



Making Sense of the American Civil War

SITE SUPPORT NOTEBOOK
For State-Level Programs



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INTRODUCTION

What is *Let's Talk About It*?

Let's Talk About It is a reading and discussion series led by local scholars and organized around themes that engage and stimulate audiences. It was pioneered by the American Library Association (ALA) on a national level in 1982. *Let's Talk About It* has reached hundreds of libraries and more than four million people around the United States in the past 30 years.

The ALA Public Programs Office and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) are pleased to offer "Making Sense of the American Civil War," a theme that explores meanings of the war that are "hidden in plain sight" behind the key questions and main characters so familiar to us. *Let's Talk About It: Making Sense of the American Civil War* aims to encourage contemplation and conversation about and the war's meaning and engender a love of literature and community discussion through the *Let's Talk About It* model.

How will *Let's Talk About It: Civil War* programs work at my library?

Participating libraries plan a series of reading and discussion programs taking place at the library every 2 to 4 weeks (depending on local library preference). The library is responsible for recruiting a scholar to lead the discussion, and promoting the programs to the widest possible public audience. The program includes a series of five readings found throughout three books, to be read and discussed, accompanied by a scholarly essay. The essay, written by national project scholar Edward L. Ayers, president of the University of Richmond, introduces the theme and illuminates discussion.

How are *Let's Talk About It: Civil War* programs being supported at the state level?

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has provided support for 37 state humanities councils (some working in partnership with state libraries, state centers for the book, and other non-profit agencies) to coordinate reading and discussion programs on the theme "Making Sense of the American Civil War." Each participating state has received 100 copies of the titles to be used in the reading and discussion programs: *March* by Geraldine Brooks, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by James McPherson, and *America's War: Talking About the Civil War and Emancipation on Their 150th Anniversaries* edited by Edward L. Ayers.

Interested libraries may approach their state humanities council to request 25 copies of each book, for use in public programs. State councils may also be able to offer access to a local American history or literature scholar to lead programs, and/or grant support that will cover the scholar's honoraria. To learn more about the support available in your state, contact your state council.

Statewide programs are available in AL, AZ, AR, CA, CO, DE, GA, HI, ID, IN, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, NH, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WV, WI, and WY. For more detailed information, visit <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwar.htm>.

What makes *Let's Talk About It* unique?

- It is designed for libraries.
- The readings are organized around an overarching theme.
- Reading and discussion groups explore the theme through the lens of the humanities – that is, by relating the readings to historical trends and events, other works of literature, philosophical and ethical considerations.
- A humanities scholar, often a professor from a local college or university, presents a short talk at the beginning of each discussion session to help focus and provoke discussion.
- The discussion is led or facilitated by the humanities scholar.

Why does ALA work with other institutions and funders to develop reading and discussion programs?

Libraries are many things to their communities. They offer the practical information people need to improve the quality of their lives and to increase their options in a complex society. Libraries also give their communities something less tangible, yet just as essential to a satisfying and productive life – nourishment for the spirit.

Programs in the humanities and the arts that encourage people to think about literature, history, ethics, science, music, visual and literary arts, and human values are an integral part of the mission of libraries.

Reading and discussion series stimulate public interest in the world of ideas. They are as much an opportunity for continuing education as starting points for substantive discussion, study and programming.

One goal of ALA adult programming initiatives is to encourage the public to go beyond the stacks to explore themes with fellow patrons and the help of scholarly resources. A related goal is to help libraries strengthen their role as intellectual forums and central cultural and educational institutions in their communities.

We hope that the experience and information gained through these programs will encourage librarians to plan future humanities and arts based programs for their communities.

About Our Partner

The National Endowment for the Humanities: Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports learning in history, literature, philosophy and other areas of the humanities. NEH grants enrich classroom learning, create and preserve knowledge and bring ideas to life through public television, radio, new technologies, exhibitions and programs in libraries, museums and other community places. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.neh.gov.

THEME, BOOKS & PROGRAM MATERIALS

Theme and Book Selections

Making Sense of the American Civil War: From the moment Americans found themselves pulled into a civil war of unimaginable scale and consequence, they tried desperately to make sense of what was happening to them. From the secession crisis into the maelstrom of battle, from the nightmare of slavery into the twilight of emancipation, Americans of all backgrounds confronted the chaos with stories to explain how things had come to be. People continued to tell themselves those stories about the war and its meaning for the next century and a half, and they probably always will.

Historians' understanding of the global significance of the Civil War has shifted from fifty years ago, at the time of the centennial, when its major consequence seemed to be the unification of a nation that would stand against communism. Today, the Civil War matters just as much, it seems, for bringing an end to the most powerful system of slavery in the modern world. A hundred and fifty years after the defining war in our nation's history, we are still discovering its meanings.

Stories about the American Civil War have been told in many forms, often disguised as something else. Most of the stories at the time came in letters or diaries or reports, fashioned from whatever materials were close at hand. Speeches, made up on the spot or carefully crafted for the world to read, told stories that placed blame and laid out strategies. Newspaper articles written overnight shaped fragments and reports into narratives of victory and loss. Memoirs, short stories, novels, and histories written months or years later wove new patterns of storytelling.

The following readings have been selected for "Making Sense of the American Civil War," giving us a glimpse of the vast sweep and profound breadth of Americans' war among and against themselves. Each reading adds a crucial voice to our understanding of the war and its meaning.

- *March* by Geraldine Brooks
- *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by James McPherson
- *America's War: Talking About the Civil War and Emancipation on Their 150th Anniversaries*, edited by Edward L. Ayers

Essay

National project scholar Edward L. Ayers has written a thoughtful and reflective essay that informs the theme. This essay is a discussion tool and guidepost for local scholar and participant alike. Each "Making Sense of the American Civil War" participant should be given the essay in advance of the first discussion session. Copies of the essay may be downloaded and printed from the NEH's Federal-State Partnership website at <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>.

Ordering additional books (print and e-books)

If your library regularly hosts reading and discussion programs, you will already have policies and practices in place for making books available to patrons. Whether reading and discussion programs are new to your library or not, here are the most common strategies for ensuring that patrons have access to the books.

The library provides the books: Ideally you will provide one book to each participant, for each program in the series. Plan in advance and place copies of the books on reserve for “Making Sense of the American Civil War” participants. Libraries are encouraged to contact their state’s administering agency to borrow a complete collection, which includes copies of each book for 25 participants. Additional copies may be purchased or gathered from other library branches or through interlibrary loan.

Participants purchase their own copies: Even when the books are available through the library, participants often want to purchase their own copies to annotate as they go along. It can be helpful to contact local bookstores and let them know about the “Making Sense of the American Civil War” series far in advance. Bookstores can be a valuable partner in publicity and will often agree to offer a discount on purchases of books for the series. Note that *America’s War* is available only as a print-on-demand title, so greater lead-time for orders is recommended.

Exchanges with other participating “Making Sense of the American Civil War” libraries: Libraries participating in this program communicate with each other via the “Making Sense of the American Civil War” electronic discussion list (see Section 5: Additional Resources) and work out book sharing, buying, and exchange arrangements.

A Tip

Consider putting together program “kits” that pre-registered participants can check out. Kits for the first meeting session might include a copy of *America’s War*, a copy of *March*, and the participant folder (containing essays, bookmark, brochure, and flyer with meeting times and dates). For future sessions, participants can trade in the title(s) discussed that night for the next title in the series, adding it to their kit.

Costs and quantities: The titles selected for this series have been chosen with their availability in paperback in mind, in an effort to keep costs down. Each title is also available in electronic (e-book) edition. Book orders (anything beyond the copies that have already been provided by your state’s program administrator) should be placed in advance of pre-registration deadlines, and the number of books ordered should be based on your audience estimate.

Also, when estimating quantities, keep in mind that publicizing your “Making Sense of the American Civil War” programs may create demand for the titles among those who want to read the books, but do not have the time to participate.

The possibility of higher-than-estimated participation is another reason to contact local bookstores in advance and work out favorable purchasing arrangements for participants. Encourage the bookstores to create window displays featuring “Making Sense of the American Civil War” books and publicizing the discount.

E-books: All three books included in the “Making Sense of the American Civil War” program may be purchased in e-book editions.

America’s War is available as an e-book bundle (which includes file types compatible with Amazon Kindle, Sony eReader, iPhone’s Stanza eReader, Adobe Digital Editions eReader and MobiPocket eReader) via the ALA Online Store at <http://www.alastore.ala.org/>. This e-book edition is priced at \$5.99 and is intended for individual use/purchase only. A lending version of the e-book is also for sale via OverDrive, Amazon and other vendors.

You may also purchase e-book versions of *March* and *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* via your usual e-book vendors. *March* is available through OverDrive and *Crossroads of Freedom* is available through MyiLibrary (an Ingram company) and ebrary (a ProQuest company). Other distributors may also offer these e-books for purchase and circulation; please check with your library’s vendor.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: MAKING SENSE OF
THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
READING & DISCUSSION PROGRAM FORMAT**

I. Welcome and Introductions (5-10 minutes)

Project director welcomes participants and introduces self, scholar. Thank participants, library, funders, and partners. Go over format and let people know what to expect. Provide any necessary information regarding program materials, schedule for rest of series. Lead applause for scholar.

II. Scholarly Presentation (20-25 minutes)

Scholar's presentation on the week's reading(s), authors' backgrounds, the readings in context of the theme and essay, salient points made by the reading(s) and other relevant matters.

III. Discussion (45-60 minutes)

If the group exceeds 30-35 people, it may be necessary to break into small groups. In this case, the project director should recruit discussion leaders to facilitate small group discussion while the scholar floats between the small groups. After the discussion period, the small groups may reconvene for closing remarks.

IV. Wrap Up (10 – 20 minutes)

Scholar provides closing comments. Project director thanks the participants and scholar, distributes and collects evaluations, gives instructions for next session, and makes other announcements.

Total Program Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes – 2 hours

PLANNING THE PROGRAMS

Goals and Objectives

Your first steps will probably be to develop a preliminary program plan, and contact your state humanities council to request program support. Then, as the program dates approach and you begin implementing your program plan, revisit the reasons why you want to hold the “Making Sense of the American Civil War” series. It may seem like you already know the answer, but it’s worth taking another look. Think about what you want the series to accomplish:

Audience Goals:

- Who will your program serve (ages, demographics, library use)?
- How many (% of target population)?
- Why this audience?
- What are the interests of audience?
- What are the needs of this audience and how will they benefit?

(For more on target audience, see Promotion)

Collection/Thematic Goals:

- Is there an area of the collection that you want to emphasize or build around the series theme?
- Does this discussion series theme relate to other library or community programming or events?

Community Goals:

- How will the community benefit?
- Which partner organizations might be interested in your library’s Civil War reading series?
- What community issues/agendas tie into the Civil War theme?

Program Goals:

- What do you want this reading and discussion program to accomplish?
- How will the library benefit?
- What future activities might this series foster?

Good programs find connections between goals.

Planning the Series

Good programs are the result of good planning. After your project goals are in place, review your timeline and break your planning process down to construct a practical working timeline that will enable you to complete an excellent reading and discussion series. The following checklist should help you give yourself enough time to produce a well-organized reading and discussion series.

- Prepare a project budget
- Recruit program scholar
- Select program dates, times
- Recruit potential program partners
- Apply for funding
- Receive funding
- Apply for matching funding, contact potential sponsors
- Alert library staff, Friends
- Contact scholar, program partners with notification of grant award
- Reserve meeting space
- Finalize marketing plan
- Order any additional books, alert local book stores
- Finalize audience recruitment plan
- Publicize reading and discussion series
- Distribute publicity materials to program partners
- Place ads, public service announcements
- Put together staffing plan; if need be, recruit discussion group leaders
- Secure “buy-in” from library staff and administration
- Track potential participants through sign-up system
- Order refreshments
- Distribute program materials to pre-registered participants
- Last minute confirmations with scholar, partner organizations
- Send email reminders to registrants (week or day before sessions)
- Hold discussion sessions
- Monitor book circulation
- Publicize throughout series
- Conduct evaluation of each program
- Collect end-of-series evaluations from participants and scholars
- Submit online final report

Not all of these steps may be necessary for your program series, or you may come up with other items for your checklist – tailor the checklist to fit your library’s needs.

Program Personnel Job Descriptions

Project Director

The project director is the person at the library (or other host site) who manages the reading and discussion series from beginning to end. This may seem like a large undertaking, however, with adequate planning it can be quite manageable.

Although the project director may have help from a planning committee, volunteers and other library staff, he/she is primarily responsible for overseeing:

- Selection and coordination of the scholar
- Reservation, preparation of the meeting room
- Pre-registration of participants
- Distribution of program materials
- Publicity and outreach
- Working with community partners
- Preparation of budget, payment of bills, honorarium
- Management of programs
- Coordination of assisting staff and/or volunteers
- Evaluation and reporting

Project Scholar

If you've worked with humanities programming before, the idea of involving a scholar is not only familiar but also appealing. The scholar isn't an obstacle to be overcome – if that's your approach it could all too likely become the result. Think of the scholar as your program partner and make sure he or she understands that role.

Both of you, the project director and the scholar exist only to make this discussion series a terrific experience for the participants. You must both be open to the interests of the group, encouraging their ideas and offering assistance. You both have a great deal to offer in facilitating this program, but the program is for the participants, not for the scholar or the library.

Minimum Scholar Qualifications:

- Must possess appropriate academic qualifications to speak on the program themes and have teaching or other experience relevant to selected titles;
- Must be engaging, comfortable and experienced speaking before and facilitating discussion with adult audiences.

Preferred Scholar Qualifications (the above qualifications, plus):

- A Ph.D. or advanced degree in American History, American Literature, or other related humanities subject.
- He or she should be adept at facilitating discussion with adult audiences on themes related to the human condition, and in particular on American history or literature and the Civil War.

Working with a Project Scholar

Finding and contacting a scholar is only the first step; working with them so you have a mutual understanding of program goals and expectations is what will make this a successful experience for the participants, the scholar, the partners and you.

- This is not a college-level class – people are participating for the pleasure of reading and talking about the things they’ve read. They want to learn about – but not necessarily major in – the subject or subjects introduced by the themes. Make sure your scholar understands this and has experience working with non-college student audiences.
- Try to “interview” the scholar before making your selection. Ask if they’ve worked with library audiences or out-of-school adults before; gauge their interest in the overall subject; ask for a short biographical statement or other background information.
- Make some educated guesses about the general characteristics of your audience (age, interests, education, etc.) and share that information with the scholar.
- Be clear about the format – an opening set of remarks from the scholar, usually not more than 20-25 minutes, followed by discussion for the rest of the program.
- Be clear about the scholar’s role – the scholar is not only to take the lead in the opening remarks, but also to facilitate participation by the group during the discussion portion of the program.
- The scholar may want to prepare points for discussion for the group, based on the theme, books and essay. These discussion points may be distributed to participants in advance of the sessions, along with the rest of the program materials.
- Outline the commitment from the library and the commitment from the scholar in writing – include honorarium to be paid, any expenses to be covered, and schedule of all programs.
- Provide the scholar with any background materials you feel would be helpful, including the theme essay, copies of the books, related articles, “typical questions,” or prompts for discussion, copies of PR materials, roster of pre-registered attendees, etc.
- If you’ve held reading and discussion programs before, share some of the comments from participants’ evaluation forms, to give the scholar an idea of what to expect.
- Involve the scholar in publicity, such as an interview with a local newspaper or magazine about the program. Encourage the scholar to market the series to his or her own network.
- Keep the scholar informed throughout the process. Let them know how pre-registration and publicity progress. If you receive feedback from participants after each session, share their comments with the scholar.

Community Partners

Partnerships can assume many forms: co-presenters, financial partners, organizations that will donate goods or services, marketing and outreach efforts, and volunteers.

A partnership is successful if both partners gain something from the relationship. Identify groups that you have worked with in the past and ones that you would like to work with in the future. Share your project plans with potential partners and see if your goals resonate with their mission, interests, or intentions for community outreach.

Possible Making Sense of the American Civil War program partners:

- Arts and humanities organizations (historical societies, museums, cultural centers)
- National or state parks
- Book clubs
- Community centers
- Senior organizations
- Area churches, synagogues and other religious organizations
- Public libraries in neighboring communities, library systems
- Professional associations
- Community colleges
- Universities
- Literacy organizations
- Social justice agencies
- Literary magazines
- Writers groups and poetry guilds
- Fraternal organizations
- Local businesses
- Councils on Aging/AARP groups
- Minority group associations
- Local chapters of national organizations (ADL, ACLU, ZONTA, ROTARY)

More information on promoting the series by working with community partners can be found in the Promotions section.

Program Length

One and a half to 2 hours are about right for this type of reading and discussion program. Attendees should come prepared to discuss the book(s) and the essay. Distribute a copy of the national scholar's essay at least two weeks in advance of the first program, to allow participants time to read and consider it. The local scholar will talk for 15-25 minutes, group discussion will last for about an hour, and time will be needed for getting started, seated, wrapping up, and if needed, taking a break.

Group Size

There is no magic number for the best group size. You want to make this program available to the largest number of people who will make an active commitment to participate. If the group is large, either break into smaller groups for discussion or plan to hold the program at additional times, and/or venues. Asking people to pre-register by signing up in advance for these programs is the best way to predict group size, as well as to ensure a commitment to attendance.

If you know you will have very large attendance and opt to break up into small discussion groups, recruit staff or experienced volunteers to serve as discussion leaders. Under this model, the scholar floats between the discussion groups.

Day of the Program Checklist

The following items should be in place before the start of each program. An affirmative answer to the following questions should mean you are ready to go.

- Staff:** Has staff been alerted to the program location?
- Signage:** Are there signs telling people where to go?
- Room Set-up:** Are the chairs, nametags, and sign-in sheets in place?
- Refreshments:** Have you checked delivery and setup?
- Scholar:** Has the scholar been called to confirm directions, time, place, and other arrangements?
- Volunteers:** Do volunteers and staff have all the necessary information?
- Pre-registration:** Have participants who signed up for the program in advance picked up their program materials? Do you have a sign-in sheet ready for the program?
- Introductions & Acknowledgements:** Have you prepared introductions and a list of funders, sponsors, partners, and others to thank?
- Reminder email:** Have you sent a reminder email to pre-registrants?
- Greetings:** Has someone been designated to greet participants as they arrive?

READING & DISCUSSION GROUP TIPS FOR SCHOLARS

Reading and Discussion Group Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Be sure that everyone wears a nametag to help the participants become acquainted with each other.
- Suggest that the group form a circle, if possible, so that each person can see all the members of the group and the format is less like a classroom.
- Make certain that everyone who wants to participate has a chance to do so.
- Help keep the group on track.
- Aim to be the “leader” as little as possible.
- Accept and acknowledge the ideas of all group members.
- Look mainly at the overall group atmosphere. Don't overreact to the needs of specific individuals.
- Listen attentively to what each member has to say. Listen in such a manner that members will see that you are listening and are genuinely interested.
- Encourage wide participation by occasionally asking if there are alternate points of view.

Don'ts

- Don't require members to ask for permission to speak.
- Don't require members to speak only to you.
- Don't preach or teach.
- Don't take sides or argue on any issue.
- Don't manipulate the discussion or inhibit its flow.
- Don't push people to participate before they feel ready.
- Don't embarrass any member.
- Don't hog the spotlight.

Tips for Dealing with Problem Situations

Here are some ideas from experienced discussion leaders of ways to deal with typical problem situations.

To deal with a dominating participant:

“Just a second, Bill. Let’s get back to the first point you made. Is there someone who would like to add to Bill’s remark?”

“Bob, I think your point is a good one, and I see that Mary would like to comment.”

To include the shy participant:

“I remember your saying, Sarah, that you particularly enjoy Louisa May Alcott’s work. Do you have anything to share about your thoughts on this reading?”

To include all participants:

When participants share information about themselves, make a mental note of it and bring it up at a later time, when appropriate.

Use personal names often during the discussion and encourage others to use them.

To cope with expressions of deep emotion:

Remember that “Making Sense of the American Civil War” is a reading and discussion project. While its purpose is to encourage lively and profound discussion of the humanities through literature, it is not the appropriate setting to explore personal problems.

Acknowledge the depth of feeling in a members’ remark: “I can feel from the tone in your voice how much this means to you.”

Draw others into the discussion. This helps remove the person from the focus of the group and allows him or her to get their emotions back under control. “I understand this is a problem for you, Lisa. Let’s hear how the others have coped with it.”

Widen the discussion, moving from the personal to the impersonal: “You sound like the man in this story, Glen. Do you remember how he dealt with this situation?”

To deal with conflicting opinions:

The way you handle conflict will greatly influence the way the participants handle it as well. Give people time to say what they think, but don’t prolong the exchange beyond the interest span of the group. No matter what is said, it is important that no evaluation of opinion or judgment of personality is indicated.

“This disagreement shows diversity of feelings here.”

“I think both points of view are valid.”

“This subject certainly evokes strong emotions and that’s good.”

B U D G E T I N G E X P E N S E W O R K S H E E T

	Cash Expenses	In-Kind
Books (# of copies X cost per copy)		
Paperbacks	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____
Scholar		
Honorarium	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____
Staff Time		
Administration	_____	_____
Fundraising	_____	_____
Materials development	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____
Training Workshop		
Lodging/meals	_____	_____
Airfare	_____	_____
Expenses	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____
Publicity & Marketing		
Publicity materials development	_____	_____
Press outreach	_____	_____
Community outreach	_____	_____
Web page production	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____
Related Expenses		
Postage	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____
Meetings	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____
Printing & Photocopying	Total	_____
	_____	_____
Total Cash Expenses	_____	
Total In-Kind Expenses	_____	
Project Total	_____	

REVENUE WORKSHEET

	Cash Revenue	In-Kind
State Council support	_____	_____
Library	_____	_____
Friends of the Library	_____	_____
Other Grants	_____	_____
Other Revenue	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

Sponsors

Community Organizations	_____	_____
Book Store	_____	_____
Radio or TV Station	_____	_____
Local Businesses	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

Total Cash Revenue

Cash expenses should not exceed cash revenue

Total In-Kind

In-Kind Revenue total should match In-Kind expense total

FUNDING RESOURCES

Short-Term Grants for Library Humanities Programming

You may want to look into finding funds to support your reading and discussion program. This can expand the budget for your program and increase the potential reach and impact.

- Many state humanities councils award “mini-grants” or “resource grants” to support free admission public humanities programs of short duration. In most states, programs must involve a humanities scholar in order to qualify for a grant.
- Short-term grants usually cover only the direct costs of a humanities program, for example, honoraria and travel expenses for lecturers, film or video preparation and presentation, printing and postage for promotional items, and the purchase of books for discussion programs. Short-term grants do not in most cases cover the costs of food or beverages for receptions or other social events.
- Mini-grants and resource grants range from \$100 to \$1,500 or more, depending upon the state's guidelines and the purpose of the grant. Matching funds or in-kind contributions are often required for state humanities council grants.
- Application deadlines for short-term grants vary from state to state. In general, state humanities councils ask that mini-grant applications be received from six to ten weeks before a program is to begin. Some states also award one-time grants of a few hundred dollars that can be applied for at any time.
- Contact your state humanities council for short-term grant guidelines and application requirements.
- For a list of state humanities councils or information on your state humanities council, contact:

The Federation of State Humanities Councils
1600 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 902
Arlington, VA 22209
Tel.: 703-908-9700
Fax: 703-908-9706

Contact information for all state humanities councils can also be found at:

www.statehumanities.org

PROMOTION

To draw the audience you seek and create awareness about your reading and discussion series, your library needs to plan and implement an effective promotional campaign. The following guidelines are intended to help you launch a successful campaign. Included are general suggestions for promotional activities and sample media materials.

Please note: All promotional materials should carry a funder credit line and/or funder logos. An example appears on page 32, Guidelines for Sponsor Credits.

Getting Started

To meet media and other deadlines, you will need to start promoting your reading and discussion series at least two months in advance.

First, determine your target audience, goals for audience size and the best communication methods for this program. Involving your fellow staff members in program planning can be a great way to start determining these things and foster new ideas and additional support and enthusiasm. Try holding a mini-workshop or brainstorming session. During this session:

- Emphasize the potential for recruiting new users and building support for the library.
- Communicate the goals for your program – what audiences you wish to reach, what you wish to accomplish.
- Assign staff with various interests/talents to work in small groups to carry out the goals.

Additionally, share your program plans with the library director, board, Friends and other library support groups and invite their ideas and cooperation.

Defining the Target Audience

General promotional materials such as postcards, flyers, press releases, and advertisements are great vehicles for reaching a general audience of mixed ages and backgrounds. Certainly, there are also several groups in your community that will be very interested in your series. These groups can provide support through passing information about the series onto members of their organization who may be interested in attending or providing financial, programmatic, and other support. For a list of some of these organizations that may be in your community, see Planning the Programs.

Choosing Communication Methods

Once you've determined who you would like reach out to, you need to focus on how you're going to let them know about the series. Most communication methods fall into these four categories:

- **Public Relations/Publicity:** press releases, newspaper and magazine articles, announcements on television and radio programs, websites, public service announcements (PSAs), letters to the editor, social media;

- **Direct Marketing:** direct mailings, mass e-mail messages, online marketing;
- **Personal Contact:** word of mouth, public speaking engagements, telephone, e-mails, letters;
- **Advertising:** print ads, TV and radio spots, banners, flyers, bookmarks, posters, buttons, and displays.

Public Relations/Publicity

Public relations/publicity refers to content about your library and programs that appear in the media. For example, a press release or public service announcement informing the media about your events may result in newspaper coverage or an announcement on a local radio program.

Press and Media

Contacting the media and using the Internet to publicize your event is key to getting your message out to a mass audience. Here are a few methods you can use to contact your local media and reach out to audiences through the Internet:

- E-mail a *press release* announcing the event to your local newspapers, radio stations and television stations at least two to four weeks before the event. If you have regional magazines or talk shows that list upcoming events, you may want to send a release to them as well. Since these media outlets often have longer lead times, send these press releases out at least four to eight weeks before the event. Sample press releases can be found in the following pages.
- About a week before your event, follow up the press release by sending a *media alert* via fax or e-mail to key contacts. A sample media alert appears on the following pages. The alert provides specific information about the date, time and location for reporters and photographers who may be interested in attending the series, reporting on the series, or including the information in an “Upcoming Events” section. If possible, call each contact a day or two later to confirm that they received the media alert, find out if they have any questions, and see if they are interested in attending the program, scheduling an interview with the program director or scholar, getting more information about the program, or if they plan to include the news in an upcoming issue.
- If you find that media professionals are interested in visiting the library for a program in the series, a related event, or an interview, you will need to have additional materials available in a *press kit*. The press kit should contain one copy of the press release, media alert, photos and biographies of your scholar and other key participants, and copies of all promotional materials – flyers, bookmarks, postcards, etc. Alternately, you may decide to create an *electronic press kit*, which would include PDFs of all the materials listed above saved to a disc or a USB flash drive, or uploaded to a section of your library’s website that can be easily accessed by the local media. If you do get an opportunity to discuss the event with a reporter, suggest story ideas and offer to schedule an interview with your speakers and partner organizations. (First, make sure your program guests, scholar, and partner organization representatives are willing to be interviewed.)

- Since television and radio stations are required to use a percentage of their airtime for non-profit and public announcements, your local stations may be willing to air a *public service announcement* (PSA) about your reading and discussion series. A PSA will advertise your event, but is donated airtime, so there is no cost to your library. If you have the capabilities, you may wish to create taped, ready-to-air PSAs for radio and/or TV. If not, you will need to work closely with stations in your community to gain their interest in the series and help them develop the PSAs.

Internet

- If your library's website doesn't have a calendar or Coming Events section, talk to your webmaster about creating one. This is the perfect place for library patrons to find out details about your series. Make sure you include as much information as possible on your website and keep it current. If you do have a Coming Events section, you need to include information about the series in it. Participants in the series who do not visit the library on a regular basis will look to the library's website for details or last minute information, and it's important that you make that information available. If you post information about the series on your library's website, be sure to include the URL on promotional materials.
- The Internet can also be useful for getting the word out about your event through other organizations' websites. Your partner organizations, city, community centers, local media outlets and Chamber of Commerce may post information about community events on their websites. Additionally, many major cities also have local entertainment and news websites, such as Patch.com, Eventful.com, Upcoming.Yahoo.com, and Everyblock.com, which provide information about events in several cities. Find out if these websites exist in your area and learn how you can go about getting your library's events added to the site. Many sites allow for user-generated content, so adding your *Let's Talk About It* series could be easier than you think. Also, be sure to include links to your partners' sites and encourage them to return the favor.

Social Media

- If your library has a presence on social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, or Flickr, be sure to post information to those venues when promoting your upcoming events. Include the relevant information about date, time, and location, but also include a preview of the themes of the program. Consider creating a short video or podcast to preview the subject matter to be discussed and provoke conversation. Remember to include the library's electronic networks not just through the promotion period, but through the programming period as well. Sites such as Facebook and Twitter can be the logical place for participants to continue any conversation that begins in the library.
- Participating libraries are encouraged to tag related content on Twitter, Flickr and YouTube with #letstalkcw and #CW150.

Direct Marketing

Using the list of community organizations and other groups you have identified as your target audience, you can use direct marketing to contact these groups and individual members of these groups.

- When contacting community and other organizations, use a personalized letter or phone call. You can also use a copy of your program flyer as an informal letter, if needed, but be sure to include a personal note soliciting support, especially if you are asking for financial or other support. A sample letter to community groups appears on the following pages.
- In addition to contacting organizations, you may want to target individuals in your community. If you keep a list of patrons' e-mail addresses, sending a mass e-mail message about the upcoming event can be an effective and inexpensive way to get the word out to a number of people. You may also want to consider printing a customized version of the "Making Sense of the American Civil War" postcard found online at <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>. Postcards can be mailed to library patrons, community members or others. Additionally, you may want to send an e-mail message about the program to community group leaders to post to their electronic discussion groups or forward on to their own address lists.

Personal Contact

One-on-one personal contact can be one of your most effective means of communicating with key individuals and groups. It can create a better understanding and build more enthusiasm than any other communication method. Some tips:

- Create a list of influential individuals in your community – the mayor, city council members, business leaders, etc. – who may be interested in your event. Send them a letter and program flyer about the event and ask to meet with them to discuss further. If a meeting is not possible, mention in your letter that you will call them within a week to follow-up. Even if these individuals are not able to participate in the series, letting them know about the program could help the library in other ways.
- When contacting community groups, you may want to ask to speak for five to ten minutes at one of their upcoming meetings or events. This is inexpensive and effective since it allows you to both deliver your message and gauge responses. At the meeting, outline your overall series plan and present convincing reasons why the series may be of interest to them. Bring flyers, bookmarks and other materials along to distribute after your speech. If possible, speak at the end of the meeting or offer to stay until the end of the meeting to answer questions.
- If speaking at a meeting is not possible, solicit support from these groups to help promote the program themselves. Ask the group leaders to pass out flyers or mention the program to their members and staff.

Advertising

Often the most expensive promotional method, advertising can also be one of the most effective vehicles for promoting your program. Here are a few advertising methods:

- *Promotional posters:* Posters should include series program times, location(s), scholar's name and title or brief biographical information, acknowledgement of local funders, and your library's URL, e-mail address, and/or phone number people can call for more information.

Posters can be posted at your library, community centers (e.g., city hall, the post office and schools, local colleges), restaurants, grocery stores, dry cleaners, bookstores, health clubs, etc. Ask Friends and trustees to post flyers and posters at places they frequent. It's easy for them to take the posters with them and won't require as much work for the project director or staff. Posters can be obtained from your state humanities council, or downloaded from <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>.

- *Paid advertising* in local newspapers and on local radio or television stations can be another effective, but costly method. Before considering paid advertising, approach your local newspapers, radio and television stations regarding public service announcements (see Public Relations/Publicity above). Some newspapers and broadcast stations may be willing to donate or offer discounted airtime or ad space for non-profit groups. If you do receive free advertising, acknowledge the media outlet as a sponsor on program materials. If you consider paid advertising, also look to your Friends or other groups to underwrite costs.
- Developing simple, cost effective promotional items (bookmarks, buttons, pens/pencils, etc.) is another effective way to promote your event. These promotional items can also double as a "freebie" for patrons who attend the "Making Sense of the American Civil War" series. Hand out promotional items at schools, community group meetings or other locations. Ask Friends and trustees to hand out bookmarks to their friends and others. Bookmarks can be obtained from your state humanities council, or downloaded from <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>.

Putting It All Together

After reviewing this list, spend a little time thinking about which of these methods will work best for your event, your community and your library. Consider your budget and time available. Consider your planning team – is this effort a one-man production or committee-based? And, consider your past successes and failures by taking a look at which communication methods you've used to promote past events. For this series, you may want to combine some successful methods you've used before with some new ideas.

Also, keep in mind your goals for the size and type of audience you wish to attract. If your library can only hold a group of twenty, you do not need to spend hundreds of dollars on publicity. Instead, use your resources wisely. Use cost-effective methods and spend the majority of your time contacting individuals and groups that you are most interested in reaching or that could benefit the most from the series.

On the other hand, if you are looking to attract an audience of people who have never set foot in the library, you will need to be more creative in your promotional activities. Most likely, you will need to spend a little more time contacting new people and developing promotional materials for new outlets and locations. However, this time and effort could pay off. Bringing new faces into the library for a program will undoubtedly result in issuing more library cards and finding new life-long library patrons.

Sample Press Release (Series Launch)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
{DATE}

Contact: {NAME}
{PHONE NUMBER}
{E-MAIL ADDRESS}

***{NAME OF LIBRARY} to host Making Sense of the American Civil War
reading and discussion series***

{CITY, STATE} – {NAME OF LIBRARY} will host a free five-part reading and discussion series called “Making Sense of the American Civil War.” The library is one of more than 150 sites that will host the series, developed by the American Library Association and the National Endowment for the Humanities, with additional support provided by {LOCAL HUMANITIES COUNCIL}. Local support for the series is provided by {NAMES OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS.}

All programs will be held at {LIBRARY NAME AND ADDRESS.} For details or to register, please visit {LIBRARY’S WEB SITE ADDRESS} or contact {CONTACT NAME, PHONE NUMBER, AND/OR EMAIL}.

“We are delighted to have been chosen to host this unique series that will allow patrons a chance to discuss the legacy of the Civil War with fellow community members and with the help of a well-qualified scholar,” said {NAME OF LIBRARY/PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND TITLE}.

Group discussion events will be held once per {WEEK/MONTH/ETC.} at the library on the following works:

- “March” by Geraldine Brooks (Penguin, 2006)
- “Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam” by James McPherson (Oxford University Press, 2002)
- “America’s War: Talking About the Civil War and Emancipation on Their 150th Anniversaries,” an anthology of historical fiction, speeches, diaries, memoirs, biography, and short stories, edited by national project scholar Edward L. Ayers and co-published by NEH and ALA.

{NAME OF SCHOLAR, TITLE} will lead a discussion of the book at each session. {IF POSSIBLE, INSERT A SENTENCE OR TWO ABOUT YOUR SCHOLAR’S EXPERTISE}. To obtain copies of all program materials, please contact {LIBRARY CONTACT}.

{END RELEASE WITH A SENTENCE OR TWO ABOUT YOUR LIBRARY,
HOURS, WEB ADDRESS, ETC.}

###

Sample Media Alert

“Making Sense of the American Civil War” reading and discussion series starts at {NAME OF LIBRARY}

WHAT: {NAME OF LIBRARY} will host a free five-part reading and discussion series called “Making Sense of the American Civil War.” In commemoration of the Civil War sesquicentennial, the series encourages participants to consider the legacy of the Civil War and emancipation.

WHO: The series is open to all adults in the community and is led by {NAME AND TITLE OF SCHOLAR}.

WHEN: The series will be held on {PROGRAM DATES, HOURS}

WHERE: {LIBRARY NAME, LOCATION OF PROGRAMS, INCLUDE ADDRESS AND BASIC DIRECTIONS}

WHY: The program is part of a national initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association. Additional support has been provided by {LOCAL HUMANITIES COUNCIL}.

{NAME OF LIBRARY} is one of more than 150 libraries nationwide that will host the series. “Making Sense of the American Civil War” uses books and scholar-led discussions as an effective entry into serious thought, discussion and further reading. It also offers an occasion to bring diverse groups together at the library to discuss the modern implications of the Civil War and emancipation through a mix of scholarly essays, books and discussions.

CONTACT: {NAME, PHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL ADDRESS}

WEBSITE: For additional information, please visit {INSERT WEB ADDRESS}.

###

Sample Letter to Community Groups

{DATE}

{NAME}

{COMPANY}

{ADDRESS}

{CITY, STATE ZIP}

Dear Library Friend: {use a personalized greeting whenever possible}

The {NAME OF LIBRARY} is hosting a new reading and discussion series titled “Making Sense of the American Civil War.” We cordially invite you and your colleagues {use appropriate term for each group, i.e. members, employees, etc.} to attend. The series is designed to offer participants an opportunity to learn about the legacy of the Civil War and emancipation through historical and contemporary literature and discussing these works in scholar-led discussions at the library.

Our library is one of more than 150 nationwide to host this series, which is organized by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association. Additional support has been provided by {LOCAL HUMANITIES COUNCIL}.

{NAME OF SCHOLAR} will lead the five-part series. {IF POSSIBLE, INSERT A SENTENCE OR TWO ABOUT YOUR SCHOLAR’S EXPERTISE}. The first program will be held {DAY, DATE} at {TIME} in the library’s {ROOM NAME}.

The enclosed materials provide additional details about the series. We encourage you and your colleagues {use appropriate term} to participate in this national program at our library. To register, please contact {CONTACT NAME} at {PHONE NUMBER} or {E-MAIL ADDRESS}.

Thank you,

{NAME OF LIBRARY OR PROJECT DIRECTOR}

{TITLE}

Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

00:10 The {NAME OF LIBRARY} will host a five-part reading and discussion series titled: Making Sense of the American Civil War beginning {DATE}. For details, call {LIBRARY'S PHONE NUMBER} or visit {LIBRARY'S WEB ADDRESS}.*

00:20 Learn more about the legacy of the American Civil War and emancipation through a five-part reading and discussion series at {NAME OF LIBRARY}. Discuss {BOOK/ESSAY TITLE} with fellow community members in this series starting {DAY, DATE}. For details, call {LIBRARY'S PHONE NUMBER} or visit {LIBRARY'S WEB ADDRESS}.*

00:30 One hundred and fifty years later, and we are still talking about the Civil War. How do the legacy of the Civil War and emancipation affect our lives today? Learn more at Making Sense of the American Civil War, a new reading and discussion series at {NAME OF LIBRARY}. Discover this pivotal period of American history through historical and contemporary literature with fellow community members in this five-part series starting {DAY, DATE}. For details, call {LIBRARY'S PHONE NUMBER} or visit {LIBRARY'S WEB ADDRESS}.*

* *Making Sense of the American Civil War* is a project of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association. Additional support has been provided by {LOCAL HUMANITIES COUNCIL}.

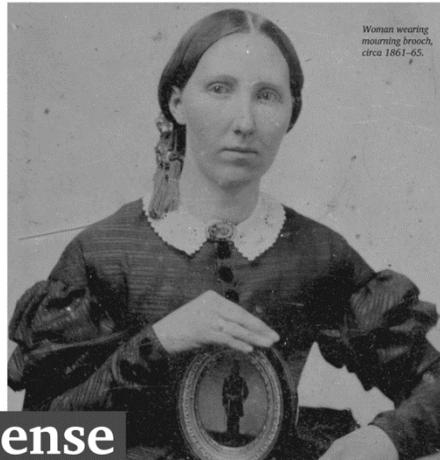
Sample Postcard

(PDF files for customization are available via

<http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>.)

“A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE PIVOTAL EVENT IN OUR NATION’S HISTORY, WE ARE STILL DISCOVERING ITS MEANINGS.”

—EDWARD L. AYERS, *Civil War historian*



Woman wearing mourning brooch, circa 1861-65.

Making Sense *of the* **American Civil War**

A reading and discussion series in America’s libraries



Sample Flyer

*(PDF files for customization are available via
<http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>)*



African American soldier and family, circa 1863-65

Making Sense of the American Civil War

A reading and discussion series in America's libraries

Presented by the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES and the AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Sample Poster

*(PDF files for customization are available via
<http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm>)*



Making Sense of the American Civil War

A reading and discussion series in America's libraries

March by Geraldine Brooks | *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by James McPherson

America's War: Talking About the Civil War and Emancipation on their 150th Anniversaries edited by Edward L. Ayers

Your text here!

Presented by the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES and the AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



SPONSOR CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A funder credit line should appear on all materials relating to the *Making Sense of the American Civil War* program. The credit line should acknowledge all project funders and supporters. An example is below.

Making Sense of the American Civil War, a reading and discussion series, is a project of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association. Additional support has been provided by the Illinois Humanities Council.

Further Guidelines for Sponsor Acknowledgment

- The credit line should appear on all printed and other visual materials related to the program, including press releases, brochures, publications, invitations, program flyers, advertisements, press kits, announcements, websites and local posters. It should also appear on any signage regarding the program. On all materials, it should appear in a type size that is readable and appropriate to the overall design.
- Please use the NEH and ALA logos whenever possible, and the *Let's Talk About It* logo when appropriate. The logos can be downloaded from <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwar.htm>.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

ALA American
Library
Association



- In speaking to or sending press releases to newspaper reporters, radio and TV interviewers and other media personnel, please stress that full sponsorship and funding credit should be included in all articles and features. Some libraries include a line set off at the beginning of press releases saying "*Editor: Please do not edit out sponsorship credits in paragraph ___.*"
- At press events and in public programs: The sponsorship of the *Making Sense of the American Civil War* program (NEH, ALA, state humanities council, other supporters) should be acknowledged orally at the beginning and end of each program, press conferences, and related programs, and at the beginning and end of radio or television interviews, when possible.
- Local sponsor credits: Local sponsor credit should follow the official program credit line and be in a type size no larger than the program credit. The exception is materials that are entirely supported by another funding source. In those cases, the additional sponsor's credit may appear first and in larger type.

PROGRAM EVALUATION & REPORTING

Evaluation is essential for determining the effectiveness of your program, its impact and whether your original goals have been met.

Not all participants will attend every session, but it can be valuable to hear from every participant as the series progresses. By distributing evaluation forms at each discussion session, you will be able to respond to any problems, address questions, and make any adjustments in format that may be necessary.

Consider in advance, how you will judge the quality and effectiveness of your reading and discussion series. By number of participants? By their evaluations? By whether your original goals were met? By the comments of the scholar? By requests for future reading and discussion programs? Most project directors will evaluate the series by weighing each of these and other factors.

Valuable sources for feedback include:

- Participants
- Scholars
- Community partner organizations
- Project director
- Planning committee
- Library staff
- Sponsors and funders
- Library patrons

Think of evaluation not only as a way to gauge the level of effectiveness of this program, but also as a tool to plan future programs.

Sample scholar and participant evaluation forms appear on the following pages.

Sample Evaluation Form for Local Scholar

- 1. Were the books/readings the right choice for today's program?**
- 2. How successful was group discussion?**
- 3. How closely related to the theme was the group discussion?**
- 4. How helpful was the essay in preparing for today's program?**
- 5. How helpful was the essay for today's discussion?**
- 6. Please comment on the overall success of today's program.**
- 7. How useful was the pre-program information to your preparation? Is there anything else the project director could have done to assist you?**

Other comments:

Sample Evaluation Form for Participants, continued:

5. How did you hear about this reading and discussion program?

6. Do you plan to attend other programs in this series? *Yes* *No*
If no, why not?

7. Is the program time convenient? *Yes* *No*
If no, when would you prefer to meet?

8. Is the program date convenient? *Yes* *No*
If no, when would you prefer to meet?

9. Is the discussion group size too large, too small, just right? (circle one)

10. Are there any other topics or themes in literature that you would like to discuss?

Demographic questions (optional):

11. What is your gender? (circle)

Female *Male*

12. What is your age? (circle)

18-24 *25-35* *36-50* *50+*

13. Which ethnic background do you most identify yourself with? (circle)

African-American *Asian* *Hispanic/Latino*

Native American *Caucasian* *Multi-racial* *Other*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Related Programming Ideas

The five scholar-led discussion sessions corresponding to the books in the series are just the beginning of what your library can do to generate community interest in the Civil War Sesquicentennial. Libraries are encouraged to hold related programs such as film series, forums, receptions, lectures, and related exhibits, to expand the reach and impact of the *Making Sense of the American Civil War* series. Here are some suggestions and ideas for related programs:

Programming Ideas for “Making Sense of the American Civil War”:

- Host a film series that focuses on movies and documentaries about the Civil War (e.g., *Glory* directed by Edward Zwick, *The Civil War* directed by Ken Burns).
- Invite authors or historical re-enactors to appear and read from their works featured in the reading and discussion series; or, invite authors to read from their works on similar themes. Consult the Additional Reading list for this series, included at the end of the thematic essay, for ideas.
- Work with a scholar to present a lecture or lecture series on the lives and times of the authors featured in the series.
- Ask good public speakers to read one or more of the speeches featured in *America’s War*. Have an historian on hand to interpret them and put them in context. A series of public readings can create a picture of this period of American history--its people, its philosophies, its ideals, its failings--and also allow community leaders, media personalities and other celebrities to be included in library programs.
- Create intergenerational programs for community members to discuss and learn about historic and contemporary issues.
- Develop a walking tour of battlefields and other local sites significant to Civil War history. Highlight the people and places connected to the Civil War era in your community. Create a Web version of your research.
- Host a related exhibit, available from the Gilder Lehrman Institute, online at www.gilderlehrman.org/institute/public_traveling.html. Available exhibits include "Frederick Douglass from Slavery to Freedom: the Journey to New York City," "Looking at Lincoln: Political Cartoons from the Civil War Era," "Free at Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America," "Freedom: A History of US," and "Abraham Lincoln: A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times."
- Find people in your community who have family stories, diaries, artifacts from the Civil War era. Create related exhibits or ask them to speak at a program. Record their stories.

- Sponsor a One Book, One Community program using a related work or works (consider using one title for adults, one for young adults, one for children).
- Present a series of performance programs, featuring Civil War era music or poetry.

Films and Videos

Film and video showings are very popular related programming options. Here are some guideposts for good film and video programming practices:

- Libraries wishing to show films or videos related to the reading and discussion series to the public must arrange for public performance rights (PPR). For more information, see Copyright Tips for Programming Librarians: Public Performance Rights on ProgrammingLibrarian.org.
(<http://www.programminglibrarian.org/library/planning/copyright/copyright-tips-for-programming-librarians-public-performance-rights.html>)
- Swank Motion Pictures, Inc. offers a Movie Public Performance Site License to public libraries on an annual basis. Information is at <http://www.movlic.com/library/index.html>
- Please share information about films and videos with other libraries via the electronic discussion list. The ALA Public Programs Office will also pass along to you any film information we find.

Films to consider include the following:

- *The Civil War: A Film* by Ken Burns (1990, PBS)
- *Glory* (1989, Tristar)
- *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War* (1992, PBS)
- *Frederick Douglass: When the Lion Wrote History* (1994, PBS)
- *The Time of the Lincolns* (2001, PBS)
- *Ulysses S. Grant* (2002, PBS American Experience)
- *Robert E. Lee* (2011, PBS American Experience)

The following websites may be useful in obtaining additional information about these and other related films including release dates, reviews, and distribution information.

International Movie Database	www.imdb.com
Rotten Tomatoes	www.rottentomatoes.com
AMG Film Site	www.allmovie.com
Movie Licensing USA	www.movlic.com/

RELATED WEBSITES

NEH's EdSITEment

The National Endowment for the Humanities' EdSITEment website is offered in partnership with the Verizon Foundation and the National Trust for the Humanities, and is a proud member of the Thinkfinity Consortium of premier educational websites.

EdSITEment offers a treasure trove of high-quality material on the Internet in the subject areas of literature and language arts, foreign languages, art and culture, and history and social studies.

Online at <http://edsitement.neh.gov/>, EdSITEment features sections on the American Civil War (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/american-civil-war>), literature of the Civil War (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/literature-civil-war#node-21484>) and also offers K-12 lesson plans on Slavery, the Crisis of the Union, the Civil War and Reconstruction.

ALA's ProgrammingLibrarian.org

The ALA Public Programs Office maintains a website called ProgrammingLibrarian.org, an online resource center for all things related to presenting cultural programs for all types and sizes of libraries. Visit www.programminglibrarian.org to find information about other ALA grant opportunities, programs, and more. You can also visit the *Let's Talk About It* area of the site (www.programminglibrarian.org/ltai) to access essays, book lists, and resources from more than 30 other *Let's Talk About It* series on themes ranging from African-American migration to Latino literature to the new millennium and even children's literature.

Civil War on NEH's Website

Have a question about your "Making Sense of the American Civil War" program? Visit <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwar.htm> to access to complete information about the project. From this link, you can access a PDF of this Site Support Notebook, downloadable and customizable promotional items (e.g., posters, flyers, bookmarks, postcards), a list of participating state humanities councils, information about the books and readings included and how to purchase them, and access any other news about the project.

Additional Online Resources

What's New

- **New York Times – Opinionator's "Disunion" series**
Exclusive online commentary revisiting and reconsidering America's most perilous period -- using contemporary accounts, diaries, images and historical assessments to follow the Civil War as it unfolded.
<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/category/disunion/>

- **National Park Service**
The Civil War: 150 Years (National Park Service Sesquicentennial Commemoration)
Features include: Nationwide calendar of CW150 events, information about Civil War Parks, access to database of Civil War Soldiers, more in-depth information about the War
<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar150/>

Pioneering Digital History Resources

- **Valley of the Shadow**, Edward L. Ayers
<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/>
- **Hidden Patterns of the Civil War**, Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond
<http://dsl.richmond.edu/civilwar/>

Online Exhibitions

- **Library of Congress - From Slavery to Civil Rights: A Timeline of African American History**
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/civil-rights/#>
- **Library of Congress - Variety of collections on: Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877**
<http://www.loc.gov/topics/content.php?subcat=8>
- **Virginia Historical Society - An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia**
<http://www.vahistorical.org/civilwar/introduction.htm>
- **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center - Online exhibit of Frederick Douglass' documents**
<http://www.freedomcenter.org/underground-railroad/frederick-douglass/>
- **Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History - Online Exhibition: John Brown the Abolitionist and His Legacy**
<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/online/johnbrown/>
- **Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History - Slideshow: Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation**
<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/online/emancipation/index.html>
- **National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) - America's Historical Documents: The Emancipation Proclamation**
<http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/document.html?doc=8&title.raw=Emancipation%20Proclamation>

- **Frederick Douglass National Historic Site - Virtual Museum Exhibit**
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/douglass/>
- **Boston College - First-Hand: Civil War Era Drawings from the Becker Collection**
<http://firsthandexhibit.org/>

General Information – To Learn More

- **EdSITEment - The American Civil War**
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/american-civil-war>
- **EdSITEment - Literature of the Civil War**
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/literature-civil-war#node-21484>
- **EdSITEment - K-12 lesson plans on Slavery, the Crisis of the Union, the Civil War and Reconstruction**
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/edsitement-lessons-slavery-crisis-union-civil-war-and-reconstruction>
- **Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History -History by Era: The Civil War Era**
http://www.gilderlehrman.org/institute/era_civilwar.php
- **Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History - Civil War 150th**
<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/institute/civilwar150.php>

Electronic Discussion List

ALA has created an electronic discussion list that will allow librarians at libraries participating in the “Making Sense of the American Civil War” project with state-level support to exchange information about their series, ask questions of each other, and pool resources. As a resource, ALA staff and several librarians with experience leading “Let’s Talk About It” programs will be subscribed to the list and available to answer questions.

The electronic discussion list is named **letstalk-councils@ala.org**. The list is unmoderated and self-subscribing. If you require assistance with list use, please email publicprograms@ala.org.

To subscribe to **letstalk-councils@ala.org**: Send an e-mail message to listproc@ala.org with the following command as the first line of text in the body of the message:

subscribe **letstalk-councils** Name (for library staff interested in joining)

To receive messages in digest form (one message per day, which will contain all messages posted to the list in the previous 24 hours): Send another e-mail to listproc@ala.org with the following command:

set **letstalk-councils** mail digest

To unsubscribe from **letstalk-councils@ala.org**: Send an e-mail with the following command to **listproc@ala.org**:

unsubscribe **letstalk-councils**

To manage your subscription to this and other ALA electronic discussion lists, please visit <http://lists.ala.org>.

NEH's Project Website

The site available at <http://partnership.neh.gov/activities/civilwarhosts.htm> is an important online tool for participating libraries. It features a copy of this Site Support Notebook, plus additional downloadable program materials, including:

- Program flyer (high-res PDF file, Word file)
- Program bookmark ((high-res PDF file)
- Customizable posters (high-res PDF file, Word file)
- Customizable postcards (high-res PDF file, Word file)
- Web ads and banners (JPG and GIF files)
- Template PR materials—press release, media alert, PSA, letter (Word files)
- ALA and NEH logos (TIF, EPS, and JPG files)
- *Let's Talk About It* logo (TIF, EPS, and JPG files)
- Instructions on how to customize materials in Word and PDF formats

Please share this information with all members of your “Making Sense of the American Civil War” team, especially those individuals who are handling publicity and marketing if the project director is not handling those aspects directly. The person handling promotion will undoubtedly need to access the downloadable materials referenced above and is required to read and follow the sponsor credits and acknowledgements instructions.