

The Blue Hill Peninsula in the Civil War
Developed in cooperation with
The Wilson Museum & Blue Hill Historical Society

Grade Level: 7-8

Introduction:

In 1884, a number of Civil War veterans living in and near Blue Hill, Maine recorded the story of their service in the war. They described their lives prior to the war, when they enlisted, what they did during the war, and finally what they did in the 20 years following the war until the time of the interview. These documents provide a valuable resource in helping students understand the scope of the war. Through these narratives, students can research and learn about many aspects of the war, many of which would be difficult to understand through the reading of a textbook. These documents are an excellent resource for learning about the reasons for the war and why men volunteered to serve. These documents, along with the letters of Castine soldiers, the “Life of a Civil War Soldier” kit and other resources will provide students with a rich understanding of the conflict.

Guiding Questions:

- What factors and events influenced the outcome of the Civil War?
- What were the experiences of soldiers who fought in the U.S. Civil War? Who were these men, and why did they serve?
- What was Maine’s role in the Civil War?

Standards:

Maine Learning Results: E1 Historical Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and

Patterns: Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-Speaking and Listening SL.7.2 Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

CCSS.ELA-Speaking and Listening SL 7.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-Speaking and Listening SL.7.5 Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

CCSS.ELA-Speaking and Listening SL.7.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Teacher Preparation:

In order to guide students through this unit, the teacher will need a solid understanding of the Civil War, to include the central issues that motivated the South to secede, how the war progressed from Fort Sumter in April of 1861 to Appomattox Court House 4 years later as well as knowledge of some of the central figures. The PBS documentary, *Ken Burn's Civil War*, is an excellent resource, if a bit long. Because of the overwhelming amount of scholarship on the topic, it is difficult to know where to start. The single volume text, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, (Oxford University Press, 1988) by James McPherson is an excellent resource.

For the primary source transcription activity, I have used documents provided to my class by the Blue Hill Historical Society. Most communities in Maine have a similar organization and are likely have an archive of similar documents. If local documents are unavailable, the Maine State Archives, Maine Historical Society and the Maine Memory Network are all sources of primary documents relating to Maine's role in the Civil War. It is recommended that whatever documents are used, the teacher has a transcribed version available.

Student Preparation:

Prior to beginning this unit, students should have already been taught:

1. How to conduct research using print and online resources
2. How to properly cite a source
3. Oral presentation strategies

Activities:

1. Civil War overview (4 days)
2. "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory"
3. Why Fight? Soldiers' Letters analysis (2-3 days)
4. Civil War Rations (1 day)
5. Exhibiting a Civil War Soldier (2-3 days)
6. Blue Hill Veteran Narratives
7. Presentation of Research

Resources:

History Alive: The United States Through Industrialism (with online teacher resources)

"The Sixteenth Maine at Gettysburg" (MPBN documentary)

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Civil War Program: 1861-1865

"Life of a Civil War Soldier" Kit - Wilson Museum

Blue Hill Civil War Veterans narrative documents - Blue Hill Historical Society

Assessments:

1. History Alive Chapter 22 test
2. Civil War Letters scavenger hunt worksheet
3. Research presentation: Blue Hill Veterans

Activity 1: Overview of the Civil War (4 days)

Students will read Chapter 22 of *History Alive: The United States Through Industrialism* in order to gain an understanding of the significant events and figures of the Civil War. Additionally, we will watch a short documentary highlighting the role of the 16th Maine Volunteer Regiment at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Objective:

- compare the strengths and weaknesses of the Union and Confederacy at the outbreak of the Civil War to predict the outcome of the war.
- draw connections between significant writings and speeches of Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence.
- identify the views of leaders on both sides and compare and contrast the experiences of white and black Union soldiers.
- examine critical battles and events of the war and connect them to the Union's Anaconda Plan.
- explain how key events of the Civil War, like the Battle of Gettysburg, affected soldiers and civilians.

Procedure:

Day 1:

1. Display visuals 22A (Union Soldiers Marching off to War) and 22B (Confederate Soldiers Marching off to War). Give the students time to discuss, at their table, what they observe in the images. Ask students what they notice in the images including differences between the two images.
2. Read Section 22.1 together and explain that with this chapter, students will examine the key figures and events of the Civil War in order to answer the Essential Question: What factors and events influenced the outcome of the Civil War?
3. Assign Chapter 22: Sections 1-4 in *History Alive: The United States Through Industrialism*. Students will read the chapter and answer the questions in their interactive notebook as homework.

Day 2:

1. Discuss the assigned questions from sections 22.2 - 22.4
2. Watch the MPBN documentary "The Sixteenth Maine at Gettysburg" (26 min)
 1. Ask the students if they know what role Maine played in the Civil War.
 2. After watching, discuss the significance of the Battle of Gettysburg.
 3. Follow up on the discussion with a conversation about Maine's contributions to the war.
3. Assign Chapter 22: Section 5-8 (end of Chapter) Students will read the chapter and answer the questions in their interactive notebook as homework.

Day 3:

1. Review the assigned reading and questions.
2. Use the online “Jeopardy” format Reading Challenge to complete the textbook activity and review for the chapter quiz.

Assessment:

1. Chapter 22 Multiple Choice/Short Answer Test

Activity 2: “Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory” (2-3 days)

Students will attend a staged reading of battlefield letters written by soldiers from Castine, Maine at the Wilson Museum Education Center.

Objectives:

- understand the role of Maine volunteers and specifically, volunteers from Castine and the surrounding towns.
- identify key events from the Civil War that Maine units participated in.

Procedure:**Day 1:**

1. Ask students when they last wrote a hand written letter. What prompted them to write their letters? Now ask them when they last sent an email, and what occasioned their writing it. Did any of these communications contain important news? If students had something highly important to convey, what means of communication would they use Why?
2. Now ask students how important they think letter writing may have been in 19th century America. With telegraphs, but no telephones, and relatively slow means of transportation, people were often separated from one another without any other way to communicate except by letter.
3. Ask students to imagine they are living during the Civil War. They themselves, or one of their family members, has just enlisted and gone off to fight. How important would it be to receive a letter in this situation? What would those left at home hope to hear about? What would those gone off to fight yearn to know?
4. Explain that the class is going to listen to a staged reading of letters written by Civil War soldiers from Castine. They should listen for descriptions of living conditions, what the soldiers missed most about home, and what happened to them during the war. While listening, they will have a Scavenger Hunt worksheet on which they will record key points of the program.

Day 2:

1. Attend program at the Wilson Museum Education Center
2. Complete the scavenger hunt worksheet while listening to the program

Day 3:

1. Discuss the program, their scavenger hunt findings, and introduce Activity 4: Soldiers' Letters analysis

Activity 3: Why Fight? Soldiers' Letters Analysis (2-3 days)

- From the Wilson Museum "Life of a Civil War Soldier" Kit

Activity 5: Civil War Rations (1 day)

- From the Wilson Museum "Life of a Civil War Soldier" Kit

Activity 6: Exhibiting a Civil War Soldier (2-3 days)

- From the Wilson Museum "Life of a Civil War Soldier" Kit

Activity 7: Blue Hill Veteran Narratives (10 days)

Students will engage in primary source analysis by transcribing narrative accounts of Civil War soldiers from Blue Hill and researching the information contained in the documents. This project will take quite a bit of time, and will likely be frustrating for some students as they encounter challenges in transcribing the documents. The handwriting, along with the quantity of unfamiliar words and locations make this a challenging assignment. The teacher should have be prepared to give hands on assistance throughout the assignment. Having a previously transcribed copy of the documents will make the activity go much easier.

Objectives:

- gather information from a primary source
- analyze, interpret and synthesize information from primary and secondary sources
- integrate multiple resources to develop an understanding of the experiences of Civil War soldiers from Maine

Procedures:

Day 1:

1. Explain that the students will examine primary sources in order to understand the role of Maine soldiers in the Civil War.
2. Separate the students into groups of 3 and assign each group the soldiers they will be researching.
3. Project one of the documents on the wall and discuss some of the challenges in transcribing a hand written document.
4. Hand out the transcription procedures and rubric. Go through the requirements for a successful transcription. (Courtesy Civil War Trust)
5. Review the requirements for the project (see attached sheet)

Days 2-5:

1. Students will continue to transcribe primary documents.

2. Groups should note key information, according to the research requirements, for further research in secondary sources.

Days 6-10:

1. Review the requirements for the final presentation of research.
2. Students meet in groups to use their notes and research to develop a multimedia presentation that describes the role of their veteran during the Civil War.

Activity 8: Presentation of Research (2 days)

Students will present their research and final project 2 times. The first presentation will be at BHCS for an audience of their classmates and other invited guests. These guests will likely include members of the Blue Hill Historical Society, parents, and other school and community members. The second presentation will be at the Wilson Museum Education Center for an audience of Museum staff and patrons and the students of the Adams School located in Castine.

Objectives:

- Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Procedure:

1. Each group will have the opportunity to present their research according to the attached requirements and rubric.
2. Students should be prepared to answer questions from the audience regarding their research.

Assessment:

Transcription Rubric
Presentation Rubric

Castine Letters Scavenger Hunt

	In the Union Camps	In the Prison Camps	Back Home
Living Conditions:			
Camp Life			
Food			
Clothing			

	In the Union Camps	In the Prison Camps	Back Home
The War:			
Battles Mentioned			
Fighting			
Rebels			
Injury & Wounds			

Blue Hill Civil War Veterans

Biographical Information:

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Family / Hometown _____

Date of Enlistment _____

Military Unit _____

Date of Discharge _____

1. What did your soldier do before heading off to war?

2. Describe where this soldier travelled during the Civil War. Give locations and dates where available.

3. What battles did your soldier participate in? What information is given regarding their actions in the battles?

4. What did your soldier do after the end of the Civil War?

Blue Hill Civil War Veterans Presentation Requirements

Your group must create a multimedia presentation which describes who your veteran was, and what they did before, during and after the war. Because your primary documents give only brief descriptions of what they did during the war, it is up to you to conduct further research about the battles mentioned. Your final presentation should reflect how you took information from both primary and secondary sources in order to fully understand the significance of your soldier's participation in the Civil War.

Required information:

1. All available biographical information (name, date of birth, parents, wife, children etc.)
2. Their life before the war
3. Why they volunteered (some documents describe this, and others do not)
4. Date of enlistment
5. What unit they were a part of
6. Where they were during the war
7. Battles they participated in: this should include key information about the battles: Union & Confederate casualties, significance of the battle, etc.
8. Injuries and illness
9. Date of discharge
10. Their life after the war

Your presentation will include:

1. Written documentation of the above information with a bibliography of sources used.
1. Complete typed transcription of Biographical Narrative & clean copy of handwritten document.
2. Photographs or images related to your veteran or the unit he was a member of.
3. Photograph or image of at least 1 significant battle your soldier participated in.
4. Timeline of your soldier's participation in the Civil War.
5. Map of where your soldier travelled during the War.

Final presentation:

At the final presentation, each group will present, to the rest of the class and other guests, your research and will be prepared to answer questions from the audience.

Blue Hill Civil War Veterans
Presentation Rubric

Categories	4	3	2	1
Requirements	All requirements are met and exceeded	All requirements are met.	One requirement was not completely met.	More than one requirement was not completely met.
Content	Covers topic in-depth with details. Subject knowledge is excellent.	Includes essential knowledge about the subject. Subject knowledge appears to be good.	Includes essential information about the topic but there are 1-2 factual errors.	Content is minimal OR there are several factual errors.
Mechanics	No misspellings or grammatical errors.	Three or fewer misspellings and/or mechanical errors.	Four misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	More than 4 errors in spelling or grammar.
Sources	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. All documented in desired format.	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. Most documented in desired format.	Source information collected for graphics, facts and quotes, but not documented in desired format.	Very little or no source information was collected.
Attractiveness	Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.	Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance to presentation.	Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.	Use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. but these often distract from the presentaion content.
Oral Presentation	Interesting, well-rehearsed with smooth delivery that holds audience attention.	Relatively interesting, rehearsed with a fairly smooth delivery that usually holds audience attention.	Delivery not smooth, but able to hold audience attention most of the time.	Delivery not smooth and audience attention lost.

Resources used in developing this unit:

Common Core State Standards for English / Language Arts

Dunfee, Paula. "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Civil War Program 1861-1865." The Wilson Museum, Print. 2009.

Hart, Diane, and Bert Bower. "22." History Alive!: The United States through Industrialism. Palo Alto, CA: Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2011. Print.

Maine Learning Results for Social Studies

Phou, Laura, Dyanne Tracy, Glen Auten, and Shelley McHugh. "Transcribing Civil War History." Civil War Trust. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 24 Jan. 2015.

Sixteenth Maine at Gettysburg. Dir. Daniel Lambert. MPBN, 2013. Web.

The Blue Hill Historical Society Archive of Civil War Veterans' Narratives

The Wilson Museum Educational Kits: "Life of a Civil War Soldier".