

Blog Posting Questions

Ten Reasons Why

Thursday, February 22nd, 2007

Your 10 Ten Reasons Why We Should Study the Civil War were **insightful**: “*It involved one of the greatest presidents of all time*” and **thoughtful**: “*We have to respect the people who fought*” and **exemplary**: “*We can learn how to avoid conflict*” and **pragmatic**: “*You might want to be a history teacher some day*” and **honest**: “*Because we have to.*” Take a look at your 10 reasons why we should study the Civil War. **Which one of your reasons do you think is the most important and why?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [55 Comments »](#)

Weren't they Americans too?

Sunday, February 25th, 2007

In a comment on the Ten Reasons post, Chris M. and Michael G. astutely mentioned a topic that bears further thought. I was planning to raise this question in a future class, but there is no time like the present. In their earlier posts, Chris wrote “*if the American Army didn't win*” and Michael wrote of “*the bravery of the American Army.*” **This poses the question: Weren't the Confederate soldiers Americans too? Weren't they just as brave?** I know that in my study of the Civil War, and probably being a Yankee myself, I may have been prejudiced by history into thinking that the Confederates were not Americans. Yet, the more I read, the more I am convinced that they were indeed Americans, even though they did not want to be part of the Union. Once the Civil War was over, the Confederates once again became part of the fabric of a United States. Did you know that after the war Gen. R.E. Lee needed to re-apply for American citizenship but it was never granted? Was his application “lost”, I wonder? During the 1970's, Lee's application was found and he was granted citizenship posthumously by President Ford in 1975. **So...here's the question: Do you think the Confederates soldiers and citizens were Americans, even though they seceded? Why or why not?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [40 Comments »](#)

What if...?

Thursday, March 1st, 2007

Holly and Evan have asked an intriguing question in the “Ten Reasons” post. They asked what would have happened if the Confederates won the Civil War? There are some historians who theorize answers to questions such as these, and there are novelists who have written “alterative histories” that explore the “what if” question. So...we have the question: **What if the Confederates had won the Civil War?** Now we need some answers...

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [38 Comments](#) »

[Truth is stranger than fiction](#)

Monday, March 5th, 2007

Take a look at this article from *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. A tooth of a Confederate soldier recently discovered in Gettysburg will receive a proper burial in South Carolina.

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [5 Comments](#) »

[Hey, baby, they're playing our song!](#)

Monday, March 5th, 2007

Jeline writes that “we love the song *God Bless the USA*.” If *Dixie* was the anthem of the Confederacy and the Union’s song was *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, (see “Name that Tune” post) **what song do you think would characterize our country today and why?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [6 Comments](#) »

[Name that tune](#)

Monday, March 5th, 2007

OK...so maybe you didn’t know the names of the songs, but for many of you they *did* sound familiar. And no, one of the titles was not *When the Ants Going Marching One by One*.

The correct title is *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*. Who does Johnny represent? Here are the [lyrics](#).

This link has the song being sung with the [words](#):

How about the other songs? [Take a listen](#):

[At this site listen to: *Dixie* and *Battle Hymn of the Republic*](#). Where have you heard the Battle Hymn being sung?

Take a look at the lyrics below the songs. *Dixie*’s lyrics might be a bit difficult to understand. The Union took *Dixie* and made their own lyrics. You can see those lyrics at the bottom of the song *Away Down South in the Land of Traitors*.

Three things to ponder: 1) The tune of *Dixie* is often used without the lyrics. Why do you think this is? 2) Why do you think *Union Dixie* isn't as well known? 3) Compare the lyrics between the two versions. How could *Union Dixie* be used to rally troops the same way that the song *Fly Eagles Fly* rallies the fans? (questions courtesy of The Library of Congress...except for the Eagles allusion.)

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [2 Comments »](#)

[Full Metal Corset](#)

Friday, March 9th, 2007

This morning, two students came upon a strange photograph that confused them. It was a woman in a dress but they thought it was a man masquerading as a woman. Actually, it was a woman who looked like a man. The corresponding photo showed how she looked in her soldier's uniform, where she masqueraded as a man. For anyone who is interested (this would be students researching the role of women in the Civil War and those researching army life) you might want to watch "Full Metal Corset". Here's a description from the Civil War Preservation Trust:

A new Civil War documentary, "Full Metal Corset: Secret Soldiers of the Civil War", will air on cable television's History Channel on March 25. This program will take you behind the lines to tell the story of two of the Civil War's most interesting women soldiers - Sara Emma Edmonds and Loreta Janeta Velasquez. Edmonds, who was just 17 years old in 1858, escaped an arranged marriage and a tyrannical father to begin a new, more prosperous life as a man. She took her perfected disguise to the enlistment office and served two years in the Union Army as Franklin Thompson. Another woman suffering the oppressions of society, Velasquez was determined to defy convention. Disguised as Harry T. Buford, she travelled throughout the South as a self-appointed Confederate officer. This documentary brings to life the amazing tales of these two women recounting the sacrifice of identity, fear of discovery and the constant need for duplicity-even under fire. Check the tv listings for air time.

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [5 Comments »](#)

[Photographs, Primary Sources and you](#)

Friday, March 9th, 2007

Take another look at this [photo](#) that was discussed in the post below. During History Day research, you learned that photographs are primary sources and like all primary sources, must be interpreted within the context of their times. Some sources may have a purposeful bias or a spin. **Knowing that this photo does not depict the actual event, why do you think Gardner posed the photo? What was he trying to accomplish? How can you apply this to your future research involving photographs as primary sources?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [18 Comments »](#)

[What did you learn...or...the camera doesn't lie](#)

Friday, March 9th, 2007

There is a saying that the camera doesn't lie. Or does it? Some students who were doing research were surprised to find out that [this primary source photograph](#) didn't really happen the way it is portrayed in the photograph. They were surprised to learn that the photograph was posed. **What have you learned from your research so far that has surprised you?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [50 Comments](#) »

[Was it just about slavery?](#)

Thursday, March 15th, 2007

Your comments to the *What Did You Learn* post shows that you are engaging the texts (library talk for getting some really good information from the sources). I think we will have a wonderful wiki, with all the facts that you are learning. As I read the comments, I see the issue of slavery frequently repeated, and I noted in one of the posts that while it certainly was an important issue, and became a goal during the war, it was not the primary reason at the start of the war, as you will soon learn in Mr. Rooney's class. [I'm glad to see that Greg and Kevin's comments about their research acknowledges the various reasons that lead up to the war and that led me to think about why it seems that everyone thinks the war is about slavery and only slavery.](#) Is it because the other issues are harder to understand? For example, what is a tariff and why would it get people upset? What would be the problems of states rights? I suspect that the issue of states rights was a "cover" for the continuation of slavery, what the South called "the peculiar institution." Maybe the reason why many people think the war was fought to free the slaves is because we can put a human face on the horrors of slavery much easier than we can connect to tariffs and states rights. **Would it surprise you to know that the majority of Union soldiers were not fighting to free the slaves?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [17 Comments](#) »

[Forward, March!](#)

Friday, March 23rd, 2007

"Company: Attention! Company: Forward, march!" Today you learned how to drill and get into formation to march and to fight. You also learned the nine steps involved in firing a musket. Was it difficult to follow orders? What might the problems be for soldiers if they did not follow orders, or did not hear the orders in the noise and confusion of battle? **Comment on your brief experience in the Army.** "Company: At ease."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [19 Comments](#) »

[“Dear Edward...please come home.”](#)

Friday, March 23rd, 2007

Christopher’s post on the [wiki](#) discusses desertion among the troops. Desertion is leaving the army without permission. At the beginning of the war, desertion rates were low, but as the war dragged on, the number of absentee soldiers rose dramatically. One of out every nine Confederates would desert during the war and in the Union Army, one of out every seven soldiers would desert. If you deserted the army, your fellow soldiers would become demoralized and they might leave too. If there are too many desertions, the army could be crippled. Stephen Crane talks about some of the reasons for desertion in *The Red Badge of Courage*. Some reasons were fear of battle. But there were other reasons as well, some very compelling reasons. What would you do if you were Edward and received this letter from your wife in North Carolina:

My Dear Edward,

I would not have you do anything wrong for the world, but before God, Edward, unless you come home we must die. Last night I was aroused by little Eddie’s crying. I called and said ‘What is the matter, Eddie?’ and he said, ‘O Mamma! I am so hungry.’ And Lucy, Edward, your darling Lucy; she never complains, but she is growing thinner and thinner every day. And before God, Edward, unless you come home, we must die.”

Imagine that you are Edward and you receive this letter in camp. If you desert, you face severe consequences if you are caught. You might have your cheek branded (for life) with a “D” for “deserter.” Or, you might face death by firing squad (although in the Union Army this was about 10% of all desertion convictions - the Confederate rate was slightly higher.) **Would you be willing to face these consequences and desert the army to help your family? Why or why not? What would you do if you were Edward?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [37 Comments](#) »

[New wiki pages](#)

Friday, March 30th, 2007

Nick has added a new [wiki](#) page: “The End of the War”. Good thinking!! There are two more new pages: “Triva” (what’s the Civil War without some trivia?) and “Questions I (meaning you, the students) have about the Civil War”. You can add to both pages by posing questions or answering them.

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [3 Comments](#) »

[Lee Comes North](#)

Friday, March 30th, 2007

It is early June 1863, and you are a resident of Gettysburg. You have reports of Confederate units moving north and as close as 25 miles west of you, in Chambersburg. Merchants are loading up rail cars with merchandise and sending them to Philadelphia. Banks are emptying their vaults. Carriages and riding horses are being sent to safety. Pa. Governor Andrew Curtin issues a call to arms to defend the state. (Where is that Union army, anyway?) Fifty Gettysburg citizens leave town to cut down trees across the mountain passes to slow down the Confederates, but they are fired upon by enemy pickets. On June 25, you see campfires on the eastern slope of South Mountain. **What would you do? Would you flee to safety, leaving everything behind, or would you stay and defend your home?** (remember...you know nothing about what is to happen in the next few days)

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [18 Comments](#) »

[Gentlemen, Choose Your Generals](#)

Friday, March 30th, 2007

In the video today, you learned that some of the generals were inexperienced. Union Gen. Daniel Sickles was a political appointee. That means that he became a general because he had friends who were powerful politicians. He had no formal military training. Gen. Sickles, a corps commander, disobeyed orders at Gettysburg, putting his troops at risk. Confederate Brigadier Gen. George Pickett had never been in divisional command prior to Gettysburg, although he was following orders given to him by General Longstreet. Granted, these men had competent commanders under them. **As a soldier, discuss your opinion of your commanding general or your feelings at following a command that you know is dangerous.** Remember, the file closers are behind you!

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [43 Comments](#) »

[Glory](#)

Tuesday, April 3rd, 2007

Here's your chance to be a movie critic. Reflect upon the movie "Glory". You may write anything about the movie or you can use these questions from the Film Education Study Guide. Here's some things to think about:

- The film opens with the Battle of Antietam in 1862. In what way does this opening sequence set the scene for the rest of the movie? What information are we given about Robert Gould Shaw and also about his attitudes to war?

- Think about the different attitudes towards black regiments by members of the regiment themselves and then later by military authorities. How did “Glory” reinforce these attitudes?
- How does a film maker take an important historical event, such as the formation of the 54th Mass., remain true to the history and at the same time make the movie entertaining?
- Describe some of the characters, how they change, what their attitudes are to the war and to other characters.
- How do each of the characters give us a perspective on the events of the time?
- One of the themes of the movie is the way that black soldiers gain respect for themselves as human beings and prove to the whites that they are capable of doing as good a job. How does the movie show this?
- What other ideas are dealt with in the film?
- From the comments made by Col. Shaw and Trip (when Shaw offers Trip the post of flag bearer), whose view of the future do you think bears most resemblance to the situation in America today of both blacks and whites? Trip or Shaw? (hint: why did Trip initially refuse the honor?) How does Trip’s comment “What’s in it for us?” relate to the current position of blacks in America?
- The final image of the film is the burial of the dead troops after the assault on Ft. Wagner. In what ways does this image work? What does it tell us about Col. Shaw? What impression does it make on the audience? Why do you think the director chose to end the film with this image?

I knew Colonel Shaw before the war, and then esteemed him. Had he been in command of white troops, I should have given him an honourable burial; as it is, I shall bury him in the common trench with the negroes that fell with him.” Johnson Hagood, commander Confederate troops, Fort Wagner.

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [29 Comments »](#)

[You be the author](#)

Sunday, April 15th, 2007

If you keyword search “Civil War” on Amazon, you will find over 253,000 books. Somebody out there likes to read about the Civil War...a lot. If you could write a book on the American Civil War, would you write non-fiction or fiction? Either way, you’d have to do research and list your sources. But, since you have been doing that since 6th grade, you won’t let that stop you. So...tell us about your next best-seller. **If you write non-fiction, what will your book focus on? Will you write a broad history of the Civil War or would you specialize? If you write fiction, would your story be for children, Young Adults (that’s you) or Adults? Tell us about the characters and the plot.**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run, 7th Grade](#) | [24 Comments »](#)

[Bull Run \(the book, not the battle\)](#)

Sunday, April 15th, 2007

In order to write historical fiction, authors need to research the time period so that the historical part of the fiction is accurate. **Based upon your research, do you think that Paul Fleishman has done his homework? Has the research that you have done helped you to understand the characters? Did your research and the book help you understand and appreciate the Civil War?**

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [42 Comments](#) »

[Got relatives?](#)

Monday, April 23rd, 2007

Shake your family tree. Do any Civil War ancestors fall out? If so, tell us who they are and what you know about them.

Posted in [Gettysburg](#), [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [6 Comments](#) »

[Lee visits the 'burg](#)

Monday, April 23rd, 2007

In an earlier post ([Lee Heads North](#)), you were asked what you would do if you spotted the Confederate campfires outside of your town of Gettysburg. Some of you said you would stay in town and other said they would leave and seek safety. If you were a white citizen and you elected to stay, you chose wisely. Although you would have to spend most of the three days hiding in your basement for safety, your house and its contents were, for the most part, safe from looting. Families who left and came back weren't always so lucky, and it caused some hard feelings among some that their neighbors didn't defend the empty homes. Some of you, like David and Adam, might have thought about joining the new militia that was formed for the purpose of defending the town (where *was* that Union Army?) and after two days of training, felt yourself ready to face the battle-tested Confederates. That was the decision of George W. Sandoe, and it cost him his life. He was the first casualty in the Battle of Gettysburg, killed just six days after enlisting, and before the two armies engaged in battle, when he ran into Confederate pickets outside of town and refused to halt his horse. And for the black citizens who did stay, they chose poorly. Once the Confederates entered Gettysburg, they rounded up the black citizens and marched them away under guard. One old woman slipped away and hid for two days in the belfry of Christ Lutheran Church, and other citizens also harbored their black neighbors. As Fanny Beuhler writes, there were so many false alarms that "when they did not come, we lost faith in their coming...we tried to make ourselves believe they would never come." When the Confederates actually did come, the town was surprised, even though there were warning signs. **Put on the persona of your *Bull Run* character and give advice to the citizens of Gettysburg (or the soldiers) about what they should do or what they should expect**

now that Lee is in the 'burg. Introduce your character first, followed by their advice. See the example in the first comment.

Posted in [Gettysburg](#), [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [20 Comments](#) »

[Been There, Done That](#)

Monday, April 23rd, 2007

Our class trip to Gettysburg is coming up. What are you hoping or expecting to see or learn?

Posted in [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [42 Comments](#) »

[New wiki member & new pages](#)

Monday, April 30th, 2007

You may have noticed some new postings on the wiki. Check out the entry on the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg on the Women page. It was posted by our newest member...an AAA mom. How cool is that? Can we collaborate or what? And...Miles has added Civil War slang (most of which I think he used in his "Lee's in the 'burg" comment!) I was glad to see that addition. There is so much that we did not cover; this addition extends our learning. Take a look at the slang from back in the day. Is there any that is still in use? Miles also added a Music page and has posted the lyrics to Ashokan Farewell, the song that was used for our first guided writing and which Ken Burns has used in his documentary. The melody is haunting, but it is not a Civil War song. It was written in the 1980's!. (I know...ancient history for some of you!!) Check out his Youtube links.

Posted in [Gettysburg](#), [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Reflections from students and chaperones](#)

Saturday, May 5th, 2007

Our class trip was different from most of the class trips in the past. The places we visited make us look inward and ask ourselves what it means to be a Catholic and what it means to be an American. Elizabeth Ann Seton made a courageous decision when, as a widow and single mother, she converted to Catholicism at a time when Catholics were a minority in the country and held suspect. She lost many friends because of her decision but her faith in God sustained her. The soldiers who fought at Gettysburg also took a stand and historian Shelby Foote says that it was in the Civil War that our identity as the *United States* was conceived, rather than our identity as a citizen of a particular state. Please comment on any part of the class trip. What did you think about what you saw and learned? How did you felt about the experience? Students,

what part of our religious story as Catholics and/or our national story as Americans will you pass on to future generations?

Posted in [Parent comment](#), [Gettysburg](#), [7th Grade](#) | [37 Comments »](#)

[If I Were the Teacher](#)

Monday, May 7th, 2007

T.S. Elliot said this about education: “*No one can become really educated without having pursued some study in which he took no interest.*” I know that for most of you, the Civil War is a topic in which you have no (current) interest; that it is something that happened long ago and that you learn about it only because you have to. Here’s your chance to be me: look back on our Civil War study during Library class (*not* Social Studies). Think about what we have done, how we did it and what we learned. If you were the teacher, how would you structure the lesson? For example, would you have students work in groups or individually? Would you have the students read *Bull Run* (or maybe something else) before, after or during our research? What would you do the same? Is there anything you would do differently? Is there anything that we did not do that you think would be valuable for next year’s students to know or learn? Was there anything that you thought was not necessary or useful? What about the blog and/or the wiki? Do you believe, as T.S. Elliot said, that you are now *educated* about the Civil War?

Posted in [Gettysburg](#), [Civil War-Bull Run](#), [7th Grade](#) | [23 Comments »](#)
