PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

46

The Historical Formation of the United States of America: From Independence to the Civil War. Reference Novels: The Scarlet Letter, The Red Badge of Courage

La configuración histórica de los Estados Unidos de América: De la independencia a la guerra de secesión. Novelas de referencia: The Scarlet Letter, The Red Badge of Courage

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NOVIEMBRE DE 2026

Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." With these words, delivered at Gettysburg on 19 November 1863, Abraham Lincoln summed up this topic in a single sentence: a nation born in 1776 from a promise of equality, and then tested by a civil war over whether that promise could be kept.

I will first examine the road to independence and the war that secured it, from 1775 to 1783. Secondly, I will analyse the failure of the Articles of Confederation and the writing of the Constitution. Thirdly, I will study the early republic and territorial expansion up to 1848. Fourthly, I will explain how slavery turned sectional disagreement into secession, and how the Civil War unfolded. Fifthly, I will turn to the two reference novels, Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and Crane's The Red Badge of Courage. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical implications for the Secondary English classroom.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted: Gordon S. Wood's Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815 (Oxford University Press, 2009) and James M. McPherson's Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (Oxford University Press, 1988), both in the Oxford History of the United States; the documents of the National Archives (archives.gov), the National Park Service (nps.gov), the Library of Congress (loc.gov) and the Office of the Historian (history.state.gov); and the texts of the two novels in Project Gutenberg. As for the legal framework, I have taken into account Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE), Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022 and Extremaduran Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022.