

Artsgenesis: Civil War Tapestry

Author(s)

This material was created by Kathleen Gaffney as a Multiple Intelligences Interactive Curriculum Model

Grade Range: 5-8, 9-12

Time Required

This model may be used for any historical period. The model may span several weeks as teachers or artists work with students. For teachers it is a full day experience.

Technology and Materials Needed

1. 3 x 5 index cards, two for each teacher or student
2. a large open space for participants to be grouped into family units (5 chairs in a circle) 6 circles of chairs, no desks or tables please
3. pencils and paper for letters
4. resource materials to access details such as specific dates
5. xerox copies of traditional dress, and home settings, tintypes
6. long table for Civil War artifacts: sword, writing desk, Federal uniform, sashes, foot wear, bonnets, ribbons, petticoats, whip, candle snuffer, toilet articles.
7. Slide projector and screen for slide presentation of Brady's photographs of Civil War America. (12 minute presentation to music of the era).
8. 2 easels to hold enlarged copies of recruiting posters.
9. 1 flip chart for the timelines and invention inventory.

While Ms. Gaffney toured the country she researched and compiled letters and diaries for her Civil War era play "**Challenge Her**". Through letters, diaries, and hundreds periodicals about dozens of ordinary individuals in America, Ms. Gaffney's plays have found their voice. Participants will create families that 'live' through specific events in the United States of 1863. They will explore music, art and photographs, inventions and authentic objects. Then they will write and perform letters to one another's family members from the perspective of people who experienced Gettysburg. Through the lens of these ordinary people speaking directly about their life and times, a living emotionally moving tapestry will emerge.

Procedures

1. **FAMILY GROUPS:** Group participants into small 'family units' at random this will produce a nice mixture. Use music to start and stop them. The sound track from Ken Burns PBS special Civil War is perfect. There is no speaking allowed. Turn music on low; ask them to form themselves into groups of 10. Stop music. Now into groups of 8. Stop music until complete. Coach them not to speak. Finally into groups of 5. Without speaking they must choose a leader of their group.

2. **MAKE CHOICES:** Have each group go to a different circle of chairs. This is where their family will live. The 'family' now must make many decisions. The leader becomes the (matriarch or patriarch) mother, father, grandmother or grandfather. The rest of the participants are members of the family. Each person decides who they are. Think of extended families where aunts and uncles live with relatives. Some will need to be children. The leader decides the last name of the family. Collectively the family decides where in the United States they live. Each state had a role in the Civil War. Good choices are Maryland, Tennessee, Vermont, Georgia and Pennsylvania since so many crucial events happened there. New York City was swelling with immigrants and former slaves who were now free Americans so it is also a good choice. Recruiting for both Federal and Confederate armies will be woven into daily life. Participants decide what the family does to survive (shipbuilding, farming, black smithing, preaching, printing, tin smithing and so forth). What does each family member do to help the family survive? What chores do the children do? Which side are the individuals on: North, South or neutral. Who is keeping secrets in the family. How may one family be related to another. Search for connections.
3. **WRITE IDEAS:** On index cards have participants write the answers to the above questions. Also each person chooses their own first name, age and which side of the issue (freedom / rebellion / neutral) they believe in, different family members can have different loyalties. Follow the rules of improvisation. Say 'yes' to your creative ideas, say 'yes' to the creative ideas of others, make each other look good.
4. **INTERVIEW ALL FAMILY MEMBERS:** The teacher will eventually become the Interviewer. The interviewer speaks to all the families. Ask specific questions. Gather as much information as possible in addition to name, age, and city where they live. What did you have for breakfast? How many pairs of shoes do you have? Send out your favorite child. All these questions will provoke strong responses and help the family build a history. When asking a question about secrets ask the person to step outside the house where their "family" cannot hear them. This is a device to allow their character to have a secret. In the game it is illegal to have any other family member respond to the secret as if they have heard it. If a participant breaks a rule, they must go to the Oregon frontier. If opportunities arise where a family member refers to something that happened before, bring out the other member, regress them in time and have them play the scene.
5. **EXPLORE:** Using typical family life scenes, explore life. Each family will recreate one of the following scenes: dinner table scene on a typical day celebration of someone's birthday arrival of a new family member (baby, grandparent and so on) departure of a family member to join the war effort family captured in the midst of doing their chores (remember that over 400 dressed as men and fought in the war so some girls may run away to fight) Use the provided reference materials to look up exact dates. The American History Almanac, Civil War Almanac and books from the bibliography will be provided for the day.
6. **PROGRESS IN TIME:** Start in 1860 and move ahead in time. Do this with a time line and discuss each event in terms of how it might have effected the families. Have participants make decisions about how they might be effected. Then at random interview some family members to get first hand experience.

7. **ENLIST MALES FOR COMING WAR:** Choose a major battle like Gettysburg and create scenes of camp life. You may have a Civil War re-enactor living near you who would be happy to be a technical assistant. Artsgenesis uses re-enactors to facilitate the induction and boot camp. Take a photograph (tintype) of each family before the soldier leaves. This Polaroid is the record of the family. When possible have family members recreate the farewell scene.
8. **LETTER WRITING EXERCISE:** Now that the families are split up each person writes a letter to someone else. Designate a postal officer. Have the postal office gather the letters. Give participants a very short time to write five to seven minutes. Collect the letters. Deliver them, have each family member read them aloud.
9. **PANTOMIME A BATTLE SCENE:** Describe a great battle. I like the Battle of Little Round Top at Gettysburg. Talk them through it. Stage and choreograph some of the movement. Then have participants perform a slow motion version of a moment in this battle to the sound track of Ken Burns Civil War or to the participants singing, Vacant Chair or Battle Hymn of the Republic.
10. **REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

Additional Comments

Bibliography

- Balsiger, David and Charles E. Sellier, Jr., *The Lincoln Conspiracy*. Los Angeles: Shick Sunn Classic Books, 1977
- Blackwell, Sarah Ellen. *A Military Genius, A Life of Anna Ella Carrol of Maryland*. Washington, D.C.: 1891-1895, 2 vols.
- Catton, Bruce. *The Army of the Potomac: Mr. Lincoln's Army*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962.
- , *The Civil War*. New York: The Fairfax, 1980
- Clinton, Catherine. *The Other Civil War American Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1984.
- Colman, Perry. *Spies Women in the Civil War*. Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 1992
- Davis, Burke. *The Civil War Strange and Fascinating Facts*. New York: Fairfax Press, 1960
- Edmonds, S. Emma E. *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*. Hartford: W.S. Williams & Co., 1865.
- Fleishman, Martha and Carol Joy Justice. *Bugs to Blizzards or An Army Wife at Fort D.A. Russell*. Cheyenne: Wigwam Publishing Company, 1974

- Greenbie, Sydney and Marjorie Barstow. *Anna Ella Carroll and Abraham Lincoln* Manchester University of Tampa Press in cooperation with Falmouth Publishing House, Inc., 1952
- Hanaford, Phebe A. *Daughters of America or Women of the Century*. Augusta: True and Company, 1882
- Lewis, Lloyd. *Myths After Lincoln*. New York: Press of the Readers Club, 1941.
- Morrison, Dorothy Nafus. *Chief Sarah Sarah Winnemucca's Fight for Indian Rights*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1990.
- Nevins, Allan. *The War for the Union War Becomes Revolution 1862-1863*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960.
- Read, Phyllis J. and Bernard L. Witlieb. *The Book of Women's Firsts*. New York: Random House, 1992.
- Sams, Anita B. *With Unabated Trust*. Monroe: Walton Press, Inc., 1977
- Sandburg, Carl. *Abraham Lincoln the Prairie Years & the War Years*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- Spence, James. *The American Union: Its Effect on National Character and Policy*. London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1862.
- Tomlin, Barbara and Carol Burgoa. *Multicultural Women's History Curriculum Unit*. Windsor: National Women's History Project, 1986.
- Williams, T. Harry. *Lincoln and His Generals*. New York: Vintage Books, 1952.

The Music and Poems of the Civil War

Music was popular with Civil War soldiers and civilians alike. It was one of the few recreations available. This was true for both instrumental and vocal music. Many soldiers carried songbooks in their knapsacks and frock coat pockets.

Sheet music was in extensive use throughout the war. One of the most popular songs of the period was *Lorena*. This Civil War classic was published in Chicago by H.M. Higgins in 1861.

The poems and songs of the Civil War are gripping and powerful. Everyone was touched by the War's events and each citizen was moved by the currents of the divergent principles and needs that tore a nation in half. The lyrics of *Lorena* evoke an appreciation of a soldier's sadness because of separation from home, contemplation of more peaceful times and a yearning to be with his sweetheart once again.

Lorena spoke so eloquently to the hearts and passions of so many soldiers that the leaders in both armies forbade its singing for fear it would cause higher rates of desertion from the ranks.

Sample Letters from the Civil War

Letter writing can be useful when trying to personally connect students with a lesson. Here are some examples of letters that reflect a level of research and comprehension of the lesson.

Battle of Cold Harbor

Thomas Kieffer, Auburn, NY, Camp of The 14th New York Artillery,
December 20, 1864

Dear Friend Erin,

I take you in hand to let you know that I yet live. We got to Spottsylvania in time to have a break to get to Cold Harbor for a brush with the rebs in the grand assault on the 3rd. The rebs had the advantage of position and they were protected by breastworks and rifle pits. When the order was given we charged across an open plain into a hailstorm of rebel balls and shells. Men were struck down as if by a great scythe like grass in haying season and it was there that Father was struck. He was at my side during the charge when I suddenly heard him groan. Just then I looked over and saw Father fall to the ground, his uniform soaked with his blood. He was shot a few feet from me. The bullet went a little back of and a little above the left groin and exited to the skin of the right hip.

On the battlefield I took off his belts and clothes and then with my bowie knife I took the ball out as it was located near the surface under his cartridge box. I have it now in my pocket. I helped carry Father off the field and stayed with him until he died. He lived about one day after being shot at Cold Harbor. The ball went through the lower part of his bowels and Father must have suffered greatly before he died. Father knew that he was going to die and he was a very brave and calm. I wish that I could have done much more for Father. He said that he was prepared to die and that he had done his duty. He was very alert until the end and he gave me some good advice. He told me to be a brave soldier, and then he died in my arms. I buried him on the field at Cold Harbor and he now rest in peace with thousands of other brave soldiers so much bloodshed on both sides is to be beyond description. The ground has puddles of blood from mangled bodies and the sight torments me still. Thank God that you are not in the Army. I must close Give my respects to all and save a portion for yourself.

From Your Friend,
Thomas Kieffer

All lesson plans are the property of Artsgenesis, Inc. and Kathleen Gaffney.

J.S. Pitts, NY Reg., Antietam Camp, October 1, 1862

[Historical Note: on September 17, 1862 Major General Joseph Hooker's Union First Corps struck hard against the Confederate left, under the command of Major General Stonewall Jackson. By mid-morning 13,000 men fell dead or wounded. Pitts is describing the Confederate position known as the Sunken Road of Bloody Lane. On no other field, on no single day of battle, would so many Americans be killed, wounded or missing: 22,719 – nearly 13,000 Federals and about 10,000 Confederates. The consequences of the battle were enough to convince Lincoln to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.]

Dear Friend Moses,

I take pen in hand to let you know that I live still having been through a terrible battle at this place. We remained encamped at the above place for how long I know not. Well, I have seen enough of battles and I will be very well never to see any more after Antietam. I never shall forget the horrors of the day which the pen and paper cannot express. The day I counted 41 dead rebels in one small spot no larger than where our house stood. This was where our boys charged by the side of the road and a post rail fence and there were dead rebels in a line 3 deep for most of a mile. Once and a while you see our dead boys but nothing compared to the rebels. The rebels would try to wound all that they can for it takes two men to remove a wounded man from the field. The blood of the killed was plainly to be seen upon the ground. Burial parties are hard at work but this place is really a stinking hole.

I can write no more for now. This is from your friend,
J.S. Pitts

A Civil War Timeline

1861

Politics

- Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as the sixteenth president. Hannibal Hamlin was his vice-president.
- Kansas became the thirty-fourth state.
- Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee seceded from the Union.
- The Confederate States of America was formed at Montgomery, Al. Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as the president.
- The Confederate Convention adopted the Confederate flag (and later changed it).
- The Nevada and Dakota Territories were formed with the division of the Territory of Utah.
- The Confederate Congress adopted a constitution and enacted a coinage bill.
- The Civil War began at Ft. Sumpter, SC.
- The capital of the Confederate States was moved from Montgomery, AL to Richmond, VA.
- The first casualties of the Civil War came at Baltimore, MD.
- The Choctaw Indians declared their allegiance to the Confederate States.
- President Lincoln called for 42,000 volunteers for the Union Army and Navy.
- Congress passed the first income tax law to aid in financing the Civil War.
- Congress authorized the Medal of Honor for Valor.
- The U.S. Army had 186,751 men at this time.
- The Battle of Belmont, MO, was General Ulysses S. Grant's first Civil War battle and his first defeat.
- In Arizona and New Mexico, the 1861-1890 Apache War began.
- A territorial government was established in Colorado.
- President Lincoln suspended all commerce with the seceded states.
- Charleston, New Orleans, Mobile and Savannah were all blocked.
- The national debt at this time amounted to \$90,580,873.

Science & Technology

- Transcontinental telegraph service eliminated the Pony express.
- President Lincoln received the first coast-to-coast telegram from Sacramento.

Arts & Culture

- Mrs. Julia Ward Howe wrote the "*Battle Hymn of the Republic*".
- The American Miners Association was formed in St. Louis.

1862

Politics

- General Robert E. Lee was appointed Confederate Commander of Armies.
- The Department of Agriculture was formed.
- The Bureau of Printing and Engraving began.
- President Lincoln passed the Homestead Act.
- Chief Little Crow led a Sioux uprising in Minnesota.
- Congress enacted an anti-polygamy measure aimed at the Mormons.
- Battles were fought at Sea Ridge, Shiloh, Seven Pines and Cedar Mount.
- The *Virginia (Merrimac)* sank two Union frigates at Hampton Roads, VA.
- Congress established the rank of admiral in the Navy.
- Admiral Farragut took possession of New Orleans after a battle with Confederate ships.
- The number of men in the Union Army at this time was 575,917.
- Andrew Johnson was named military governor of Tennessee.
- Martin Van Buren died at the age of 79.
- John Tyler died at the age of 72.
- The 1862-1867 Sioux Indian War was fought in Minnesota and Dakota.
- The first land mines were used in war.
- The existence of a rock salt mass was revealed at a mine near New Iberia, LA.
- Congress chartered the building of the Union Pacific Railroad.
- Public debt rose to \$524,176,412.

Science & Technology

- A patent was issued to R.J. Gatling for the first machine gun.
- John D. Rockefeller, at the age of 23, invested \$4000 of his savings in an oil refining partnership in Cleveland.
- A.T. Stewart built a store in New York City, which later became Wanamaker's.
- Chicago surpassed Cincinnati as the U.S. meat production center.
- The nickel industry in the U.S. began when the Lancaster Gap Mine in Pennsylvania began supplying metal for nickel coins.
- A.M. Dunham began commercial snowshoe production in Norway, ME.

Arts & Culture

- *The Golden Age* was the first newspaper in Idaho
- Artist Thomas Nash began what is now political cartooning.

1863

Politics

- West Virginia was admitted as the thirty-fifth state.
- President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address.
- President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
- The Territory of Arizona was created from the Territory of New Mexico.
- The Territory of Idaho was carved from the territories of Washington, Utah, Dakota, and Nebraska.
- The Congress passed the first National Conscription Act.
- Anti-draft riots broke out in New York City. Nearly 1,000 were killed or wounded.
- A total of 174,524 immigrant arrived in the U.S.
- Income tax receipts in the U.S. amounted to \$2,741,857.
- The Union forces were composed of 918,191 men.
- The Confederate invasion of the North ended.
- The Union and Confederate campaigns continued.
- War broke out with Cheyenne and other Indian tribes in Nebraska, Colorado and the Indian Territory.
- Congress authorized the organization of national banks.
- The Confederates Sates tried to break the blockade around southern cities with submarines.
- General Stonewall Jackson was accidentally shot by his own soldiers.
- James A. Garfield was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- The national debt rose to \$1,119,772,138.

Science & Technology

- Ebenezer Butterick invented the first paper dress patterns in the U.S.
- The steel age began with a new method of converting iron to steel.

Religion

- The Mormon Tabernacle was built in Salt Lake City between 1863 and 1867.

Arts & Culture

- Everett Hale's *Man Without a Country* was published.
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published *Tales of a Wayside Inn, Part I*.
- The song "*When Johnny Comes Marching Home*" was published by L. Lambert.
- The *Daily Telegraph* was the first newspaper printed in Wyoming.

1864

Politics

- Nevada became the thirty-sixth state.
- The motto “In God We Trust” was first used on U.S. coins.
- Congress amended the National Bank Act, replacing the Independent Treasury System of 1846 with a system more attractive to private finance.
- General Ulysses S. Grant was named Commander-in-Chief of the Union Armies.
- The famous words “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead” were spoken by Admiral Farragut at Mobil Bay.
- General Sherman made his famous march to the sea via Atlanta, GA.
- A total of 193,195 immigrants arrived in the U.S.
- A federal cigarette tax was enacted.
- General McClellan resigned his commission to run for president.
- The Territory of Montana was formed from the Territory of Idaho.
- Battles were fought at Olustee, Ft. Pillow, Wilderness, Chickamauga, Cold Harbor, Spottsylvania, Petersburg, and Cedar Creek.
- Arkansas adopted the motto “Regnant Populi” (The People Rule).
- Montana adopted the motto “Oro y Plata” (Gold and Silver).
- Rhode Island adopted the motto “Hope”.
- The Confederate cruiser *Alabama* was sunk near France by the U.S.S. *Kearsarge*.
- The national debt at this time amounted to \$ 1,815,784,370.

Science & Technology

- The casualty insurance industry began in Hartford, CT.
- G.P. Rowell began the first successful advertising agency in the U.S.

Arts & Culture

- The songs “*Beautiful Dreamer*” and “*Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*” were published.
- Songster Stephen Foster died at the age of 38.
- Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne died at the age of 60.
- The Red Cross was founded in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The *Montana Post* was the first newspaper in the Montana Territory.
- The *Frontier Scout* was the first newspaper published in North Dakota.

1865

Politics

- President Lincoln was inaugurated for his second term. Andrew Johnson was his vice president.
- The Civil War ended when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at the Appomattox Court House, VA., on April 9th .
- President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 14th ; He was the first president to be assassinated.
- Andrew Johnson became the seventeenth president upon the death of President Lincoln.
- The total death toll of the war was 524,509 – 359,528 Union Soldiers and 164,981 Confederate soldiers.
- The number of dollars in circulation in the U.S. at this time was \$1,081,540,514.
- A total of \$8,525,153 was paid out in government pensions.
- The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was adopted.
- The president rescinded the restriction of trade west of the Mississippi River.
- Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned at Ft. Monroe, VA.
- There were about 295,000 Indians in the U.S. at this time, In 1492 there had been approximately 850,000.
- The national debt at this time was \$2,680,869,000.

Science & Technology

- A company in Fredonia, NY was the first to sell natural gas in the U.S.
- The first American cannery was built on the Pacific Coast.
- The Butterfield Overland Dispatch was formed to take passengers and packages between the Missouri River and Denver.
- The Southern Pacific Railroad was chartered.
- The compression ice machine was invented by Thaddeus Lowe.

Arts & Culture

- *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* made Mark Twain famous.
- Walt Whitman wrote *Drum Taps*.
- The Ku Klux Klan was first formed in Pulaski, TN.
- Mascara came into vogue.
- *The San Fransisco Examiner* was first published by William Moss.

Which War?

The conflict known to most of us as the Civil War has a long and checkered nomenclature. Here are some samples students might uncover:

The War for Constitutional Liberty
The War for Southern Independence
The Second American Revolution
The War for States' Rights
Mr. Lincoln's War
The Southern Rebellion
The War of the Southern Planters
The War of the Rebellion
The Second War for Independence
The War to Suppress Yankee Arrogance
The Brothers' War
The War of Secession
The Great Rebellion
The War for Nationality

The War Against Slavery
The War of the Sixties
War Against Northern Aggression
The Yankee Invasion
The War for Separation
The War for Abolition
The Confederate War
The War of the Southrons
The War for Southern Freedom
The War of the North and South
The Lost Cause
The Late Unpleasantness
The Late Friction
The Schism

Which Battle?

There is some confusion as to the names of various Civil War battles. The root of the difficulty was geography; invading Union armies lived by maps, while Confederates were at home with the terrain. The Federal troops often named battles for nearby streams, while Confederates used the names of towns. With some investigation, students can uncover some of these discrepancies, for example:

Federal Name	Confederate Name
The Battle of Bull Run	The Battle of Manassas
The Battle of Antietam (Creek)	The Battle of Sharpsburg