influence of Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted* (1951), Black Odyssey's chief target was what Blight labels the "Bancroftian paradigm"—the "master narrative of providential destiny." Blight suggests the need for a "replacement narrative"—one that, like Huggins's work, will pay attention to "contradiction and irony and not flee from them" (p. 273).

The chief value of this work lies not in its essays on memory and the Civil War. Readers interested in that topic would be better served by examining *Race and Reunion*. Instead, *Beyond the Battlefield* provides a succinct introduction to what historians have been saying in the recent past about the differences between and the similarities of history and memory. Blight clearly comes down on the side of convergence—between, for instance, history and literature, and especially poetry and mythology. This work also allows readers to explore the developing thought of an important historian of the Civil War and of African Americans.

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Lee's Last Retreat
*The Flight to Appomattox*
By William Marvel

According to Webster's, a revisionist is simply "one who favors revision." Customarily, the term describes a historian who alters previously accepted interpretations of a historical event. In this sense, William Marvel is surely one of the most effective and reliable revisionists in a field—Civil War history—long marked by romance and legend and greatly in need of cleansing. Marvel takes on the tough ones, too: in the past he has considered Ambrose Burnside and Andersonville prison; in this volume he reconsiders Robert E. Lee's storied final campaign. In a foreword, Marvel states that "no episode of the war (perhaps not even Gettysburg) has been so particularly affected [by mythology] as the retreat that ended at Appomattox" (pp. ix-x). After identifying the prior romances, Marvel follows Lee and his beaten Army of Northern Virginia from the fall of Richmond and Petersburg to William McLean's Appomattox home, where Ulysses S. Grant courteously protected the dignity of his adversary while accepting Lee's surrender of what remained of his army.

The defeat of the Confederacy was the just outcome of its unjust and self-destructive rebellion in behalf of preserving the institution of slavery. Nevertheless, the desperate last flight
of the southern common soldiers is a tragic tale. They were led to that end by their leaders' pathology. It has seldom been acknowledged that six thousand Confederates were killed or wounded in the flight to Appomattox, in addition to the hundreds of prisoners and deserters lost—senselessly prolonging the agony to serve Lee's personal sense of honor. (See Thomas L. Livermore, Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861–1865 [1986], p. 137.)

As the casualty data suggest, Lee's final retreat was marked by skirmishes along the way, through Amelia Court House, at Farmville (where 8,000 rebels were captured), and at Appomattox in the early hours of April 9 before the truce. Throughout "the last mile," Lee persisted in driving his soldiers, thus causing the additional loss of life and limb. He finally desisted only when the pursuing Federals literally forced him to do so. General Porter Alexander, Longstreet's artillery commander, described Lee's state of mind as of April 5:

We took the road to Jetersville where it was reported that Sheridan with his cavalry crossed our path & Gen. Lee intended to attack him. I rode with him and his staff & Gen. Longstreet . . . I never saw Gen. Lee so anxious to bring on a battle in my life as he seemed that afternoon, but a conference with Gen. [W.H.F] Lee in command of the Confederate cavalry in our front seemed to upset him greatly. [W.H.F] Lee reported that Sheridan had been reinforced by two infantry corps who were entrenching & that force was more than we could venture to attack. (From Gary W Gallagher, ed., Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander [1989] p. 521.)

William Marvel has done it again. While he says a nice thing about this reviewer along the way, I believe that any conscientious evaluation of this fine history would yield a similarly favorable view of its accomplishments.


Performing the American Frontier, 1870–1906
By Roger A. Hall

Performing the American Frontier, 1870–1906, Roger A. Hall's chronicle of American plays and theatrical productions that treated the subject of the