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David W. Blight. *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War.* Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. xi + 301 pp. $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-55849-361-2; $70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-55849-344-5.

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Remembering the Remembrance of War

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In a graduate history class, a professor of mine asked us to pause for a moment and recall our first public memory. I found myself viewing the last several years of my historical life in rewind, locating the first thing I could honestly remember, without being clouded by the floods of images from history I have received in my life. Memories remain a powerful outlet for historical exploration, especially when the memories are grounded in deep, emotional significance. Everyone has his or her own personal and individual memories. Yet, it remains the way the individual memories fit or do not fit into society's memory, known as the collective memory, which makes for pertinent scholarship. Keeping in mind that a collective memory can be as small as a group of soldiers to as large as how all Americans remembered the American Civil War, it may be up to the historian to examine, and in many cases, re-examine individual memories that do not necessarily fit the collective in order to preserve any memories from being diminished. The story and memory of the American Civil War proves a poignant example of the power of memory, exemplified in a fine collection of essays by David W. Blight.

Blight uses his essays to explore three arenas: the cause and consequence of the war, the role of race and significance of African American history and the purpose of studying historical memory. The collection takes on a structure of beginning with a thorough exploration of the historiography of memory, explaining the theoretical framework of memory formation in clear and concise language that any beginning historian interested in memory will be able to grasp from a first reading. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who laid out the relationship between individual and collective memory in his work *On Collective Memory*, provided a necessary framework for historians, such as Blight, who seek to understand the relationship between individual and society. In order to understand Halbwachs, one must distinguish between history and memory, as laid out by Blight in the opening pages. As he argues, "History can be read by or belong to everyone; it assesses change and progress over time and is therefore more relative, more contingent upon place, chronology and scale" (p. 2). History also tends to be "interpreted" and "revised" and "seeks to understand contexts and the complexity of cause and effect." Memory, on the other hand, tends to be "treated as a sacred set of potentially absolute meanings and stories. Possessed as a heritage or identity of a community." Memory, often "owned" and "passed down through generations," often "coalesces in objects, sacred sites and monuments," which Blight utilizes throughout his essays to convey the meaning of memory. Blight concludes by stating the words of historian Pierre Nora, who wrote, "Memory dictates, while history writes" (p. 2).

The collection of essays, all written by Blight, reveal one historianÎÒs journey through the tangled web of collective and individual memories in regards to race and the significance of the Civil War. In a way, the reader understands how Blight came to formulate his main arguments in his insightful works, *Frederick DouglasŝÒ Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* and *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, as well as numerous articles published in collected volumes and scholarly journals. For someone who diligently read the previous volumes, I found this work to be intellectually stimulating, as the reader follows the author on his own personal ex-

perience and memory of the experience in uncovering the significance of Frederick Douglass and the meaning of race and memory in the Civil War. For those unfamiliar with Blight, the collection also adequately introduces his main arguments on the importance of race in shaping the collective memory of the Civil War and peaks further curiosity to simply want to know more about the vast array of memories that have yet been probed. He seeks to understand how Americans in the era of the Civil War shaped, and in some cases reformed the collective memory, as well as how personal visions of the past shape self-understanding and political power in the present and future.

In terms of the structure of the book, Blight uses a section entitled Preludes, which explores such topics as the importance of revisiting the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, how African Americans came to grips with the coming of the Civil War, the relationship between Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln and how one Union Soldier, Charles Harvey Brewster, defined and redefined his manhood in the face of war. The second section, entitled Problems in Civil War Memory, delves into issues ranging from Douglass and the role of race and memory to the meaning of the Robert Shaw Memorial in Boston, as well as the how the memory of Emancipation fit or did not fit into the grand celebration of the Civil War Semi centennial from 1911- 1915. Of note, Blight also discusses Ken Burns and the history of battlefields, in order to provide the reader a continued understanding of how American society still remembers or misremembers different collective experiences of the Civil War.

Blight is at his best when grappling with Frederick DouglassŝÒ own battle with the problems of Civil War Memory. As the author mentions, Douglass needed to make sure that the meaning of the Civil War would never fade. He utilized a constant belief that the war had been an ideological struggle that pledged to stimulate a refurbished nationalism made possible through emancipation, radical reconstruction and Union victory. At the same time, Douglass had to confront a growing sense of racism and Lost Cause mythology that emerged as part of the South's efforts to secure an honorable defeat. In the midst of these differing forces, Douglass also struggled to maintain the African American and abolitionist memory of the Civil War as well as cure the "amnesia" of the American public, as the Lost Cause and Redemption trumped Radical Reconstruction efforts across the South. This discussion of Douglass, from a chapter that has the same title as the entire volume, presents one example of the elaborate detail and discussion espoused by Blight throughout his volume, which encompass too many ideas to review in one short write up.

At times, I had wished Blight would further delve into the conflicting memories that swirled amongst the participants in the postwar period. Moreover, how did the regional differences shape the conflicting memories? Did the Upper South and the Lower South share a similar agenda, in terms of both the white and black South? How did the North figure in this complicated web? How crucial was the memory of the Civil War in shaping the lives of those who settled in the West or other regions that did not directly feel the hand of war? How much of AmericâÒs fate since the war has been linked to "how we remember and interpret the Civil War? " Civil War scholars will not discount how important the memory of the war was to American society. But how did that memory transform and take on the matters of today, such as flag debates raging in South Carolina, Mississippi and Georgia, as well as the memory presented in *Gods and Generals* and in the upcoming *Cold Mountain*? Although Blight touches on some of these points, more exploration is necessary to truly understand the impact of memory in the Civil War. I have no doubt that future volumes will delve into this unexplored historical region.

As a historian, David Blight continues to open new doors for future scholarship, making himself and the study of memory forces to be reckoned with in the realm of academia. Anyone interested in memory or the Civil War will find *Beyond the Battlefield* a refreshing and enlightening collection of essays. Those interested in understanding how a historian crafts a historical argument will benefit from following Blight through his own personal methodological journey of finding and using memories as evidence to support a complex argument. Finally, anyone who wants to add context to the meaning of the most tragic hour in our history will surely find Blight invigorating and refreshing. I highly recommend *Beyond the Battlefield* not only for everything previously mentioned, but also for where it can take future scholars and myself in contextualizing Civil War memory. The horizon remains endless, provided we carefully utilize the tools of memory laid before the historianÒs feet.

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