

Virtual Capitol Lessons

The Civil War with Primary Documents

Author	R. Heather Ropes
Editor	Karen Graff, Ed.D.
Grade Level	Fourth
Class Period(s)	2

This lesson is designed to precede or follow a field trip to Lincoln or a virtual field trip (<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org>) to the Nebraska Capitol.

Nebraska Social Studies Standards

SS 4.4.1 Students will examine chronological relationships and patterns, and describe the connections among them.

SS 4.4.1.d Examine the chronology of historical events in Nebraska and their impact on the past, present, and future.

SS 4.4.2 Students will describe and explain the relationships among people, events, ideas, and symbols over time using multiple types of sources.

SS 4.4.2.a Describe and explain the relationships among historical people, events, ideas, and symbols, including various cultures and ethnic groups, in Nebraska by era

SS 4.4.2.b Describe how Nebraska and the Great Plains Region have changed over the course of time using maps, documents, and other artifacts

SS 4.4.2.c Differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

SS 4.4.3 Students will describe and explain multiple perspectives of historical events.

SS 4.4.3.b Compare and contrast primary and secondary sources to better understand multiple perspectives of the same event

SS 4.4.4 Students will analyze past and current events, issues, and problems.

SS 4.4.4.e Describe the relationships among historical events in Nebraska and the students' lives today

Nebraska Language Arts Standards

LA 4.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build and use conversational, academic, and content-specific grade level vocabulary.

LA 4.1.5.c Acquire new academic and content-specific grade-level vocabulary, relate to prior knowledge, and apply in new situations.

LA 4.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by using prior

knowledge and text information while reading grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 4.1.6.e Determine main ideas and supporting details from informational text and/or media.

LA 4.1.6.f Use text features to locate information and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of print and digital text.

LA 4.1.6.h Compare and contrast similar themes, topics, and/or patterns of events in literary and informational texts to develop a multicultural perspective.

Overview

Students will consider how the Civil War affected different groups of Americans.

Key Vocabulary

Drafted-ordered by the government to serve in the military
Preserver of our life-God



Virtual Capitol Lessons

Unscathed-unhurt

Mourning-a period of sadness after someone has died

Calamity-disaster

Materials

Copies for each student:

- William H. Hendrick's letters of January 24th and April 24th, 1865 (Modified)
- Undated Photo of William R. Hendricks
- Enlistment Poster
- Samuel Cabbie enlistment letter, (Modified)

Procedures

SESSION ONE

1. Ask students to share what they think they know about the Civil War.
 - US was divided in two sections, North/South, Union/Confederacy
 - The South supported slavery because of their reliance on agriculture as an industry
 - Abraham Lincoln was president at the time
 - Nebraska was not yet a state
 - Our state capital was named for President Lincoln (after his death, after the Civil War had ended)
 - Nebraska settlers included Civil War soldiers and freed African American slaves

Clarify misunderstandings. Tell students this lesson will focus on how the Civil War affected people across the US. If they have not worked with primary documents, explain the differences between primary and secondary documents. Also, make students aware that these are only *excerpts* from the actual documents.

2. Distribute the Hendricks letters that William H. Hendricks wrote to his son, William R. Hendricks, who was serving in the Union Army in 1865. Discuss the historical background information and guide students through the first letter. Allow students to discuss two things that they believe are important in this letter. It can be about facts, feelings, or inferences. They should use evidence from the document to support their opinions. Lead a class discussion so students can share their thoughts. Ask for predictions about the content of the second letter. Then repeat the procedure for the second letter. Check accuracy of predictions but emphasize that "incorrect" predictions are still valuable if they were supported with reasonable evidence.
3. Distribute the Enlistment Poster and allow time for students to examine it and discuss in small groups. Students should understand that families were in terrible distress because the men were fighting in the War and were not able to provide for their families. Thus, enlistment bonuses were enticing. Ask students if such tactics would be effective in current times and what other benefits might help recruit service members. Discuss incentives you use in the classroom or students have at home to complete difficult or unpleasant tasks. Compare these to employment benefits that workers often receive.

SESSION TWO

1. Distribute the last "primary" document, the letter from Samuel Cabbie. Students can view an image of the actual letter at <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/letter-from-samuel-cabbie-to-his-wife-and-mother> Guide students through the reading and compare this letter to those written by Hendricks. Consider the tone of the letter as well as the content, especially how Mr. Cabbie views the War as an opportunity for himself, his family, and all people who seek freedom.



Virtual Capitol Lessons

Assessment

Ask students to respond to how the Civil War affected different groups by comparing the different points of view expressed in the documents. They should share at least two observations or inferences about each of the three perspectives (Hendricks, Cabbie, and the military) and cite evidence in the documents that supports their statements. Choose a format that you prefer such as a paragraph or essay, web, or Venn diagram.

Extensions

Virtual Capitol Tour-Nebraska's Role in the Civil War

Students should open the tour and enter "Civil War" in the search bar. They will find several references to the Civil War:

- North Façade - "What Brings You Here?" A relief sculpture depicting Nebraska's entrance into the Union as the first new state after the Civil War
- Memorial Chamber – A plaque showing the order from Washington DC that that sets aside the 30th of May as Memorial Day
- Memorial Chamber - A plaque showing the Gettysburg Address of 1863, a speech by President Lincoln given during the middle of the Civil War
- Capitol Interior - Hall of Fame NE Side – The bust of Robert W. Furnas who was the second governor of Nebraska in 1873. Before becoming governor, Furnas was a colonel in the Civil War
- West Façade - A Civil Society - West of the Capitol is the memorial to President **Abraham Lincoln** from the previous Capitol

Sources/Resources

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Recruiting_poster_179th_Pennsylvania_Infantry_Regiment.jpg

Recruitment Poster

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/letter-from-samuel-cabble-to-his-wife-and-mother>

Image of Samuel Cabble letter

Virtual Capitol Tour Website

<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/>

<http://capitol.nebraska.gov/building/rooms/memorial-chamber>

Memorial Chamber art



**The Civil War Letters of William H. Hendricks to his son, William R. Hendricks
while serving in the Union Army (Modified Documents)**

Historical Background

The U.S. Civil War was fought between 1861-1865

April 14, 1865: President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated.

May 12, 1865: The final battle takes place in Texas, a Confederate (Southern) victory.

June 2, 1865: The Civil War officially ends.

Documents A and B are excerpts (portions) of letters written by Ms. Ropes' great-great-great grandfather to his son who was serving in the Union Army during the U.S. Civil War.

Document A (Modified)

Jefferson County, Iowa; January 24th, 1865

Dear Son this will inform you that yours dated the 8th was received. We were glad to hear from you. We can but return thanks to God that your life is still precious in his sight. And our daily prayer is that your life may be spared and that you may be permitted to return home. I hope the time will come soon that will wind up this cruel war.

I received a letter from your Uncle Nathan which stated that he and John were drafted the 15th day of Sept. last. And Ben went in his place. Milton is also in the Army as a volunteer. Now Will, in conclusion I will say to you trust in the Lord and try to have a preparation to meet him. May the Lord keep you from evil. And if we meet no more on earth, May we meet in heaven. In this you will find five stamps and also a half sheet on which you can write. So write soon.

Your affectionate Father,
Wm. H. Hendricks

Document B (Modified)

Fairfield Iowa; April 24th, 1865

Dear Son,

I embrace the present opportunity to write you a few lines. I received your letter dated the 14th of April. We try to give thanks to the preserver of our life that you passed through the fight around Mobile unscathed. And our prayer still is that your life may be spared and you permitted to return home again, endeavor to trust in God. And I believe he will still protect you. Before you receive this, you will have heard of the death of the President. The land is in mourning. But still we hope that even this great calamity will be overruled for the good of the nation. For as action we must trust in God and not in man. We now believe the war to be about over...The health of the neighbourhood is good those here having boys in the 4 Cavalry are becoming very uneasy about them, not having heard from them for a long time. I hope you will write after. Remember me to John et. and also to the boys from these parts.

In this you will find 16 cents in postage stamps.

Your Father
W. H. Hendricks

Source

Letters and photo: Ropes/Kolstad family documents

Envelope addressed to: Wm. R Hendricks, B Company,
19th Reg Iowa, Infantry, (via New Orleans)

Photo: William R. Hendricks, born Nov 15, 1841;
Gilchrist & Kyle, Photographers, S.W. Cor of Public Square
Fairfield, Iowa

Vocabulary

Drafted: Ordered by the government to serve in the military

Preserver of our life: God

Unscathed: unhurt

Mourning: A period of sadness after someone has died

Calamity: disaster



Historical Background

Generally those who volunteered to serve in the military thought they would get better treatment or opportunities than men who were drafted. Men who enlisted were sometimes paid a bounty, a bonus, for joining. Those who were drafted would not get the extra money.

Document C



Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Recruiting_poster_179th_Pennsylvania_Infantry_Regiment.jpg

Document D

Historical Background

During the Civil War, African Americans, then called Colored or Negroes, had an opportunity to fight against the people who enslaved them, earn wages, and eventually earn equal pay to white service members. Samuel Cabbie, for example, a private in the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Infantry (A) was a slave before he joined the army. He was twenty-one years old. Among documents, the letter was in Cabbie's file with an application for compensation signed by his former owner. It was used as proof that his owner had offered Samuel for enlistment.

Document E (Modified)

Dear Wife i have enlisted in the army i am now in the state of Massachusetts but before this letter reaches you i will be in North Carlinia and though great is the present national dificulties yet i look forward to a brighter day When i shall have the opertunity of seeing you in the full enjoyment of fredom i would like to no if you are still in slavery if you are it will not be long before we shall have crushed the system that now opreses you for in the course of three months you shall have your liberty. great is the outpouring of the African American peopl that is now rallying with the hearts of lions against that very curse that has seperated you an me yet we shall meet again and oh what a happy time that will be when this ungodly rebellion shall be put down and the curses of our land is trampled under our feet i am a soldier now and i shall use my utmost endeavor to strike at the rebellion and the heart of this system that so long has kept us in chains . . . remain your own afectionate husband until death-Samuel Cabbie

Source: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war/article.html>
© 1997 by Budge Weidman, National Archives volunteer. **Note:** All letters and quotations are transcribed as they were originally written and are from the Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94.