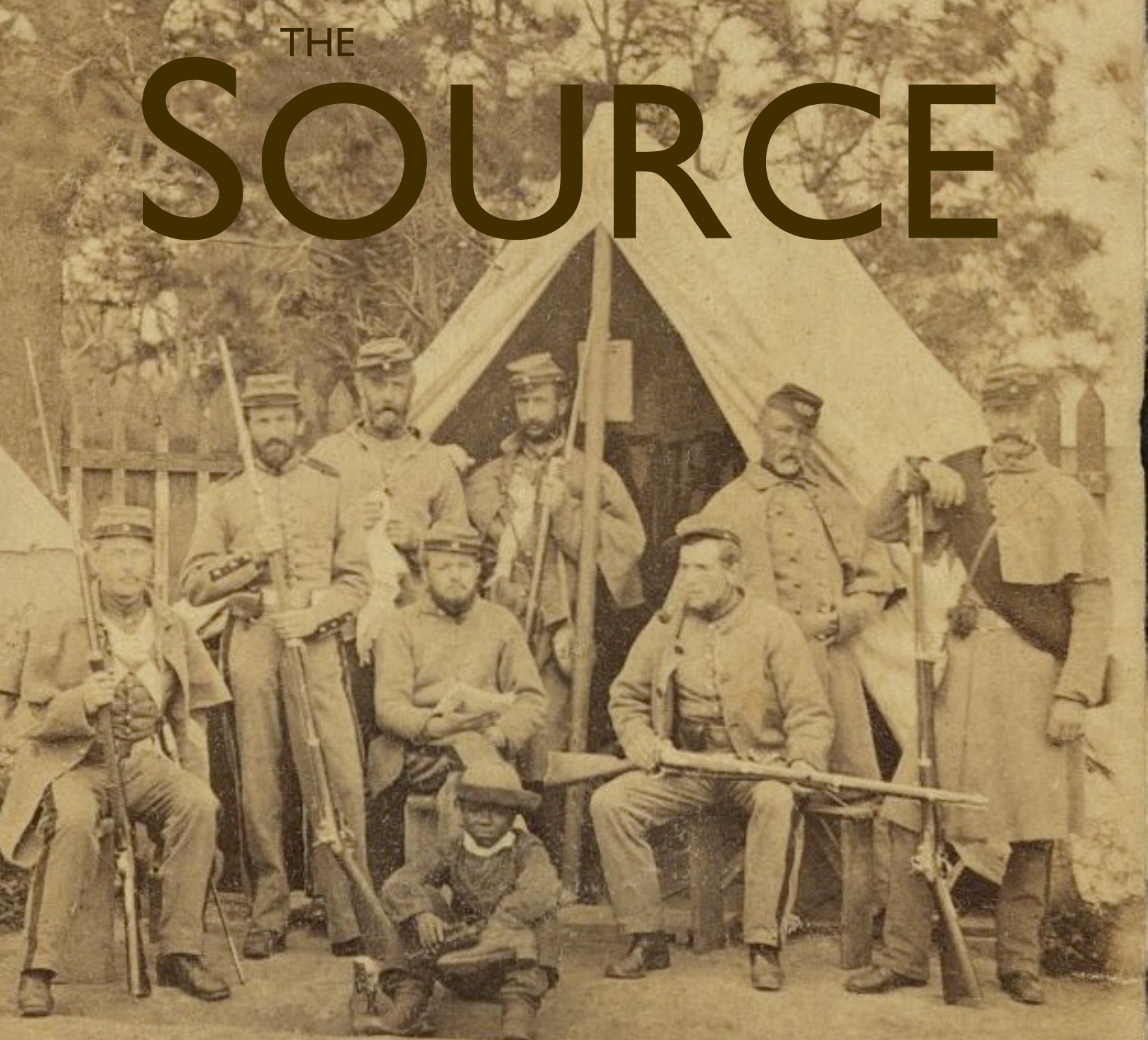


# THE SOURCE



*Teaching the American  
Civil War*



## ***The Source***

***A Quarterly Publication of The California History-Social Science Project***

### **FEATURES**

---

#### **Why Should California Care about the Civil War? 3**

*Teaching the legacy of the Civil War in California.*

#### **Resources for Teaching the Civil War 4**

*Some History Project favorites for engaging students in a study of the Civil War.*

#### **Battle Lines 5**

*An interview with Civil War Historian Ari Kelman.*

#### **Caning Sumner: Exploring the “Irrepressible Conflict” 7**

*Teaching students about the coming of the Civil War.*

#### **Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: Lessons from Social and Cultural History 11**

*The importance of viewing the Civil War through the eyes of ordinary Americans.*

#### **Women and the Civil War 13**

*Valuable resources for understanding women’s role in the Civil War.*

#### **From The Civil War History Blueprint Unit:**

##### **Scott’s Great Snake: A Primary Source Toolbox 17**

*Questions to guide primary source analysis.*

##### **Civil War Battles 18**

*Excerpts from Lesson #3, Strategies and Battles.*

##### **Civil War Perspectives 19**

*Excerpts from Lesson #4, Perspective.*

#### **Calendar 21**

*History Project Institutes, Programs, and Workshops offered across the state this spring and summer.*

Cover: Life in Camp Cameron, Photograph by Matthew Brady. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010647707/>.  
Back Cover: Unidentified African American Soldier in Union uniform with wife and two daughters. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.36454/>.

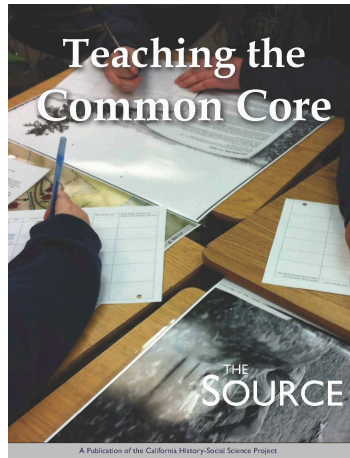


## LETTERS

Dear Nancy,

*Thank you for your wonderful article on the importance of teaching history to our students [from Teaching the Common Core, January 2013]. I am currently a 5th grade teacher in Fairfield. Although we are a P.I. (program improvement) school district, at my school our CST scores were good enough to keep us out of the P.I. program. I don't think I would survive teaching without being able to teach American history. I truly believe that too many school administrators/teachers don't understand the value of teaching our students to think. Hopefully, when the Common Core standards are fully implemented, both history and science will claim their rightful place in the daily curriculum.*

*Thanks again,  
Joanna Fox  
Laurel Creek Elementary  
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District*



*The Source* is a publication of The California History-Social Science Project (CHSSP). Copyright © 2013 UC Regents. We welcome your letters and inquiries. To learn more visit our website at <http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/> or contact us at [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu).

-Shelley Brooks, Editor

### Advisory Board

Emily Albu, UC Davis  
University of California Representative

Steve Aron, UCLA & Autry Museum  
Private Industry Sector Representative

Marvin Awbrey (Co-Chair)  
Fresno Unified School District, Retired  
Professional Organization Representative, CCSS

Barbara Doten, Long Beach Unified  
California State Board of Education Representative

Gary Dei Rossi, San Joaquin COE  
Commission on Teacher Credentialing Representative

Gary K. Hart, Public Policy Institute of California  
Governor's Office Representative

Craig Hendricks, Long Beach Community College  
Emily Rader, El Camino Community College  
California Community College Representative

Jeff Pollard (Co-Chair)  
Natomas Charter School  
Superintendent of Public Instruction Representative

Amanda Podany, California State Polytechnic University,  
Pomona  
California State University Representative

Alan Taylor, UC Davis  
Statewide Faculty Advisor

### Staff

Statewide Office  
Nancy McTygue, Executive Director

The UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project  
Rachel Reinhard, Director

The History Project at UC Davis  
Pam Tindall, Director

The UCLA History-Geography Project  
Mary Miller, Co-Director  
Emma Hipolito, Co-Director

The History Project at CSU Long Beach  
Dave Neumann, Director

The History Project at CSU Dominguez Hills  
Lisa Hutton, Director

The UC Irvine History Project  
Nicole Gilbertson, Director

The History Project at CSU Fresno  
Melissa Jordine, Director



## Why Should California Care about the Civil War?

As a child growing up in California, I learned about the Civil War from a distance of geography and time. In school, I learned the story of the blue and the gray, the horrors of slavery, and the death of a beloved president. Like many young girls, I read Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* and watched the film during its annual showing on network television. I also remember watching Alex Haley's *Roots* miniseries on television, religiously marking my calendar for the next installment (in the age before VCRs, DVDs, and on demand). I was both fascinated and horrified by a time and a place that seemed absolutely alien to my "modern" California existence.

In college, I visited my brother who had recently moved to Georgia. One day we went to Stone Mountain, home to the Confederate Memorial Carving of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Jefferson Davis, as well as a recreation of a pre-war plantation. His advice as we were walking in to the park still rings in my ears: "keep your mouth shut – the Civil War is still real here, not like in California."

When I started teaching, I remember one of my colleagues who argued that there was more than one cause of the Civil War. Each year, we'd hold a debate for our students where I argued that slavery was the cause and she argued for a combination of states' rights and economic issues. The students were polite, but really didn't engage in the discussion directly. Teaching the war was always a struggle for me – I never could figure out how to make the people, places, and drama come to life for my students. They just didn't seem to care and I wasn't skilled enough as a teacher to overcome that distance from a time and place far away from their lives.

In the last few years, I've had the opportunity to travel more to the east coast for work. At each visit, I'm reminded of my brothers' admonition all those years ago. From Tennessee to Georgia to Washington, DC, it's clear that the Civil War is still more real outside of our state's borders. Memorials to the war dot the landscape. Public events commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conflict bring hundreds and sometimes thousands of people together to think about the war, its impact on their state and our nation, and our future as a people.

Back home in California, however, the Civil War remains distant to popular discourse, with the exception, perhaps, of Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln* movie and its chances of winning an Academy Award. I don't know why we don't seem to care about this defining moment in our national history. Is it a result of the continuing dominance of the east coast on our national historical narrative? Although the war took place in the east, California made an impact - financing the war and volunteering our citizens. Is it part of the continuing marginalization of our discipline, with the ongoing focus on English and math? Should we care about events 150 years ago if our kids can't read or do basic math? Is it victim to our ongoing economic malaise – do we only have enough attention span to bemoan our lack of money? Prior to the passage of Proposition 30 this past November, California districts were seriously planning to shorten the school year by three weeks.

In the end, I'm not sure if the why matters. What is important is that we do something about it. The Civil War was likely the defining moment in our nation's history – the moment where we put the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence to the test. Are we a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men (and women) are created equal, endowed by our Creator with unalienable Rights? Learning about the war, the people who sacrificed on both sides, and considering the war's short- and long-term legacies is integral to understanding who we are today as Americans. And that should be important to teach in any state and at any time.

This edition of *The Source* is dedicated to the challenging and important task of teaching the Civil War. My colleagues have brought together an exciting collection of teaching resources, detailed lesson plans from our *History Blueprint* initiative, and thoughtful essays all designed to bridge that gap – to provide you with tools that can help your students understand this difficult time and think critically about its legacy.

A former high school history and government teacher, Nancy McTygue is the Executive Director of The California History-Social Science Project. Write to her at [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu).



## Resources for Teaching the Civil War

### **Websites with general resources for teaching the Civil War:**

Lesson plans and a good deal more from the Civil War Trust: <http://www.civilwar.org/education/teachers/>

Lesson plans from Ed.gov: [http://free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject\\_id=137&res\\_feature\\_request=1](http://free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=137&res_feature_request=1)

National Park Service's Heritage Education Services Program, Civil War History: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/civwar00.htm>

In conjunction with Ken Burns' *The Civil War*, PBS offers lesson plans, discussion and activity ideas: <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/classroom/activities.html>

Primary sources on Civil War battles from *Education Week*: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/civil-war/index.html>

Audio lectures from Civil War historians on TeachingAmericanHistory.org: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/civilwar150/>

### **Sources on youth in the Civil War:**

Elisha Stockwell, *Private Elisha Stockwell Jr. Sees the Civil War*

Jim Murphy's *The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk About the Civil War*

Stories of children who fought in the Civil War: [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning\\_history/children\\_civilwar/child\\_soldiers.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning_history/children_civilwar/child_soldiers.cfm) and the *New York Times* also has a webpage, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/04/the-boys-of-war/>, with biographical information, some quotes, and images of other children who fought in the war.

### **Library of Congress Civil War Collections:**

"The Last Full Measure: Civil War Photographs from the Liljenquist Family Collection" <http://myloc.gov/exhibitions/civilwarphotographs/pages/default.aspx>

An essay from the donors of the Liljenquist collection: [http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/633\\_lilj\\_measure.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/633_lilj_measure.html)

First-Person Narratives of the American South, 1860–1920: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/ncuhtml/fpnashome.html>

A Civil War Soldier in the Wild Cat Regiment: Selections from the Tilton C. Reynolds Papers: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/tcreynolds/>

Voices from the Days of Slavery: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/>

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>

Recommendations from History Project Sites and Faculty, including UCLA's Emma Hipolito, Mary Miller, and Dr. Joan Vaughn.

Abraham Lincoln, head-and-shoulders portrait. Image from the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2009630692/>



# Battle Lines

*An interview with Civil War Historian Ari Kelman  
by the UC Davis History Project's Phillip Barron*

Historian Ari Kelman is at work on his next book - *Battle Lines: a Graphic History of the Civil War* – which, as the title suggests, is in a different genre from his previous work. *Battle Lines* is Kelman's and artist Jonathan Fetter-Vorm's first collaborative project. The book examines a number of episodes from secession through Reconstruction, and as an object-based history, focuses on images that frame each chapter. "For example," Kelman explains, "the chapter on Fort Sumter focuses on the flag that flew over and then was lowered when [the fort] fell." "The chapter on Vicksburg focuses on a mosquito spreading malaria through the city during the siege."

Ari Kelman agreed to an interview with the UC Davis History Project (UCDHP) about the challenges and goals of writing an historical graphic novel.

**UCDHP:** *Who is the audience for a graphic novel on the Civil War?*

**Kelman:** The obvious answer is everyone. But more specifically, Hill and Wang has published a number of graphic histories: a graphic history of the Beats, a graphic history of the 9/11 commission report. They did the Autobiography of Malcolm X as a book. The audience that they typically reach depends on the subject matter and seems to range from high school students — who otherwise don't especially like to read history but are willing to read history when it's presented to them in the form of a graphic book — to adult readers. A book like

ours, I think the initial hope was that there would be a very, very broad readership because the Civil War is a popular topic for histories. As it is, though, it's a pretty abstract book. The idea of doing an object history is pretty unusual.

**UCDHP:** *Do you intend this book to be used in classrooms? If so how will its being a graphic novel affect teaching or make teaching different than say a textbook?*

*"It's our sense that a graphic book is more accessible, even for students who don't especially like reading traditional textbooks."*

**Kelman:** We do hope it will be used in classrooms. It's our sense that a graphic book is more accessible, even for students who don't especially like reading traditional textbooks. This book though, is abstract enough that we hope that even students who like to read traditional text-driven books will find this appealing because it has a complicated story and the artist is exceptionally talented, so it's quite beautiful. One of the ways in which we're trying to make it more accessible for teachers who want to teach it is that at the head of each chapter, the first page of each chapter is a mock up of a fake 19th century-looking newspaper. And there will be two newspaper stories, which are not written like newspaper stories. They are written like very, very short contextual essays. So for example, before the chapter on the New York city draft

**Ari Kelman** is an associate professor of history at the University of California, Davis, where he teaches a wide range of courses, including on the Civil War and Reconstruction, the politics of memory, environmental history, Native American history, World War II, and America in the 1960s. He is the author of [A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek](#) (Harvard University Press, 2013) and [A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans](#) (University of California Press, 2003), which won the Abbott Lowell Cummings Prize in 2004.



riots, there is an essay about all of the things that were happening in the war in the summer of 1863. And then there's another newspaper story/short essay about why Robert E Lee and Jefferson Davis made the decision to invade the north for a second time during the war, leading to the battle of Gettysburg.

**UCDHP:** Are there any challenges to writing a graphic novel that are specific to its genre?

**Kelman:** The hybrid fiction/nonfiction format presents its own set of challenges. For example, we are not having any nonfiction characters say things in fictionalized dialogue. We're not putting words into the mouths of actual people. And then with our fictionalized characters, who are often composites, we are not having them say anything that we don't think is period appropriate. And at the same time, we are having to struggle with some period appropriate language that is not appropriate today.

**UCDHP:** How does an historical graphic novel differ from a comic book?

**Kelman:** I don't have a good answer for your last question, because I don't have a definition of what a comic book is. I feel like the genre of comic book has been exploded in the last twenty years, and even before that. So what I thought was a comic book when I was growing up isn't really a comic book anymore. So, what's the difference between a graphic history and a comic book, I think that for my mom the difference is that a "graphic novel" sounds fancy and respectable while a "comic book" is something that kids waste their allowance on. For me, I don't think it's that simple. And I think that for people who are even more familiar with both of those genres — graphic histories and comic books — it is even less simple than it is for me. So I just don't think that definitionally there's a good answer to that question.

Look for *Battle Lines: a Graphic History of the Civil War* in early 2014, from Hill and Wang.

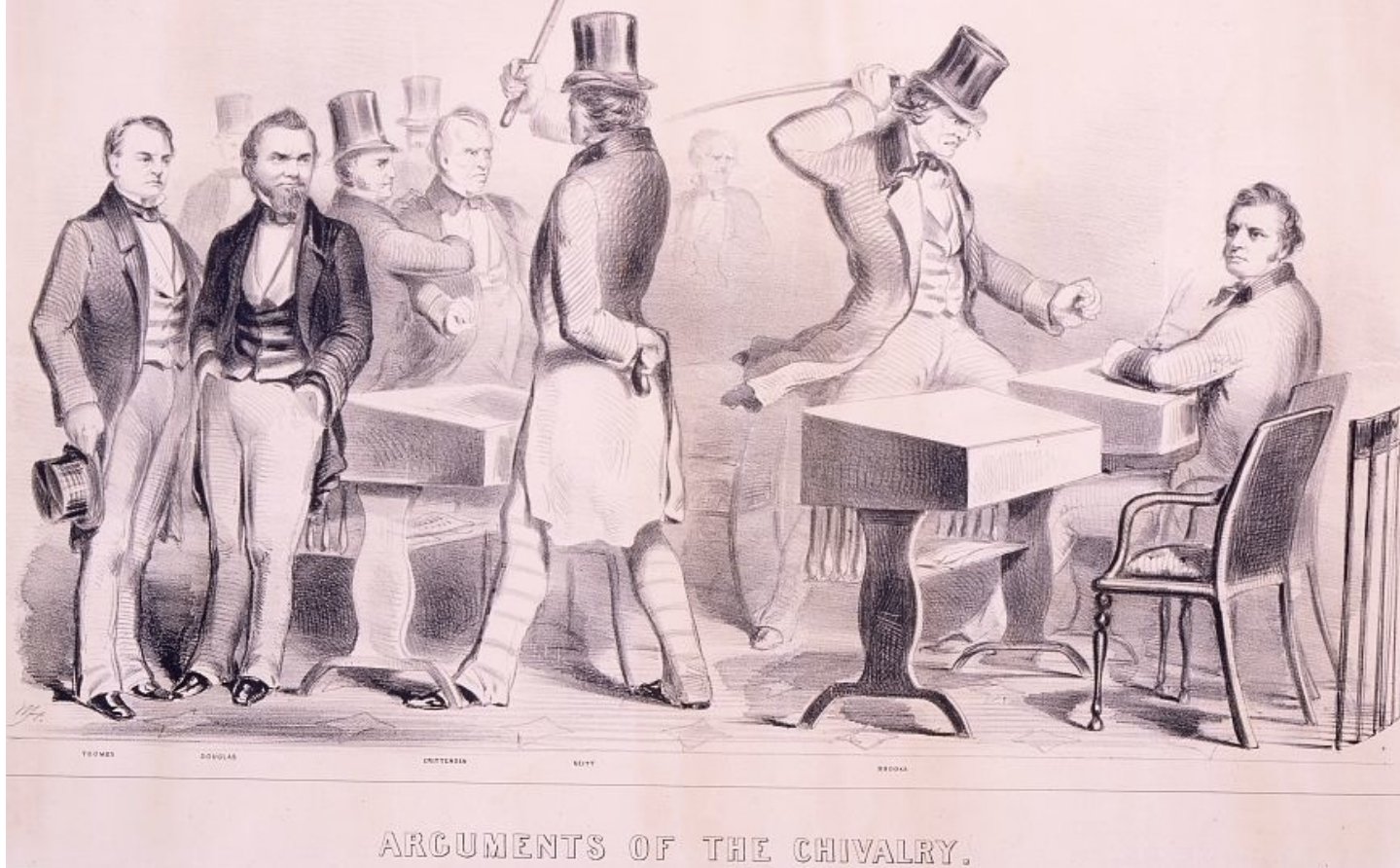


Image panel by Jonathan Fetter-Vorm.



"THE SYMBOL OF THE NORTH IS THE PEN; THE SYMBOL OF THE SOUTH IS THE BLUDGEON." — Henry Ward Beecher

## The Caning of Sumner: Exploring the "Irrepressible Conflict"



Nineteenth-century artist Winslow Homer is best known for his lush paintings of intrepid Americans under sail in beautifully roiling seas. But one of his first professional works reflects a much starker style and subject matter. The lithograph entitled "Arguments for the Chivalry" illustrates Representative Preston Brooks's assault of Senator Charles Sumner on the floor of the US Senate in 1856. As much a political statement as a work of art, the illustration depicts Sumner (from Massachusetts) like Homer, serenely writing at a desk while an enraged Brooks (from South Carolina) cocks his arm for the first savage blow. While virtually every K-12 and college textbook treatment of the Civil War includes this incident, the assault often gets crowded out by a welter of other important events in the lead-up to the war. Still, "The Caning of Sumner" can be a useful topic to invest instructional time exploring with students. It helps reveal why, four years before Lincoln's election, some had already concluded that the North-South conflict was "irrepressible."

To minimize debates in Congress that might delay the settlement of western territories, Senator Stephen Douglas co-sponsored the Kansas-Nebraska Act, proposing that the question of slavery in Kansas be resolved according to the principle of "popular sovereignty." American settlers in the new federal territory would determine the status of slavery by referendum—though Douglas's bill never spelled out at what point on the path toward statehood this crucial vote would take place. An appealing solution to a legislative logjam, popular sovereignty seemed democratic in allowing the American citizens most affected by the decision—the (white) settlers of the region—to determine their own destiny on the important question of slavery. Instead, the Kansas territory became a magnet for the most extreme settlers on both sides of the spectrum, and "Bleeding Kansas" erupted in civil war.

Argument of the Chivalry, by Winslow Homer. Image found at the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661576/>



The violence in Kansas fueled intense arguments among representatives and senators alike, destroying Douglas's hope of avoiding Congressional controversy about the territory. In the midst of this turmoil, on May 20, 1856, Senator Sumner delivered a speech in Congress criticizing the Kansas-Nebraska bill's authors, Douglas and Senator Andrew Butler of South Carolina. Sumner said this about Butler:

The senator from South Carolina has read many books of chivalry, and believes himself a chivalrous knight with sentiments of honor and courage. Of course he has chosen a mistress to whom he has made his vows, and who, though ugly to others, is always lovely to him; though polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight -- I mean the harlot, slavery. For her his tongue is always profuse in words. Let her be impeached in character, or any proposition made to shut her out from the extension of her wantonness, and no extravagance of manner or hardihood of assertion is then too great for this senator. <sup>1</sup>

Mocking a southern gentleman's pretensions to chivalric honor, accusing him of acting from base conspiratorial motives, and characterizing him as consorting with a prostitute—all of these insults were designed to infuriate Butler. They also infuriated Butler's cousin, Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina. Two days after the speech, Brooks tracked Sumner down in the Senate chamber and beat him with a gold-tipped wooden cane, only stopping his assault when the cane broke over the unconscious Sumner's supine body. This shocking event became national news instantly, though with strikingly different reactions in the North and the South.

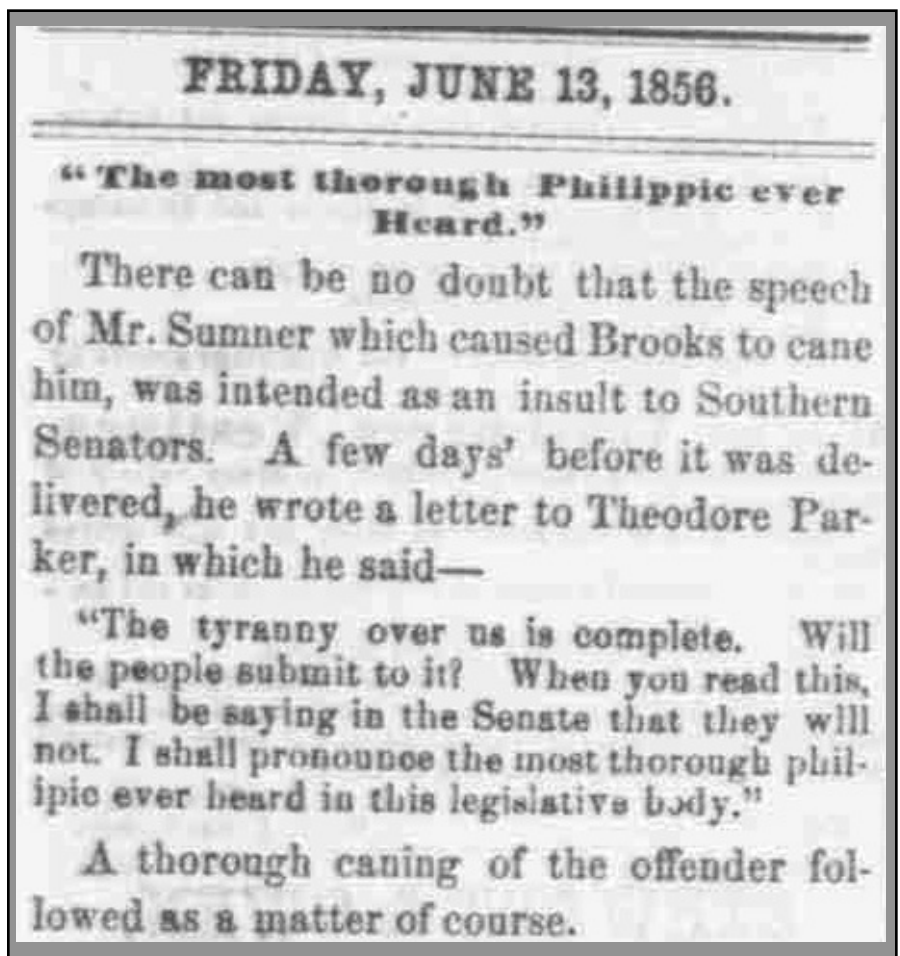
The lesson on the following pages deals with a very specific event, but it's also a vehicle for exploring larger questions. It can be a helpful way to make the real differences between the North and South tangible, in terms of their reaction to the immediate event and the deeper cultural divisions these varied reactions reveal. Since history unfolds in only one direction, questions of inevitability cannot, of course, be definitively answered. That doesn't mean they aren't worth posing; historians frequently consider issues of causation, contingency, and the overdetermination of events. This activity invites students to engage deeply in a conversation historians of the Civil War have wrestled with for well over a century. More broadly, it also encourages students to evaluate a question about causation, one of the most common and important forms of historical inquiry.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <http://archive.org/details/crimeagainstkans00sumn>



Dave Neumann is Site Director at the History Project at CSU Long Beach. Formerly an award-winning high school history teacher for 11 years, Dave taught US History, World History, AP US History, AP World History, Geography, and English. He has worked with pre-service and in-service teachers at all grade levels for over eight years. He recently completed a student guide to historical thinking for Bedford-St. Martins.



Nashville Daily Patriot, Nashville, TN, June 13, 1856. From the Library of Congress's Chronicling America: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

## The Caning of Sumner: Exploring the Coming of the Civil War Lesson Plan

**#1** Provide the preceding background information to students, either through text or a mini-lecture. Lecture allows the teacher to frame the event in suitably vivid terms, displaying images of the attack, as well as portraits of the “cast of characters” involved in the caning. Since this story exudes drama—two opposed forces, scandalous insult, and shocking violence—students will likely be interested.

**#2** Teachers can tell students that the class will be using this dramatic event to explore the following question: Was the Civil War inevitable by 1856? Another option would be to use the word “irrepressible” (in quotes), as this language has characterized the debate about the coming of the Civil War since William Seward, later Lincoln’s Secretary of State, claimed in 1858 that the “irrepressible conflict” between the two regions would inevitably lead the US to become either all slave or all free. Historians have argued about the inevitability of the Civil War ever since, though they don’t always use this language explicitly.

**#3** In groups, have student investigate pairs of documents about the caning that come from both the North and the South. *The Secession Era Editorials Project* at the Furman University Department of History contains over 100 editorials and letters to the editor in reaction to the caning. These documents span more than a month and represent newspapers from around the country. The list of documents can be displayed chronologically, or by the party affiliation of the newspaper. These documents are all of the same type, which provides an opportunity to increase students’ critical thinking by exploring the nature of this genre of text. Editorials typically provide little in the way of facts or new information, so instead of factual information teachers can encourage students to pay attention to the arguments authors make and, particularly, to the rhetoric they use—including loaded terms, abusive language, and allusions to other texts like the Bible.

These documents should be chosen to parallel each other. For example, students could investigate a letter to the editor from a Boston newspaper alongside a letter from a Charleston newspaper, the principal cities of Massachusetts and South Carolina respectively. Each region’s documents use distinctive language that reflects regional cultures. For example, Southern documents routinely invoke “honor,” language rarely used in the North. Northern editorials more frequently talk about the “brutality” and “barbarism” of the attack (drawing on a familiar contrast between civilization and barbarism) or its lawlessness (again, contrasting the law-abiding North with a wayward, violence-prone South).

But the documents also use overlapping language, mostly notably in frequent references to the Bible. One document alludes to the mark of Cain, while another mentions Sodom and Gomorrah. This suggests the shared culture of civic Christianity, but a religious culture understood very differently in each place. Teachers will have to be strategic about asking questions that point students toward these rhetorical flourishes and providing scaffolding that helps them understand allusions that were much more familiar to biblically-saturated 19<sup>th</sup> century audiences than today’s readers.

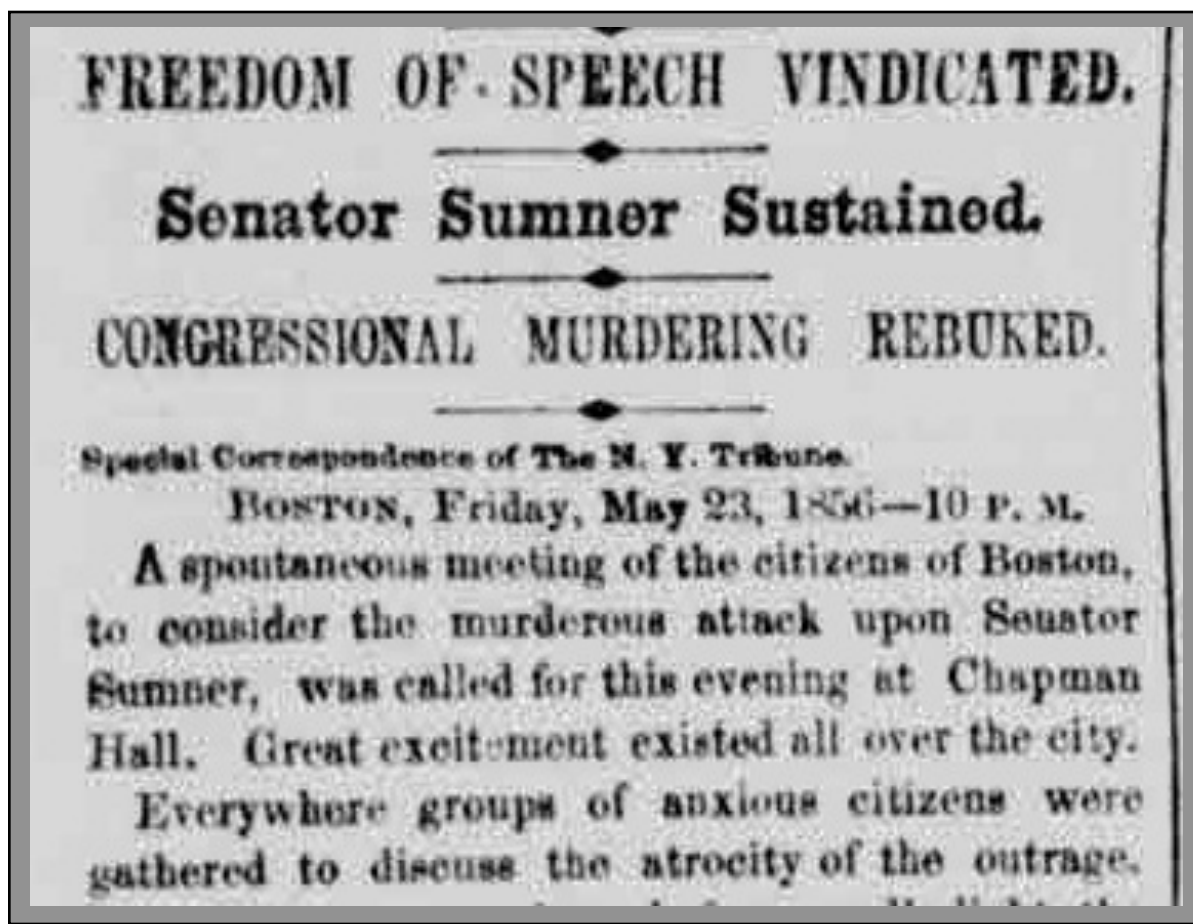
The selected editorials from the *Secession Era Editorials Project* provide four perspectives on the incident, two from the North and two from the South, including one from each state’s largest city. All four appeared in print within roughly a week of the beating on the afternoon of May 22—the first, remarkably, was published the day following the incident, suggesting the speedy transmission of information in the antebellum era and the depth of passion the beating evoked.



#4 Finally, ask each group to conclude whether, based on the evidence they have explored, the Civil War was “irrepressible” by 1856. Students may be impressed by the depth of the regional divide revealed in the documents. The teacher could guide the class to a discussion about when these regional differences developed. Many cultural and economic differences had roots in the colonial period, deepening or becoming more evident after independence. This might suggest that an “irrepressible conflict” had already emerged long before 1856—evident, for example, with the Missouri Crisis of 1819. On the other hand, war didn’t break out for another five years after this event, so maybe common ground was possible after passions cooled. Students can answer this question verbally, as an exit ticket, through a quick-write, or as a more formal essay. Regardless of the form of assessment, in light of the Common Core it makes good sense to require students to cite at least one specific piece of evidence that supports their general conclusion.

**Documents from *The Secession Era*  
Editorials website:**

- [Boston, Massachusetts, Bee](#)  
[American], (23 May 1856)
- [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Gazette](#)  
[Republican], (24 May 1856)
- [Charleston, South Carolina, Mercury](#)  
[Democratic], (30 May 1856)
- [Laurensville, South Carolina, Herald](#)  
[Democratic], (30 May 1859)



New York Daily Tribune, New York, NY, May 24, 1856. From the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America*: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

## Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: Lessons from Social and Cultural History

by Sarah Gold McBride, UC Berkeley History–Social Science Project

One of the most significant legacies of social and cultural history has been the elevation of the experiences of ordinary people in the historical narrative. The social and cultural branches of historical study emerged in the 1960s and 70s as a reaction to previous work by historians which primarily emphasized the role of leaders in the political, legal, and economic realms. In contrast, social and cultural history reveals what life was like for poor people, working people, women, children, and people of color. While teachers today often incorporate social and cultural history into their curriculum, it can be easy to overlook these lenses when teaching students about major political events - such as the Civil War.

The Civil War was, of course, a watershed event in American history, with profound consequences that transformed the country's political, legal, and economic structures. It is often taught through larger-than-life characters like Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee, timelines of major events and turning points, and maps of troop movements and battle ground sites. A social and

cultural history approach allows us to teach students about the lives of the majority of Americans who never held formal leadership but affected the course of the war from their efforts on the battle fields, the home front, and every where in between.

A useful example can be found in our contemporary culture. When it was released in November 2012, the movie *Lincoln*, by Stephen Spielberg, drew overwhelming praise from film critics for its compelling portrayal of American politics and, in particular, for the superb acting of Daniel Day-Lewis, who played the role of the sixteenth president. However, the film also drew criticism from some historians, such as Columbia Professor Eric Foner, who characterized *Lincoln* as a “severely truncated view” of the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> It was not the historical accuracy that troubled the eminent historian. “It’s not a question of being wrong,” he explained; rather, because it did not acknowledge the role that people like activists and slaves played in the war, the movie was “just inadequate.”<sup>2</sup> What Foner argued about this Hollywood film is a useful lesson



Negroes Leaving the Plough, March 1864 sketch. Image from the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004660106/>



to bring into the classroom: while it is not inaccurate to center lessons about the Civil War on Abraham Lincoln and other influential political actors, lessons that exclude the convictions, movements, and actions of common people *inadequately* reflect this important time period.

There are many different kinds of primary sources that students can use to study everyday experiences during the Civil War era—many of which are digitally accessible through entities like the Library of Congress. Letters and diaries, for example, are an excellent way to gain insight into individual lives. Historian James M. McPherson notably used this method in *For Cause and Comrades* (1997), which uses the letters and diaries of Civil War soldiers to examine their personal motivations fighting in the war. First-hand narratives of former slaves can also provide perspective on the war and its aftermath, such as the interviews collected by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s. In one WPA interview, former slave Albert Jones recounts how some slaves ran away from their masters to join the Union army—even those like Jones, who described his master as “mighty good to me.”<sup>3</sup> This interview is revealing of a Civil War story that is sometimes overlooked: it was the transfer of slave labor power from the South to the North—initially via runaways like Jones, and later via the Emancipation Proclamation—that proved pivotal in the North’s victory over the South. With this source, students would learn that many people, not just Abraham Lincoln and the political leaders emphasized in *Lincoln*, were responsible for the direction of the Civil War and, ultimately, the abolition of slavery. Although the WPA interviews do have their limitations, they offer students the chance to view the war from an often-overlooked perspective. (Even their weaknesses, such as the dialect interviewers used to record the former slaves’ speech, could spark a classroom discussion about how slavery was remembered long after the war.)

Whether students are reading a diary or listening to an interview, they should be guided to ask the same kinds of critical questions they have practiced with other types of texts, such as: Who created this source? Why was it created? Whose perspective does it represent, and Whose perspective is absent? These sources, and the questions students ask of them, can help illuminate the lives and perspectives not represented by a timeline or a map, and demonstrate how these often-unheard voices—the ordinary people who lacked access to traditional mechanisms of power—could inform the actions taken by traditional leaders.

Reflecting on how the film *Lincoln* depicted the Civil War, Eric Foner reminded his readers that “emancipation — like all far-reaching political change — resulted from events *at all levels of society*, including the efforts of social movements to change public sentiment” and, crucially, “of slaves themselves to acquire freedom.”<sup>4</sup> Foner’s comments remind us of the value of including the stories of multiple agents from all levels of society when we strive to teach the complexity and significance of the Civil War.



A 1937 photograph of Betty Bormer, a former slave, taken as part of the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Writers’ Project. Image from the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/99615239/resource/>

<sup>1</sup> Eric Foner, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, 11/26/12, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/27/opinion/lincolns-use-of-politics-for-noble-ends.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Nick Dutton, “Historian: ‘Lincoln’ is good film, but paints incomplete portrait,” *WTVR*, 11/17/12, <http://wtvr.com/2012/11/17/historian-lincoln-is-pretty-accurate/>.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Jones, “Civil War veteran of Portsmouth, Virginia,” *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1938*, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/mesbib:@field\(AUTHOR+@od1\(Jones,+Albert\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/mesbib:@field(AUTHOR+@od1(Jones,+Albert))).

<sup>4</sup> Eric Foner, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, 11/26/12. Emphasis added.

## Women and the Civil War

by Casey Christensen, The UC Irvine History Project

More than any other historical event, scholars of American history insist that understanding the Civil War is essential to “understanding the nation.”<sup>1</sup> If this is true, I’ve always wondered how and why women were so often relegated to the sidelines of Civil War history curriculum. Thankfully, the celebration of the war’s sesquicentennial, and the profusion of online resources commemorating it, has allowed me to revise my teaching of the conflict. As I surveyed the numerous websites dedicated to all things Civil War, I discovered an expanding body of rich and varied sources that foreground the experiences of women in the seminal event.

The most readily accessible sites on “Civil War Women” are those heralding acts of patriotism among women spies, soldiers and institutional leaders. Websites such as Duke University’s “Civil War Women” Archival Collection and the Smithsonian.com’s “The Civil War: 150 Years” uncover the singular and sensational stories of figures like Harriet Tubman, Rose O’Neal Greenhow, Pauline Cushman or the four hundred women who served as soldiers in the war. They offer primary and secondary sources that document the contributions of women in espionage and on the battlefield and thus call attention to women as historical actors in the most explicit of ways. And while the literal and figurative stories of women in men’s clothing are compelling to students, the emphasis on women in military service limits the story to the conventional narrative of combat and does little to expand our understanding of how most women experienced the Civil War.

Alternatively, first hand accounts of more “ordinary” women do much to communicate the war’s physical and emotional toll and also illuminate how dramatically the Civil War changed American society. Indeed, diaries and letters from nurses and from the northern and southern home front show how the conflict disrupted the social and cultural patterns of “everyday life”—particularly regarding prescribed gender roles. Online museums and academic libraries such as the University of Maryland’s “Women on the Border: Perspectives on the Civil War” exhibit, the Civil War Treasures from the New York Historical Society webpage and the PBS American Experience “Abraham and Mary Lincoln: A House



Frances L. Clailin 4 mo. heavy artillery Co. 1, 13 mo. Calvary Co. A. 22 months.  
Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645144/>





*Richmond Ladies Going to Receive Government Rations. "Don't you think that Yankee must feel like shrinking into his boots before such high-toned Souther ladies as we?" Image from the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96510482/>*

Divided" site, reflect the experiences of female volunteers who served in northern and southern hospitals. Beyond their direct sacrifices for the war, these women figured centrally in the establishment of nursing as a profession and the progression of women's rights. Union nurses allude to these changes with descriptions of working "among these rough men without fear of the slightest word of disrespect" and feeling "their dependence upon us."<sup>2</sup> They further expressed newfound expectations of equality with assertions to "never do a man's work for less than a man's pay."<sup>3</sup>

Even southern women acknowledged that in war "woman must soar beyond the conventional modesty considered correct under different circumstances."<sup>4</sup> Yet most southern wives and daughters appeared to lament such shifts in women's responsibilities and their words offer a powerful point of comparison with northern attitudes. Attention to these differences vividly illustrates the cultural divergence between the North and South and thus can help students better understand the nature of

sectional conflict. The internet offers valuable teaching resources on Confederate women. Some, like the University of Virginia's "Hearts at Home: Southern Women in the Civil War," are dedicated entirely to their story, while others provide primary and secondary sources embedded within general sites such as the "Civil War Women Blog." Many of these letters and diaries document the collapse of southern society during the war as the departure of Confederate men undermined traditional hierarchies of husband and wife, slave and master. Like many women, one mother grieved her new independence, "My only support-both boys gone to the war. I wonder if they would take me?"<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as Southern white women lost the protection of their patriarchs and the subservience of their slaves, their words foretold the effects of emancipation: "My future course is still uncertain. The servants are not willing to remain with me on the same terms."<sup>6</sup> Unlike their northern counterparts, Confederate women were ambivalent about their new responsibilities and the prospects of equality brought by war. According to historian Drew Gilpin Faust, the



unwelcome changes in social dynamics and gender roles bore consequence as southern women begged their soldiers to return home and resume old ways. Faust contends that although women of the Confederacy certainly helped the war effort, their flagging support ultimately undermined morale and contributed to Southern defeat.<sup>7</sup>

Although less common, writings by African American women likewise reflect a unique Civil War experience. While the first-hand account of Susie King Taylor—an African American “army woman”—is perhaps the most popular and easily available primary source on the web, more general sites dedicated to women in the war often include information about slaves and freedwomen. Their stories reveal the momentous change brought by emancipation and yet can also say much about life under slavery. In a letter to her former owner, one newly freedwoman explained her departure during the war “because you Parted me and my housbond as tho we had no feeling and...because you accused me of stealing Money and I was not guilty of it but because I am coulard.”<sup>8</sup> Such voices reveal the changing consciousness among

slaves during the war as they awakened to the ideals of racial equality. However, given the rarity of written documents, the analysis of war photographs that capture freedwomen and their families in “contraband” camps offer an equally rich source of knowledge. The Library of Congress website “Women in the Civil War: Ladies, Contraband and Spies” offers an image gallery that displays the hardship of slave women who traveled into Union lines alongside pictures of Northern white women volunteers and even portraits of southern belles. Taken together, the visuals offer a spectrum of experience during the war and are instructive in teaching historical thinking skills like “compare and contrast” and “point of view.”

Placing women at the center of the Civil War has engaged students and broadened their scope of interest beyond battles. Attention to the voices of nurses, wives, spies and daughters has offered vivid portraits of war and avenues to enhance their practice of primary source analysis and historical thinking skills. Significantly, integrating women into the Civil War narrative more effectively situates the event in the larger story of the nineteenth century and the greater history of American citizenship.



Before Louisa May Alcott wrote her famous Civil War novel, *Little Women*, she served as a Union nurse in Washington, D.C. Below is an excerpt from Alcott's *Hospital Sketches*, 1863:

*“My three days’ experiences had begun with a death, and ... a ward containing forty beds, where I spent my shining hours washing faces, serving rations, giving medicine, and sitting in a very hard chair, with pneumonia on one side, diphtheria on the other, five typhoids on the opposite, and a dozen dilapidated patriots....”*

Louisa May Alcott. Image from the Library of Congress:  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a02242/>.

<sup>1</sup> Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative* (New York, 1958-1974)

<sup>2</sup> “The Diary of a Civil War Nurse,” Smithsonian.com, [http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/nursing\\_3.html](http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/nursing_3.html)

<sup>3</sup> Clara Barton National Historic Site, accessed January 22, 2013, <http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/clba/work.html>

<sup>4</sup> “Nursing in the Civil War South,” Civil War Women Blog, <http://www.civilwarwomenblog.com/2006/11/nursing-in-civil-war-south.html>

<sup>5</sup> “Hearts at Home: Southern Women in the Civil War,” University of Virginia Library, <http://explore.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/show/hearts/patriotism>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, <http://explore.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/show/hearts/end>

<sup>7</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Adventure: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Durham, 2004.)

<sup>8</sup> “African Americans: Slavery and Freedom, Jane Giles, “Kentucky Civil War,” <http://www.ket.org/civilwar/aamerican.html#giles>



*The Influence of Woman, 1862. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/91705457/>*



## Was the Civil War a War for Freedom?

The History Blueprint is a state-of-the-art program, aligned to the Common Core, designed to develop critical thinking, reading and writing to engage students, improve their learning, and address the achievement gap. Developed by the California History-Social Science Project, the Blueprint's first unit, *The Civil War*, tackles a critical watershed in U.S. history, when the meaning of freedom for Americans and the meaning of union for the nation changed forever. The unit is comprised of eight separate lessons, organized around questions of historical significance and supported by research-based strategies to improve comprehension, expository writing ability, and historical content knowledge. Three excerpts were selected from two lessons in the unit for this special edition of *The Source*. To learn more or to download the entire unit (for free), visit <http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/historyblueprint>.

### Why Did the North Win?



1. What **strikes** you in reading this document? What sorts of things **grab** your attention?  
**Make two or more observations.**
2. What **puzzles** you? What don't you get? What do we need to talk about & to try to figure out?  
**Ask two or more questions.**
3. What **patterns** do you see? How does this source relate to other sources from this time?  
**Identify at least one pattern.**
4. What **connections** do you see? Does this source remind you of a source or issue from **modern times**?  
**Note one or more connections.**

Primary Source Toolbox developed by The History Project at UC Davis and Dr. Karen Halttunen.

Find this lesson online <http://historyblueprint.ucdavis.edu/site/unit/>, Lesson #3: Strategies and Battles, Page 12.

Image: Scott's great snake, 1861 by J.B. Elliott of Cincinnati. From Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3701s.cw0011000>



## CW3.5 – Civil War Battle Evidence Collection Sheet

In this lesson, students investigate twelve separate battles that defined the war. At each Battle Station (one of which is excerpted below) students collect basic information about the battle, including the victor, date, location, and the battle's impact on the outcome of the war. At each of these stations, students also need to consider and reconsider their answer to the question: *Why did the North win?*

Name	Date	Location	Leadership	Victor	How did they win?	Did this battle have an impact on the outcome of the war? If so, how?

### Antietam (September, 1862)

Following another loss at Bull Run in August of 1862, Union forces were on the run, not far from the capital of Washington, DC. The Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and Military General, Robert E. Lee, saw an opportunity to continue their victories by marching to Maryland. Lee crossed the Potomac River with 55,000 men and hoped that the people of Maryland would rise up in support of the Confederate cause. Unfortunately for Lee, there was no popular uprising (revolt.) He next divided up his troops in order to capture a Union military post.

On September 13 in a field near Frederick, Maryland, two Union troops found a copy of Lee's orders to divide his troops into four parts wrapped around three cigars. Union General McClellan did not move quickly to act upon this advantage, however. He waited almost eighteen hours to begin to move his troops to attack Lee. Lee used this time to reorganize, having learned from a Maryland citizen about the Union's discovery of his orders.

On September 17, the two forces finally met at Antietam Creek, near Sharpsburg. By the time they fought, the armies were relatively well-matched. The southerners were on the defense and the Union attacked. The fighting was horrible; by the end of the day, 6,000 troops had died, and 17,000 more were wounded. Lee fled with only 30,000 troops, and the Union army did not go after him, probably because of the devastation [destruction] they had seen the day before. Union General McClellan had won a strategic victory at Antietam, but had yet again wasted an opportunity to destroy the Confederate forces once and for all.

Find these handouts online <http://historyblueprint.dss.ucdavis.edu/site/unit/>, Lesson #3: Strategies and Battles, Page 22 & 30.



Completely silenced! Photograph at Antietam by Alexander Gardner, 1862. Image from the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/>

**How did Individual Americans Define Freedom?***CW 4.3 Civil War Historical Figures Activity Sheet - for use with Historical Figure***Historical Figure:** \_\_\_\_\_**Part I: Investigating the Secondary Source**

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Status: free or slave? \_\_\_\_\_ Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

What did this person do during the Civil War? \_\_\_\_\_

Supported which side during the Civil War? \_\_\_\_\_

Background Information (Ideas include: family, education, military training, hobbies, political party affiliation, and religion): \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: Read the primary sources and fill in this information.**

List the three most important main ideas from the primary sources. Rewrite these main ideas in your own words.

---



---



---

What was the perspective of your historical figure? (If these details aren't available, write "unknown"):

Regional Identity: \_\_\_\_\_ Date or time period: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Historical Context: When was the primary source written? \_\_\_\_\_

What was happening around your historical figure at that time? (If your primary source was written after the end of the war in 1865, write down what was happening around your historical figure during the war):

---

Describe your historical figure's perspective:

---

Select a quote from the primary source that represents your person, and explain the importance of the quote:

---

List two things you have learned about your historical figure that you have not already stated:

---



---



## Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Robert Smalls (1839-1915)

### Secondary Source:

Robert Smalls was born into slavery in Beaufort, South Carolina. He was educated and trained as a deckhand and rigger on coastal transport steamships. By the time South Carolina seceded from the Union, Smalls was a pilot on *Planter*, the transport steamer serving Brigadier General Roswell Ripley, commander of the Second Military District of South Carolina. On May 13, 1862, while the white crew was ashore, Smalls, then 23, took over the ship, which was loaded with armaments for the rebel forts. He took on board his wife, his two children and other slaves, and sailed out towards the Union fleet, which was blockading the harbor. He passed by the Confederate forts and raised the white flag of surrender to the Union ship, *Onward*. For the rest of the war, Smalls was first the pilot and later the captain of *Planter*, and led the ship in attacks. After the war, he was elected to the South Carolina legislature, and served there and in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1870s and 1880s. He died in 1915.

### Primary Source:

From M. Dezendorf, "Report to the [U.S. Government] Committee on Naval Affairs, January 23, 1883"

... at 3:25 A. M., May 13, the *Planter* started on her perilous adventure, carrying nine men, five women and three children. Passing Fort Johnson the *Planter's* steam-whistle blew the usual salute and she proceeded down the bay. Approaching Fort Sumter, Smalls stood in the pilot-house leaning out of the window with his arms folded across his breast, after the manner of [Confederate] Captain Relay, the commander of the boat, and his head covered with the huge straw hat which Captain Relay commonly wore on such occasions.

The signal required to be given by all steamers passing out, was blown as coolly as if General Ripley was on board, going out on a tour of inspection. Sumter answered by signal, "all right," and the *Planter* headed toward Morris Island .... passed beyond the range of Sumter's guns before anybody suspected anything was wrong.... As the *Planter* approached the Federal fleet, a white flag was displayed, ... [and] the [Union] ship *Onward* ... opened her ports, and was about to fire into the *Planter*, when she noticed the flag of truce. As soon as the vessels came within hailing distance of each other, the *Planter's* errand was explained. Union Captain Nichols then boarded her, and Smalls delivered the *Planter* to him.

...In December, 1863, while the *Planter*, then under command of Captain Nickerson, was sailing through Folly Island Creek, the Confederate batteries at Secessionville opened a very hot fire upon her. Captain Nickerson became demoralized, and left the pilot-house and secured himself in the coal-bunker. Smalls was on the deck, and finding out that the captain had deserted his post, entered the pilot-house, took command of the boat, and carried her safely out of the reach of the guns. For this conduct he was promoted ... to the rank of captain, and was ordered to act as captain of the *Planter*....

Find this handout online <http://historyblueprint.dss.ucdavis.edu/site/unit/> Lesson #4: Perspective, Page 21.



# Calendar

## Spring Programming

### America and the World

There are still spots available at these US and World History programs:

- The Cold War and Civil Rights (February 27, UC Davis)
- Moscow and Life under Communism (February 21, UCLA)
- Tokyo: Post WWII Democracy and Demilitarization (March 21, UCLA)
- Ancient Philosophies' Influence on the Development of Democracy - online seminar (March 14, UC Davis)
- Shanghai: 1900-1950 (April 4, UCLA)
- Holocaust Workshop, pedagogical training (April 8, CSULB)
- Brussels and the European Union (May 9, UCLA)

### Additional Spring Programs

- The History Blueprint Common Core Workshop (Feb. 28 & March 2, UC Berkeley)
- India Book Club (February 21, April 11, CSU Long Beach)
- Teaching with Primary Sources, Library of Congress Workshops (February 23 & April 6, UC Berkeley) (April 20, CSU Long Beach) (May 7 & May 14, UC Irvine)
- Common Core Online Webinars (March 20, Reading Critically) (April 3, Teaching Vocabulary) (April 24, Using Evidence)
- History-Social Science Convocation and Showcase Conference for K-12 Teachers (March 23, CSU Dominguez Hills)
- Uka and Nalini Solanki Lecture (April 24, CSU Long Beach)
- Annual Showcase of Teacher Lessons "America on the World Stage" Cohort (May 9, UC Davis)

Contact [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu) to learn more about any of these programs



Teachers collaborating at the UC Irvine History Blueprint Common Core Workshop.



## Summer Programming

### Common Core Institutes

- Implementing the Common Core Standards Through History Instruction (July 8-12, UC Berkeley)
- Implementing the Common Core: Literacy in the History Classroom (July 8-11, UC Irvine)
- Making the Transition to Common Core in the History-Social Studies Classroom (July 23-25, UC Davis)

### Library of Congress Workshops

- Teaching with Primary Sources, Library of Congress Level 1 (June 17, CSU Dominguez Hills for K-5 teachers) (July 10, UCLA)
- Teaching with Primary Sources, Library of Congress Level 2 (July 15-19, UC Berkeley - incorporating multimedia in history instruction) (July 22-25, CSU Long Beach - The Cold War)

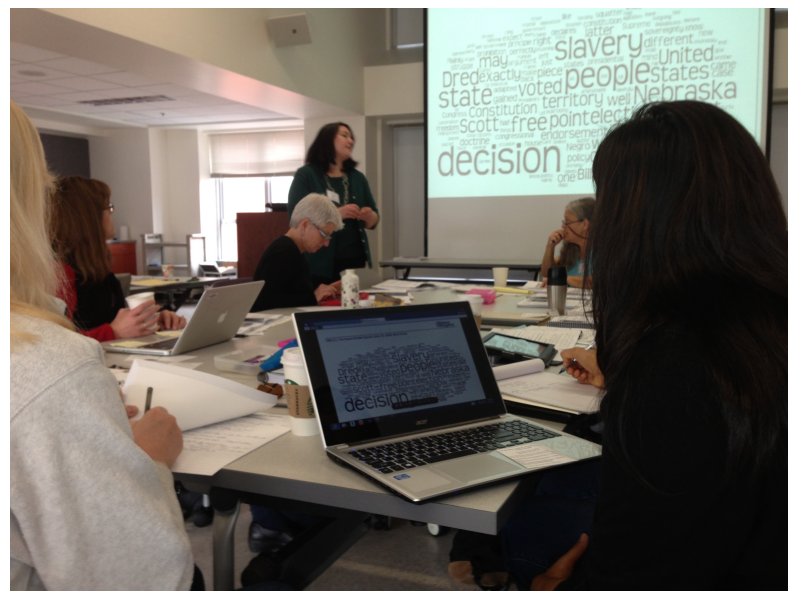
### American and World History Institutes

- Revolutions in World History: Sites of Encounter in World History (June 24-27, UC Irvine)
- Elementary Grade Level Institutes for K/1 and 4/5 teachers (June 18-20, CSU Dominguez Hills)
- Transcontinental Railroad, an NEH Summer Institute (either June 23-28 or July 7-12, UC Davis)\*
- World History Summer Institute (June 24-27, UC Irvine)
- Roots of the Arab Spring, an NEH Summer Institute (July 15-August 2, UC Davis)\*
- Place and Time Institute at the Automobile Club (July 15-19, UCLA)
- Teach India Summer Workshop (July 29-August 2, CSU Long Beach)
- Afghanistan, Then and Now (July 29-31, UCLA)
- Asian Art Museum Institute (July 29-August 2, UC Berkeley)
- The Eugene and Eva Schlesinger Teacher Workshop on the Holocaust (August 5-9, CSU Long Beach)
- Modern Israel and World Affairs (August 12-16, UC Berkeley)

\*Application deadline approaching, please contact [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu)



Teacher posting a "tweet" to the lesson questions from the Civil War History Blueprint, at the History Blueprint Common Core workshop at UC Davis.



Teacher Leader going through a Blueprint lesson with participants in the History Blueprint Common Core Workshop at UC Berkeley.





Like us on  
Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/California-History-Social-Science-Project/194311503921396>

