

COLLECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

A Measuring Rod by Mildred L. Rutherford, 1919

A MEASURING ROD

To

TEST TEXT BOOKS, AND REFERENCE BOOKS

In

Schools, Colleges and Libraries

Prepared By

MILDRED LEWIS RUTHERFORD
ATHENS, GA.

At the Request of the

UNITED CONFEDERATE VETERANS

ERA

Early 20th Century, Jim Crow

THEMES

Lost Cause Myth, Public Memory, Education

CITATION

Rutherford Mildred Lewis and United Confederate Veterans. 1920. *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books and Reference Books in Schools Colleges and Libraries*. Athens Ga: publisher not identified.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How do we decide what gets taught in school?
2. How do we choose what to believe?

A FOREWORD FROM MISS RUTHERFORD

Realizing that the text-books in history and literature which the children of the South are now studying, and even the ones from which many of their parents studied before them, are in many respects unjust to the South and her institutions, and that a far greater injustice and danger is threatening the South today from the late histories which are being published, guilty not only of misrepresentations but of gross omissions, refusing to give the South credit for what she has accomplished, as Historian of the U. D. C., and one vitally interested in all that pertains to the South, I have prepared, as it were, a testing or measuring rod. Committees appointed by Boards of Education or heads of private institutions and their teachers can apply this test when books are presented for adoption, so that none *who really desire the truth* need be hampered in their recommendation for acceptance or rejection of such books.

Absolute fairness to the North and South is stressed as only *Truth is History*.

MILDRED LEWIS RUTHERFORD,
Athens, Georgia.

CONTEXT

United Daughters of the Confederacy historian, Mildred L. Rutherford wrote *A Measuring Rod* in 1919 as a way to spread the Lost Cause ideology through textbooks in schools. She developed guidelines for school committees and Boards of Education to use to ensure that they were teaching what the U.D.C. considered the correct history about the American Civil War and about the South's role in particular. Rutherford published lists of books that were approved and ones that were condemned. These guidelines influenced what was being taught to students for decades and used education as a means to spread the Lost Cause myth.

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WARNING*†

Do not reject a text-book because it does not contain all that the South claims—a text-book cannot be a complete encyclopedia.

Do not reject a text book because it omits to mention your father, your grandfather, your personal friend, socially or politically—it would take volumes to contain all of the South's great men and their deeds.

Do not reject a text-book because it may disagree with your estimate of the South's great men, and the leaders of the South's Army and Navy—the world can never agree with any one person's estimate in all things.

But—reject a book that speaks of the Constitution other than a Compact between Sovereign States.

Reject a text-book that does not give the principles for which the South fought in 1861, and does not clearly outline the interferences with the rights guaranteed to the South by the Constitution, and which caused secession.

Reject a book that calls the Confederate soldier a traitor or rebel, and the war a rebellion.

Reject a book that says the South fought to hold her slaves.

Reject a book that speaks of the slaveholder of the South as cruel and unjust to his slaves.

Reject a text-book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln and villifies Jefferson Davis, unless a truthful cause can be found for such glorification and villification before 1865.

Reject a text-book that omits to tell of the South's heroes and their deeds when the North's heroes and their deeds are made prominent.

Refuse to adopt any text-book, or endorse any set of books, upon the promise of changes being made to omit the objectionable features.*

A list of books, condemned or commended by the Veterans, Sons of Veterans, and U. D. C., is being prepared by Miss Rutherford as a guide for Text-Book Committees and Librarians.

This list of course contains only the names of those books which have been submitted for examination. Others will be added and published monthly in "*The Confederate Veteran*," Nashville, Tennessee.

* The endorsement of a series of Historical Novels, "The Real Romance of History," was once given by the Historian-General, U. D. C., upon the promise to change the objectionable statements regarding the War between the States. The endorsement was used but the promise was not kept—her endorsement sold many books containing the falsehoods.

† There was not time to submit this "Warning" to the Veterans or Sons of Veterans, but Miss Rutherford thinks it will meet with their approval.