



Filmography

Most film versions of the American Civil War are usually imperfect, but some productions have been accurate, memorable, and uplifting. Many have been romantic potboilers; others gritty, bloody portrayals. A few biographical ones have really captured the essence of their subjects. Hopefully, you'll be able to locate one or two of these and find time to squeeze them into your calendar during CIVIL WAR.

The Civil War Start your search for outstanding film versions with documentarian Ken Burns' 1990 PBS series. Broken into nine episodes, it is the best you can offer your students. The problem in using it, however, is its massive scope. Most students will not likely sit still through several episodes. If possible, watch the whole series yourself and select portions which you feel would most move your students. Make the whole series available in your school library if you are fortunate to have video recorders available there for students to watch episodes they wish to view.

Gore Vidal's Lincoln Shown in spring 1988 on NBC, it is a rewarding and well-crafted four hours on Abraham Lincoln's astute leadership during the Civil War. With fine acting by Sam Waterston as Abraham Lincoln and Mary Tyler Moore as Mary Todd Lincoln, this TV biography offers exciting moments in the 16th president's life without sensationalizing him.



The Blue and the Gray First shown on CBS in the late 1970s, this mini-series has two recommended scenes to excerpt and show—the confusion amidst a battle (First Bull Run) and Gregory Peck, portraying Lincoln, delivering the moving Gettysburg Address. Also, it is effective in exhibiting the role of the sketch artist in the Civil War.

North and South Adapted from John Jakes' best-selling novel, this mini-series has a few worthy moments, but it is more a harlequin novel than Civil War history. Check out Johnny Cash as John Brown!

Gone With the Wind The 1939 epic MGM film is a moving, stirring, and exciting (although inaccurate) piece of movie history. You may want to select a few scenes to show. Recommended: The rush of ecstatic Southern men to enlist as the barbecue scene is interrupted, the burning of Atlanta, and Scarlett's encounter with a Sherman "bummer."

The Red Badge of Courage There have been two versions of Stephen Crane's novel. The 1951 black-and-white version directed by John Huston and starring real-life World War II hero Audie Murphy is superior to the 1974 TV version starring Richard Thomas. Huston's gritty realism is worthy of a five- to 10-minute video snippet for your students.

Ironclads Cable television offered this two hour 1991 movie about the *Merrimac* battling the *Monitor* at Hampton Roads, Virginia, but made it without much actual confrontation between the two ships. It does, however, have some exciting, climactic scenes.

Glory This Hollywood movie portraying the training and battle experiences of Negro troops won the accolades of film critics and historians in 1989. Starring Matthew Broderick and Denzel Washington, the focus is a suicide attack on Fort Wagner in 1863.

Raintree County This 1957 film tried to show the Union's side of "Gone With The Wind," but audiences were more entranced with Montgomery Clift's romances with Elizabeth Taylor and Eva Marie Saint. The film does have excellent scenes of the Battle of Chickamauga and bummers ravaging the South.

The Great Man's Whiskers Made in 1973 for TV, this disarming short film is about a young girl's letter to Lincoln suggesting he grow a beard to hide his sadness. Starring are Dean Jones and Dennis Weaver, whose voice and physical looks are effective.

Prince of Players A bit tangential but this 1955 film starring Richard Burton and John Derek as the acting Booth brothers has some heart-thumping black-and-white scenes of the assassination of Lincoln. Raymond Massey costars as their more famous father.

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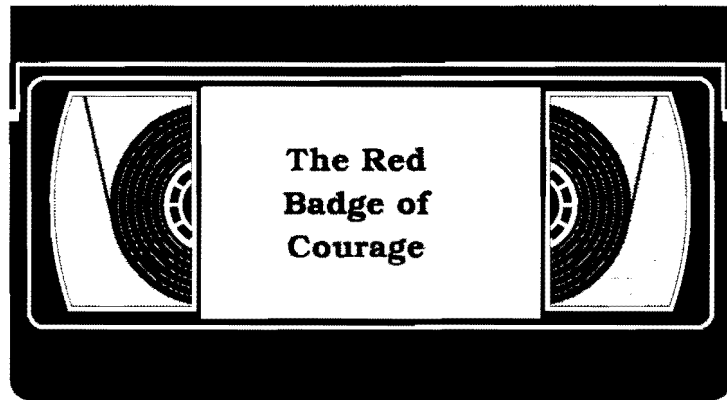
The Lincoln Conspiracy This hokey 1977 film tries to implicate just about everyone in government in Lincoln's death. May be worth showing as a "what if," especially the last 30 minutes.

Gettysburg This cable and Hollywood film of Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Killer Angels* of the Battle of Gettysburg stars Tom Berenger and Jeff Daniels. It does credit to the 1975 novel.

The Perfect Tribute A 1991 network TV movie with Jason Robards as Lincoln preparing for his Gettysburg Address. A parallel story has a 13-year-old Southern boy's journey to this historic town in Pennsylvania with hopes of getting his older brother released from a Yankee hospital. The ending will touch your students.

Civil War Journal An A&E production narrated by Danny Glover, this series is an inspiring and accurate documentary of the Civil War. It includes many lesser known, but important, facts of this great conflict.

**Encourage students
to rent videos
of Civil War films ...**

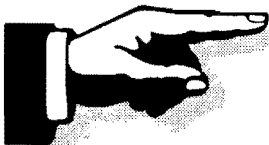


**... to watch while
at home with friends
from your class.**

Music

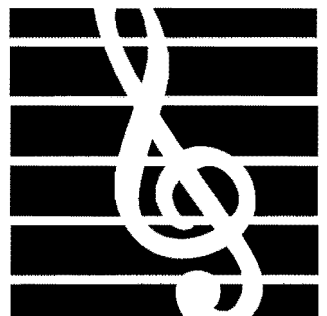
You have several choices if you wish to add a musical flourish to CIVIL WAR. Most record stores have at least two to three cassettes/albums/CDs you or your district might purchase. Particularly look for Ken Burns' musical background for his PBS series. This CD is called *Original Soundtrack Recording—The Civil War*. It is #979256-2, Elektra Nonesuch Entertainment. Besides many appropriate Civil War songs, it includes the haunting "Ashokan Farewell" along with that most moving of Civil War letters—Sullivan Ballou's letter to his wife before the first Battle of Bull Run. *Play this letter before you have your students write their letters home.* If this letter doesn't grab their hearts and twist, nothing will.

IMPORTANT



Read carefully.

CIVIL WAR



MUSIC