

America has displayed much difficulty over the years recognizing itself as a warrior nation. Yet from the Pequot War of 1637 to the War in Iraq which began in 2003, its emerging sense of nationhood has developed around the fighting of, preparation for, or memory of war. War narratives have been used to sell American products, to define American manhood, to reinforce American notions of community, to bolster American religious faith, to justify American sports programs, and, of course, to support the expansion of the American military establishment.

War Narratives and American Culture focuses on how literary, visual, dramatic, and other representations of armed conflict have, from the seventeenth century to the present, become occasions for re-imagining America's meaning for itself and its place in the world. As such, the essays in this volume contribute to the recent "internationalization" or "globalization" of American Studies by directing attention to specific moments of conflict, from the colonial period to the twenty-first century, when war has contributed to, if not dominated, the definition of the American imaginary. At the same time, the essays included here reflect the special importance of war to the interpretive gestures of American Studies itself, a discipline crucially shaped in the decades spanning WWII and the Vietnam War and long invested in arguments about violence in the name of national interests and their regeneration.

Essay contributors include: Eileen Boris, James Dawes, Giles Gunn, Katherine Kinney, Curtis Marez, Jorge Mariscal, John Carlos Rowe, Shirley Samuels, Shelley Streeby, J. E. Talbott, and Elisa Tamarkin.

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Cover painting by Jacob Lawrence: *Struggle. . .From the History of the American People, no. 8... again the rebels rushed furiously upon our men – A HESSIAN SOLDIER*. Egg tempura on hardboard. 12x15^{1/2} inches. Private Collection.

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