mead, 1940.


Sanchez, Anita. *Mr. Lincoln’s Chair: The Shakers and Their Quest for Peace.* Granville, Ohio: McDonald and Woodward Publishing, 2009. Henry Blinn and three others of Canterbury, N.H., Shaker Village were drafted in 1863 during the Civil War. They traveled to Washington, D.C., to petition President Lincoln for conscientious objector status. He granted their request and the Shakers made a chair for President Lincoln in thanks. Most of the book is about Shaker history.


Schwartz, Gerald, ed. *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War: Esther Hill Hawks’ Diary.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984. Esther Hill Hawkes, born in Hooksett, N.H., was unusual as a female doctor in her own right, not a nurse, during the Civil War. She served with her husband, also a doctor, in South Carolina.


Smith, Frederick H. *Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History.* Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2005. Rum was one of the driving forces of the Atlantic slave economy, of which New England and New Hampshire were a part. This is a scholarly analysis of the history of rum in the Atlantic world.


-----. “Some Thoughts on New Hampshire and the Civil War Centennial.” *Historical New Hampshire* 16 (December 1961).


Wilson, Harriet. *Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*. Boston: Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1859. This important work by a N.H. author, who lived in Milford, is considered the first novel published in North America by an African-American woman. Reprints are available with commentary.


Video: