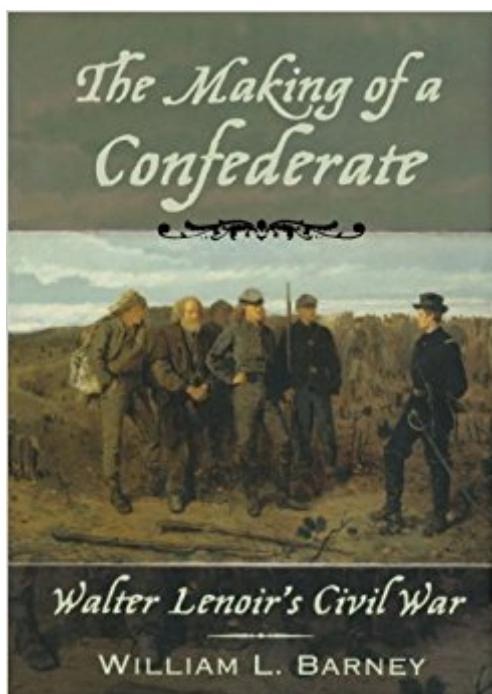


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# The Making Of A Confederate: Walter Lenoir's Civil War (New Narratives In American History)



## Synopsis

Despite the advances of the civil rights movement, many white southerners cling to the faded glory of a romanticized Confederate past. In *The Making of a Confederate*, William L. Barney focuses on the life of one man, Walter Lenoir of North Carolina, to examine the origins of southern white identity alongside its myriad ambiguities and complexities. Born into a wealthy slaveholding family, Lenoir abhorred the institution, opposed secession, and planned to leave his family to move to Minnesota, in the free North. But when the war erupted in 1860, Lenoir found another escape route--he joined the Confederate army, an experience that would radically transform his ideals. After the war, Lenoir, like many others, embraced the cult of the Lost Cause, refashioning his memory and beliefs in an attempt to make sense of the war, its causes, and its consequences. While some Southerners sank into depression, aligned with the victors, or fiercely opposed the new order, Lenoir withdrew to his acreage in the North Carolina mountains. There, he pursued his own vision of the South's future, one that called for greater self-sufficiency and a more efficient use of the land. For Lenoir and many fellow Confederates, the war never really ended. As he tells this compelling story, Barney offers new insights into the ways that (selective) memory informs history; through Lenoir's life, readers learn how individual choices can transform abstract historical processes into concrete actions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In this fascinating and beautifully written portrait...William L. Barney breathes life into many key

aspects of the Civil War era as it was experienced in the Upper South. A major achievement."--Bruce Levine, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author of *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves during the Civil War*"An enormously intelligent, sensitive, interesting, [and] significant biography of a minor character that takes us inside one white Southerner's life, family, and mind."--Mina Carson, Oregon State University"[An] excellent biography of Walter Lenoir [that] illustrates the dynamics of Lost Cause mythologizing in the postbellum South."--South Atlantic Review

William L. Barney is Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is author of *The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Student Companion* (OUP, 2001), *The Passage of the Republic*, *Battleground for the Union*, *Flawed Victory*, *The Secessionist Impulse*, and *The Road to Secession*. He is coauthor of *The American Journey*, Second Edition, and editor of *A Companion to 19th-Century America*.

This semi-autobiographical story of Walter Lenoir brings the period before, during, and after the Civil War to life. Told through journal entries laced together by the author using careful research and other primary sources this great little book helps us understand the hard decisions that were made during the Civil War. Why volunteer to fight for the Confederates cause if you profess to be against slavery? Why would one brother choose to fight for the North while another would choose the South? An interesting look into these and many other issues that illustrate the Civil War era.

"The Making of a Confederate: Walter Lenoir's Civil War" is an interesting view into what made one man commit his life to the Southern Cause of the Confederacy. Although a slave-holder, he did not actually enjoy the problems associated with slavery, nor did any of his family, and it was NOT the reason that he fought the war. He was of the "landed aristocracy" of NW North Carolina but NOT a proponent of slavery, in fact, he wished to move to a non-slaveholding state before the war began. However, once Lincoln called for a massing of troops to fight the secessionist South, Lenoir felt honor-bound, much like Robert E. Lee, to fight for his state and its right to govern itself. He did so, and lost a leg in the process. This book follows him before, during and after the war and shows how a man evolves due to the choices that he makes. I would highly recommend this book to others interested in Southern history, North Carolina history, and/or "Civil" War history. I would particularly recommend this book to those North Carolinians interested in the history of NW North Carolina.

I'm astonished that a previous reviewer attacked the book because the author does not approve of slave owning. He doesn't. Who does? Neither did the Lenoir family members, who did own slaves. William Barney carefully shows how Walter Lenoir himself hated to punish his slaves but did it anyway to set an example for the other slaves, and how Lenoir like many other Southerners of his time, despised slavery but depended on it. To him, it was evil but necessary. The war itself and its aftermath is what turned Lenoir into a confederate, and Barney traces that change in thought and attitude subtly in clear, enjoyable prose. The book is a beautiful portrait to a troubled and in many ways admirable man and his times.

Needed the book for class, works like its supposed to.

I really enjoyed this book. Although it teaches us much about history, it is well written and reads like a novel. I must admit that Walter Lenoir is an ancestor of mine but I still highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys learning and reading about the Civil war. It is a EXCELLENT book!!! Kudos to the author.

Great book!!!!

The North won the war. So they get to write the history, but their version is not believable. If you have common sense. My forefathers did not fight for slavery, because they did not have any.

:) great product was well worth the money good, good

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