



THE CIVIL WAR VOICES FROM BROOKLYN

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW & INSTRUCTIONS

THE CIVIL WAR VOICES FROM BROOKLYN

This curriculum was developed in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and highlights collections from Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Cemetery. These letters, cartes de visite, wartime illustrations, and broadsides document visual and print communication made by and for Brooklynites during the American Civil War. At the time, Brooklyn was a separate city from New York and ranked as America's third-largest city. Therefore, the sources included here, while local to Brooklyn, reflect sentiments that are useful for understanding the experiences of soldiers and civilians in any Northern city.

The Civil War: Voices from Brooklyn presents a personal perspective on the Civil War and is designed intentionally to complicate well-known epic or battle-driven narratives. The documents and visual sources presented introduce a range of themes, including the racism of many Northern whites, the contributions of women through major relief efforts such as the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair, and the form and function of wartime documentary illustration. They juxtapose the horrific realities soldiers faced in battle and in makeshift camps with the ways they stayed in touch with loved ones back home, in language that is at times tender, matter-of-fact, playful, and morose.

The Civil War coincided with innovations in photography, print media, and postage systems. The primary sources highlighted in this curriculum speak to an explosion in personal communication between battlefield and home and to the rise of a mass culture meant to solidify national identity and patriotism. They have been paired with adaptable handouts and strategies for critical thinking across the humanities and social sciences, designed for grades 4–12.

The following lessons are organized by source format — letters, cartes de visite, broadsides and printed ephemera, and wartime illustration. Each form of communication brings a unique set of insights and challenges to the researcher, which the strategies embedded in the handouts and lesson plans will prompt students to consider. If you use all of the lessons in the recommended order, you will have completed a scaffolded history research process that involves making observations and inferences, seeking additional information from a variety of sources, synthesizing a range of sources, and applying evidence to make an argument. But you might also invite students to look for sources beyond those highlighted here. In the years after the Civil War, many archiving institutions failed to collect

artifacts and documents from people of color, women, and the working class. By the time they got around to it, many documents may have been lost, destroyed, or found a home at other institutions. Thus there are significant holes in the collections of Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood on the experiences of black Brooklynites and women — especially working-class women — during the Civil War. We have made this clear in the directions and historical context for each section and encourage you to use this as a teaching point with your students.

The sources highlighted here and their accompanying critical-thinking strategies offer a rich entry point into the following topics and themes:

- Life as a soldier
- Life on the home front
- The draft in New York City
- Women and relief efforts
- Technological advancements in communication
- The use of propaganda

School groups in and around New York City can deepen their study of the Civil War through onsite programs at Green-Wood Cemetery and Brooklyn Historical Society. At Green-Wood, burial ground to many Civil War soldiers, they will unpack themes of commemoration and memory. At Brooklyn Historical Society, founded during the Civil War in 1863, they will explore archives and museum collections for what they contain as well as probe their omissions. Both this curriculum and visits to these institutions will push students to move past epic, patriotic narratives of the Civil War and to consider the powerful forces and personal experiences that defined this transformative era.

CREDITS

The Civil War: Voices from Brooklyn was created by Rebecca Krucoff in collaboration with the Education Departments of Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Historic Fund.

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The Civil War: Voices from Brooklyn was developed by Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Historic Fund as part of a joint programming initiative commemorating the 150th anniversary of the war's end through exhibitions, educational curricula, and public programming. Founded in 1863, Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) is a nationally recognized urban history center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's extraordinary and complex history. BHS is a vibrant museum, a world-renowned research library, a cutting-edge education center, and a hub for community dialogue. Located in a landmark 1881 building designed by architect George Browne Post, BHS welcomes both residents and visitors from around the world to learn about Brooklyn's past, present, and future. Founded in 1838 as one of America's first rural cemeteries, Green-Wood Cemetery soon developed an international reputation for its magnificent beauty and became the fashionable place to be buried. By 1860, Green-Wood was attracting 500,000 visitors a year, rivaling Niagara Falls as the country's greatest tourist attraction. Crowds flocked to Green-Wood to enjoy family outings, carriage rides, and sculpture viewing in the finest of first-generation American landscapes. Green-Wood's popularity helped inspire the creation of public parks, including New York City's Central and Prospect Parks. The Green-Wood Historic Fund is a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit membership organization that works to maintain Green-Wood Cemetery's monuments and buildings of historical, cultural, and architectural significance; to advance

CREDITS (cont.)

public knowledge and appreciation; and to preserve the natural habitat of one of New York City's first green spaces.

In addition to this curriculum and public programming, two complementary exhibitions were created to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, on view through 2016:

Personal Correspondents, on display April 9, 2015–March, 2016 at Brooklyn Historical Society

To Bid You All Good Bye: Civil War Stories, on display May 24 – July 5, 2015 at Green-Wood

Visit us! Bring your class on a tour! Contact us to schedule a tour/an in-class program.

Brooklyn Historical Society
education@brooklynhistory.org
www.brooklynhistory.org

Green-Wood
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The primary sources and accompanying teaching strategies in this curriculum invite students to interpret the Civil War without having to leave the classroom. For complementary place-based experiences, we invite classes to visit Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Cemetery to learn from original primary sources in the context of Brooklyn Historical Society's 1881 landmark building and Green-Wood's 1838 wooded cemetery.

At Brooklyn Historical Society, educators lead inquiry-based, learner-centered tours of current exhibitions and the Othmer Library. Tours enhance social studies skills and build knowledge of local history as a window to essential themes in American history, including the following: Colonial Brooklyn; Brooklyn's Communities, Then and Now; The Battle of Brooklyn and the American Revolution; Brooklyn Abolitionists; Learning from Maps; and Urban Development/Gentrification.

Green-Wood is launching a new guided tour about Brooklyn and the American Civil War in 2015. With the cemetery's captivating landscape as an outdoor classroom, students will visit the New York City Civil War Soldier's Monument, the Public Soldier's Lot, and individual burial sites. These unique primary sources will help students develop analytical skills and spark lively discussions about the war, its causes and impact, how the war is remembered, and how individuals and groups are and were memorialized or overlooked. This program has been designed to be student-centered, interactive, and inquiry-based. Educators will work closely with teachers to meet the curricular needs of their grade level.

Education programs at Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Cemetery are designed to support the Common Core Learning Standards and the NYC DOE Scope and Sequence.

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HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

This curriculum was designed to be a flexible resource for grades 4–12. It provides teachers and students with various strategies for closely examining, questioning, and analyzing primary sources. In this way, students can practice the methods of historians in interpreting which story is being told, where there is evidence to support that story, what’s missing from the story, and where questions still remain. To that end, we have provided the following:

FOUR LESSON PACKETS

To view digitally or print out, organized by type of source material:

- 1 Letter Writing**
- 2 Illustrated Wartime Prints**
- 3 Broadsides**
- 4 Cartes de Visite**

Each lesson packet includes:

- ✓ **A Teacher’s Guide with an introduction, lesson procedures, historical context, and ideas for extension activities**
- ✓ **High-quality images of primary sources**
- ✓ **Handouts that cover the following skills:**
 - Strategies for Close Reading of Text:
Calling American Men to Arms, Analyzing Civil War Letters
 - Strategies for Close Reading of Visual Materials:
Examining Cartes de Visite, Close Reading Sources
 - Synthesizing sources:
Mystery Text, Connecting Sources
 - Developing Claims and Evidence:
Examining Cartes de Visite, Close Reading Sources, Calling American Men to Arms, Observations and Inferences
 - Summarizing:
Connecting Sources, Analyzing Civil War Letters, Creating a Character Sketch
 - Collaborative group work:
Mystery Text

Glossary

One glossary defines terms used in all of the lessons.

**HOW TO USE THIS
CURRICULUM**
(cont.)**QUESTIONS
FOR INQUIRY**

- What was the day-to-day life of Civil War Union soldiers and civilians like?
- How did various types of communication inform the different feelings and perspectives of Brooklynites about the Civil War?
- How did people across Brooklyn contribute to the Civil War effort?
- How did new technology change the ways people communicated during the Civil War?
- How can primary sources help us to understand the Civil War?

**BIG
UNDERSTANDINGS**

- Individuals experienced the war in different ways.
(People have different experiences of the same events.)
- Events in history are experienced differently by different groups of people. Groups of people can be defined by race, religion, gender, age, class, ethnicity, etc.
- Advances in technology allowed for better communication to and from individuals and to the public at large.
- Life goes on during wartime.
- Though the war did not take place in Brooklyn, many Brooklynites were deeply affected by and contributed to the war.
- When researching an event, it is useful to draw from more than one source; each type of source brings a unique set of insights and challenges to the researcher

CONNECTION TO STANDARDS

NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

Connection to NYS Standards:

1.1 History of the United States

- Know the roots of American culture and how different people played a role in creating it.

1.2 History of the United States and New York

- Study important ideas, cultural beliefs, and interactions of people from a variety of perspectives.
- Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States.

1.3 History of the United States and New York

- Complete well-documented and historically accurate case studies about individuals and groups who represent different ethnic, national, and religious groups, including Native American Indians, in New York State and the United States at different times and in different locations.
- Describe how ordinary people and famous historic figures in the local community, State, and the United States have advanced the fundamental democratic values, beliefs, and traditions expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the New York State and United States Constitutions, the Bill of Rights, and other important historic documents.

1.4 History of the United States and New York

- The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.
- Consider different interpretations of key events and/or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts.
- Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and State.
- View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The Civil War: Voices of Brooklyn is designed to build the skills of historians, emphasizing the analysis and evaluation of primary sources. In addition, each lesson in this guide builds literacy and critical thinking skills including:

- Close reading
- Synthesizing information
- Using evidence from text and images to support ideas
- Comparing and contrasting
- Observation and inference
- Categorizing
- Summarizing
- Presenting

These skills align with the following Common Core Standards:

Key Ideas and Details

- CCRA.R1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions from the text.

Craft and Structure

- CCRA.R4.** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning and tone.
- CCRA.R5.** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- CCRA.R6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCRA.R7.** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- CCRA.R9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches authors take.

Research to build and present knowledge

- CCRA.W8.** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- CCRA.W9.** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.