

Westport Library Presents

Resurrection, Recreation, or Revolution? Remembering Reconstruction, 150 Years Later

Lecture Series: Tuesdays
May 13, August 12 & October 14, 2025 - 7pm

Join American historian and Westport resident Connor Williams for a three-part series on the achievements, failures, and enduring impacts of Reconstruction, 150 years later.

How do nations heal from great catastrophe and trauma? How do they rebuild from massive physical and philosophical destruction? And how do they relate to their past, pre-disaster selves? Do they try to resurrect the old ways, re-create what they had, or revolutionize the entire system that had failed them in the first place?

A little over 150 years ago, the United States of America faced exactly that dilemma. Between those fighting to save the republic and those fighting to dissolve it, a horrific Civil War had killed more Americans than all our nations other wars, through the present day, combined. Four million Americans celebrated the jubilees of emancipation. Five million Americans lived amongst the ruins of their failed insurrection. And the nation as a whole had suffered unfathomable loss, experienced tremendous technological and economic changes, and now faced an unknown national and international future. How the nation healed, and the problems, passions, possibilities, people, and prejudices of that age have long lasting impacts that continue to inform the possibilities of our present.



About Connor: Connor is an American Historian who writes, speaks, teaches and consults on more than 200 years of our nation's history. He holds degrees from Middlebury, Dartmouth, and Yale, has taught for Yale University and the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Connor currently teaches at Middlebury College. In 2021 and 2022, he served the United States Congress as Lead Historian for their "Naming Commission," investigating and ending all Confederate commemorations throughout the Department of Defense. A book on those experiences: *A Promise Delivered: Ten American Heroes and the Battle to Rename our Nation's Military Bases* is under contract with Macmillan's St. Martin's imprint, and will be released this November. A second book: *Our Domestic Enemy: The Radical Confederate Insurrection and the Civil War that Saved Our Nation* is also under contract, to be released by the end of 2026.

FREE

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