

a partnership between
the Moraine Valley
Library and Bookstore

[Home](#) [About the Book](#) [Study Questions](#) [Themes](#) [Events](#) [Resources](#)



Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War, by Tony Horwitz is available at the Moraine Valley Library and Bookstore.

PROGRAM THEMES

Remembering History

Horwitz explores different contexts for the remembrance of past events from historical reenactments, to monuments and symbols, and the need for laws to right the wrongs of the past. The popular views of history often differ from that of historians.

American Identity

The American identity has evolved out of history and geography. Values and founding principles shape our opinions. The ways that Americans identify with the Civil War are indicative about how individuals identify themselves as an American. This includes the famous culture wars played out by liberals and conservatives today. It also includes the ways we see America based on whether we live in urban, suburban, or rural settings.

Family Beliefs

Most of our beliefs about the world are established by the time we are 6 to 8 years old. These beliefs may shift over time, but we often think they change more than they do. Horwitz's book tells many stories where beliefs are passed between generations, and he discusses organizations that are established to keep these beliefs alive.

150th Anniversary of the U.S. Civil War

The anniversary of the war is a time to remember and consider where we've been since the conflict started. Horwitz's book challenges us to think about the Civil War as more than just a series of battles that lasted over a five-year period.

Race in America

The role of race in the Civil War as well as in society today is often ignored or downplayed. Yet, the legacy of slavery, Jim Crowe, and the battles for Civil Rights cannot be ignored. Horwitz bravely addresses these issues by showing us the connections of racism in the thinking and to the institutions of today.

War Gender Roles

Men and women played different roles during the war, and they play different roles in remembering the war. Horwitz finds organizations for men and for women that celebrate and stereotype these roles.

Veterans Returning to Society

Horwitz finds many veterans of modern wars who view the Civil War differently. They tend to romanticize the war less than others. They also face challenges returning to society.

Dealing With (or Ignoring) the Shame of the Past

Addressing unethical acts from the past is difficult and uncomfortable. This touches on many of the power structures that exist today. There are times when past atrocities are too difficult to address and there are times when they cannot be ignored.

Living in the Land of Lincoln and Grant

As residents of Illinois, our interpretation of the Civil War may be different than that of other states. Horwitz's book presents an opportunity for us to examine our local connections to the war.

Views of the South

At several points in the book, Horwitz shows us conflicting views of the old South. In some corners, the region is thought of as a mythic, genteel society, while in other corners, it is thought of as a cultural backwater living with the stain of slavery.