



# 10 best novels about the US Civil War

It was roughly 150 years ago that Confederate troops fired on a federal fort in Charleston harbor and began the violent four-year struggle in which Americans raised arms against Americans. The history books can tell us much about the trauma of war, but for those who prefer the emotional truths that can be conveyed by a good novel, here are 10 classic stories of the US Civil War.

## 1. "The Killer Angels," by Michael Shaara

This 1975 Pulitzer Prize winner tells the story of the horrendous four-day Gettysburg Battle from the perspective of various protagonists on both sides of the divide.

## 2. "North and South," by John Jakes

This trilogy of bestselling novels winds throughout three generations – before, during, and after the US Civil War – of two families. The Mains are slave-owning Southern planters and the Hazards are Northern industrialists. That doesn't stop Orry Main and George Hazard from becoming best friends while attending West Point but it does put their families on opposite sides of the war.

## 3. "Gone with the Wind," by Margaret Mitchell

You can't make a list of Civil War novels without including Margaret Mitchell's 1936 classic. Her story of a ravaged South – interwoven with the romance of plucky Southern belle Scarlett O'Hara and the roguish Rhett Butler – won the 1937 Pulitzer Prize and went on to become one of the bestselling books of all time.

## 4. "Cold Mountain," by Charles Frazier

A wounded Confederate soldier named Inman struggles to make his way home to North Carolina and his sweetheart Ada. But even as his experiences have changed Inman, the war has also altered Ada, a gentlewoman who has had to cope with deprivation and fear.

## 5. "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All," by Allan Gurganus

Now 95, Lucy Marsden looks back on her marriage at the age of 15 to "Captain" Marsden, a 50-year-old Civil War veteran who was never able to recover from the trauma he experienced during the war and who devoted the rest of his life to reminiscing about it.

## 6. "Red Badge of Courage," by Stephen Crane

This classic published only 30 years after the war tells the story of the conflict through the eyes of soldier Henry Fleming, who must travel an emotional arc from naive patriotism to horrified fear to eventual courage.

## 7. "Shiloh," by Shelby Foote

This 1952 novel by eminent civil war historian Shelby Foote uses first-person narratives by soldiers on both sides of the conflict to tell the story of the horrific 1862 battle of Shiloh, one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War.

## 8. "March," by Geraldine Brooks

Blending one great fictional tale into another, this 2006 Pulitzer Prize winner imagines the wartime experiences of Mr. March, the father of the four girls in Louisa May Alcott's classic "Little Women."

## 9. "The Widow of the South," by Robert Hicks

Civil War buff Robert Hicks based his 2005 novel on the true story of a Confederate woman who devoted herself to giving Southern soldiers a proper burial – in her own backyard. The novel begins in 1894 when, the protagonist, Carrie McGavock, is an elderly woman. An equally elderly soldier – who turns out to be her lost love – shows up at her door and asks if he too can be buried in her personal graveyard.

## 10. "The March," by E.L. Doctorow

E.L. Doctorow uses 20-some characters to serve up a fictionalized account of Union general William Tecumseh Sherman's devastating 1864-64 march through Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.