

# Civil War Lesson #4: Perspective

## Major Topics:

- ✓ Analyzing Perspective
- ✓ Views of Northern and Southern Groups
- ✓ Perspectives of Historical Figures

## How did Individual Americans Define Freedom?



The diversity of perspective and opinion made it difficult for Americans to agree upon whether war was necessary and desirable. A majority of Northerners were white Republicans who wanted land in the Western Territories open to “free” farmers. Abolitionists were primarily a Northern minority group of both black and white people who were against the institution of slavery. White Southerners were mostly Democrats who supported the institution of slavery regardless of whether or not they owned slaves. Those slaves who left written accounts or memoirs strongly desired freedom from slavery.

This lesson’s focus on the views of individual Americans not only reminds us of the complexity of public opinion; it offers an opportunity to explore the impact of perspective upon individual action, beliefs, and history itself. Students will consider this diversity by examining one historical figure from the period in-depth, comparing that figure to others from the time, and discussing how perspective can affect the interpretation of historical events.

*Harriet Tubman, full-length portrait, standing with hands on back of a chair.  
C 1860-75. Photographer: H.B. Lindsley. Source: Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003674596/>*

## Procedures

### Step 1: Understanding Historical Perspective (Class Time: 50 minutes)

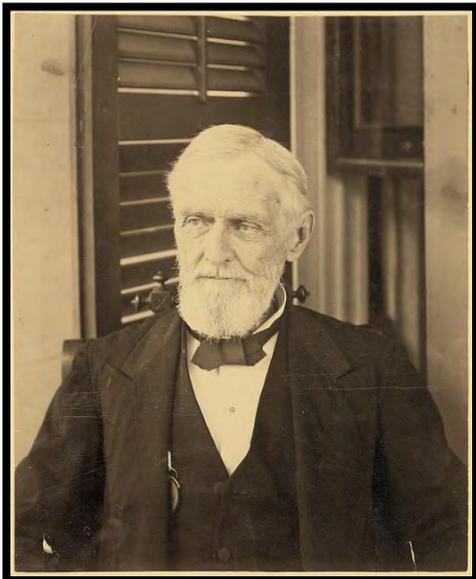


Introduce the lesson focus question: “How did individual Americans define freedom?” Explain that individual Americans define freedom in different ways based on their perspective, or point of view. Using **Analyzing Perspective Notes (CW4.1)**, explain to students what perspective or point of view means in the discipline of history, and how to analyze perspective from primary sources. Then summarize the perspectives of majority groups: Northern and Western whites, Abolitionists, Southern whites, and Southern slaves. Explain to students that these are very broad categories, and many people held different opinions from the majority of their group. Perspective is based on individual differences, and we really have to analyze the words and actions of individuals to identify perspective clearly. Finally, guide students through a practice activity to analyze primary source quotes and identify perspective. You may assign the text of CW4.1 as a reading for students, or explain the information to students using **Analyzing Perspective Summary Notes (CW4.2)**. However, work with the students to analyze the examples rather than having them complete that activity independently.

### Step 2: Investigating the Perspectives of Historical Figures during the Civil War (Class Time: 80 minutes)



Tell students that they will be studying different people who lived through the Civil War in order to understand how the war affected people in the North and the South and how individual Americans made significant contributions to the war effort. Each student will focus closely on the life of one historical figure and continue to re-visit the figure throughout the unit.



*Jefferson Davis, seated, facing front, during portrait session at Davis' home Beauvoir, near Biloxi, Mississippi, c 1865. Edward L. Wilson, Photographer. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2009633710/>*

Divide the class into thirteen groups. Distribute the **Civil War Historical Figures Activity Sheet (CW4.3)** to all students. Assign one of the following Civil War Historical Figures to each group, and pass out the matching **Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout (CW4.4)**:

**Louisa May Alcott (CW4.4.1)**

**Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas (CW4.4.2)**

**Jefferson Davis (CW4.4.3)**

**Frederick Douglass (CW4.4.4)**

**Harriet A. Jacobs (CW4.4.5)**

**Robert E. Lee (CW4.4.6)**

**Robert Smalls (CW4.4.7)**

**George Templeton Strong (CW4.4.8)**

**Clinton Hatcher (CW4.4.9)**

**Michael F. Rinker (CW4.4.10)**

**Charles Berry, Senior (CW4.4.11)**

**John P. Wilson (CW4.4.12)**

**Susie King Taylor (CW4.4.14)**

## Procedures (continued)



Remind students of the unit's focus question, "Was the Civil War a War for Freedom?" As they read the sources, students should consider how their assigned Civil War historical figure would answer this question. Tell students that they will learn about their person through secondary sources (the biography) and primary sources (things written by and about the person at the time of the Civil War.) Finally, tell students that they will be working on this activity throughout the unit at different times. While students work, circulate and check in with each group to verify that students are on-task and understand the activity expectations. At the end of the activity, either collect the source handouts and activity sheets until the students need them again, or remind students to put them away in a safe place until the class needs the handouts again. Use the **Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout Key (CW4.4K)** to check students' answers. It is important to correct any misconceptions now, because they will use this information later in the unit.

### Step 3: Meanings of Freedom (Class Time: 10 minutes)



To conclude, ask students what they have learned about the meanings of freedom from this lesson. Record the most important points (especially what freedom meant to the four majority groups) on the **Freedom Wall**.

## Modifications / Support for Student Literacy

**Analyzing Perspective Notes (CW4.1) and Powerpoint Notes (CW4.2):** If the majority of students in your class are reading below grade level, explain the material to them using the powerpoint notes. If the majority of the students read at or above grade level, consider giving them the text of CW4.1 as a reading and discussing perspective with them. Guide the students through the example quotations and the process of figuring out a person's perspective from his or her words. Since this is a very difficult skill for students to master, try to externalize your own thinking process to them and discuss the evidence in the quote that supports your analysis. If students struggle to understand perspective, review the notes again, using more examples from modern life.

### Short-Track Schedule:

This lesson is critical, and each of the steps is necessary. English learners and students who read below grade level will struggle with the Historical Figures primary source readings, but grouping students so that at least one good reader is in each group will help.

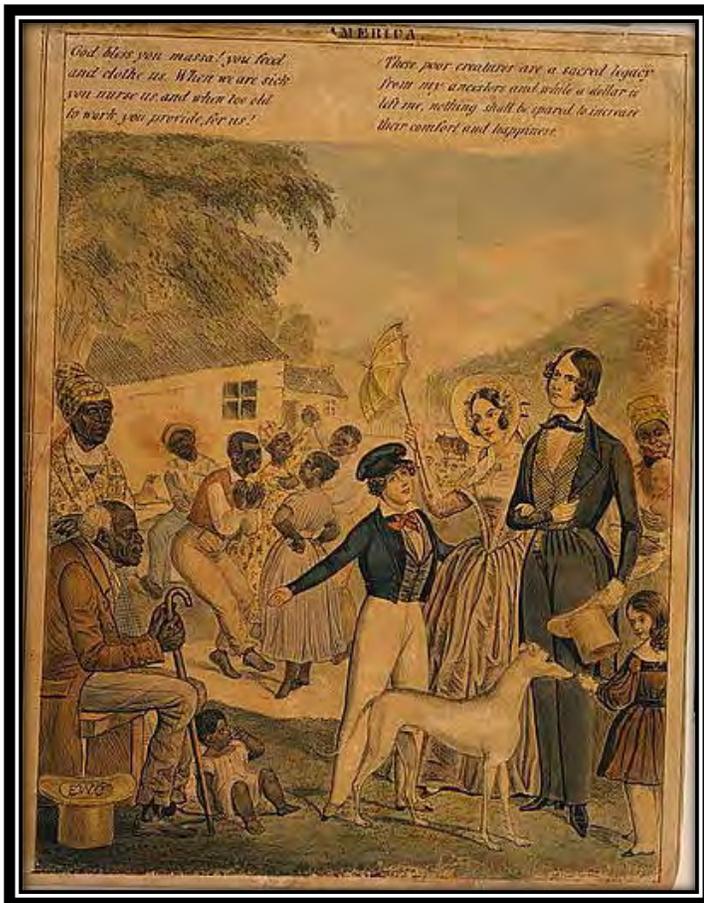


*Slaves of the rebel Genl. Thomas F. Drayton, Hilton Head, S.C., 1862, May.  
Photographer: Henry P. Moore. Source: Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006683283/>*

## CW4.1 – Analyzing Perspective Notes

Point of view, or perspective, is more than just someone’s opinion about a specific topic. Perspective is the entire worldview of a person, the way that person sees the world and is affected by the historical context. For example, as an American teenager in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, you see the world around you in a certain way. Your fellow classmates have very different personalities and they may disagree with you about many things, but you have much in common compared to a 60-year-old American, or a teenager living on a farm in Indonesia.

We get our part of our perspective from our experiences and from the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, people on TV – without thinking very hard. Certain differences help form perspective. Time and location produce major differences. Someone who lived in the 1600s had a very different perspective from someone who lived during World War II. People who live in Japan have a different perspective from people who live in Peru, and differences in language and religion also affect perspective. A person in a wheelchair has a different perspective from a gifted athlete. Three important differences are race, class and gender. Latinos have a different perspective from Anglos. Rich people see the world differently than poor people do. It is natural to us to see the world through our own perspective, and hard for us to imagine different perspectives.



Lithograph by Edward W. Clay, published in New York by Arthur Donnelly, in 1841. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003690759/>

Another part of our perspective comes from our personal values and beliefs. For example, even though they were both rich, white men living in the 1830s, John C. Calhoun believed strongly in the rights of the states, while Daniel Webster believed that the federal government (the union) should overrule the states. A few northerners were abolitionists, but many others did not think the abolition of slavery was an important cause.

Our perspective helps us decide how we think about things that are happening around us – in our everyday life, in the nation, and in the world. Our perspective tells us what is important (to us.) But it also means that we are all biased, that we judge events and people from our own perspective.

When historians analyze primary and secondary sources to collect evidence about the past, they pay careful attention to the perspective of the creator of those sources. If a painting shows happy slaves working on a beautiful plantation, the historian has to ask, what was the perspective of the artist? Was he or she white or black? A slave or free? Rich or poor? Did he or she live before the Civil War, or after it?

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## CW4.1 – Analyzing Perspective Notes (page 2 of 4)

If the artist was the white daughter of a plantation owner living after the Civil War, the historian can interpret the painting and her perspective in this way: The artist believed that the slaves were happy and plantation life was pleasant. She was sad that the Civil War ended that beautiful life (as she saw it.) The picture is “true” from her perspective, but not “true” from other perspectives. A slave on her plantation would have had a very different perspective and painted a very different picture of slaves working on a plantation.

In a primary source text, you will not find the perspective of the author stated clearly in any one sentence. You have to find his or her perspective “between the lines.”

To analyze the perspective of the creator of a source (an author, an artist, etc.), look for this information:

- ✓ Nationality/Regional Identity
- ✓ Date or time period
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Class
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Historical Context: What were the most important events going on at that time? How was this person affected by those events?

Gather as many details from his or her biography as you can, and then read his or her words carefully to identify the underlying perspective.

## Perspectives of Majority Groups in 1860

### **Northern and Western whites**

Many white people, both natives and immigrants, who lived in the North and West did not think that black people were equal to whites. Those who voted for the Republican party were opposed to the expansion of slavery into the western territories. They thought of slaves as economic competition. They wanted “free labor and free soil,” to keep the lands of the west for small farms rather than big plantations with slave labor. They did not want to end slavery in the South. To this group, freedom meant economic freedom, to own their own farms, earn their own wages, and have their own businesses, without losing out to competition from cheaper slave labor.

### **Abolitionists**

A small minority of people in the North and West were abolitionists. They were both white and black. They wanted to end slavery everywhere. They believed that slavery was morally wrong, and that black people were equal to white people. Many of them were very religious. Their perspective was the closest to our modern perspective, but in 1860, most people considered them radical. To them, freedom meant the end of slavery and bringing political and social equality to black people.

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## CW4.1 – Analyzing Perspective Notes (page 3 of 4)

### **Southern blacks (slaves)**

Most black people in the South were slaves. To them, freedom meant an end to slavery. They wanted to be economically independent, to work for money or to farm their own land. They wanted social equality.

### **Southern whites**

Even though only a small minority of Southern whites owned slaves, most of them wanted to preserve slavery and extend it to territories in the West. They were very suspicious of Northerners and hated abolitionists. Southern whites thought that Northerners were trying to take away their freedom, their rights and their way of life. They did not believe Lincoln and other Republicans who said that they would not abolish slavery in the South. By 1860, most white Southerners believed that the only way to hold on to their freedom was to secede from the Union and make their own nation. To them, freedom meant the right to hold on to slaves, as their property, and to live the way they wanted to live without interference from the federal government or Northerners.

## Analyzing Perspective Examples

### **Quote 1**

This is a quote from William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), a New Englander, and a white middle class man:

“Enslave the liberty of but one human being and the liberties of the world are put in peril.”

### **Quote 2**

This is a quote from Senator Daniel Webster (1782-1852), of Massachusetts, a white rich man. Webster made this statement to the Senate on March 7, 1850, during the debates over the admission of California to the Union (as a free state), popular sovereignty and the Fugitive Slave Act:

“I wish to speak to-day, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American and a member of the Senate of the United States. I speak to-day for the preservation of the Union. . . . I speak to-day, out of a solicitous and anxious heart, for the restoration to the country of that quiet and that harmony which make the blessings of this Union so rich, and so dear to us all.”

### **Quote 3**

This is a quote from George Fitzhugh (1806-1881), in his book, *Sociology for the South*, published in 1854. Fitzhugh was a white Virginian wealthy man.

“There is no rivalry, no competition to get employment among slaves, as among free laborers. Nor is there a war between master and slave. The master’s interest prevents his reducing the slave’s allowance or wages in infancy or sickness, for he might lose the slave by doing so. The slaves are all well fed, well clad, have plenty of fuel, and are happy. They have no dread of the future – no fear of want....At the slaveholding South all is peace, quiet, plenty, and contentment. We have no mobs, no trade unions, no strikes for higher wages, no armed resistance to the law, but little jealousy of the rich by the poor....”

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## CW4.1 – Analyzing Perspective Notes (page 4 of 4)

### Quote 4

This is a quote is from Senator John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) of South Carolina, a rich white man. He wrote this in 1828 while the Senate was debating the Tariff of 1828 and just before the Nullification Crisis:

“Ought not a sovereign State, as a party to the constitutional compact, and as the guardian of her citizens and her peculiar interests to have the power [of vetoing national laws] in question? . . . The disease is that a majority of the States, through the General [federal] Government, by construction, usurp powers not delegated [to the national government in the Constitution], and by their exercise, increase their wealth and authority at the expense of the minority.”

### Quote 5

This is a quote from Angelina Grimké (1805-1879), a rich white woman from South Carolina. She gave this speech in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1838:

“As a Southerner, I feel that it is my duty to stand up here tonight and bear testimony against slavery. I have seen it! . . . I know it has horrors that can never be described. I was brought up under its wing. I witnessed for many years its demoralizing influences and its destructiveness to human happiness. I have never seen a happy slave.”

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## CW4.2-Analyzing Perspective Summary Notes (p. 1 of 4)

Perspective (point of view)

- ✓ more than opinion
- ✓ entire worldview of person
- ✓ the way that person sees the world
- ✓ how he or she is affected by the historical context

How do people get their perspective?

- ✓ life experiences
- ✓ people around them – family, friends, neighbors, people on TV
- ✓ Certain differences help form perspective
  - Time
  - Location
  - Language
  - Disabilities
  - Race
  - Class
  - Gender

It is natural to us to see the world through our own perspective, and hard for us to imagine different perspectives.

Perspective also comes from personal values and beliefs

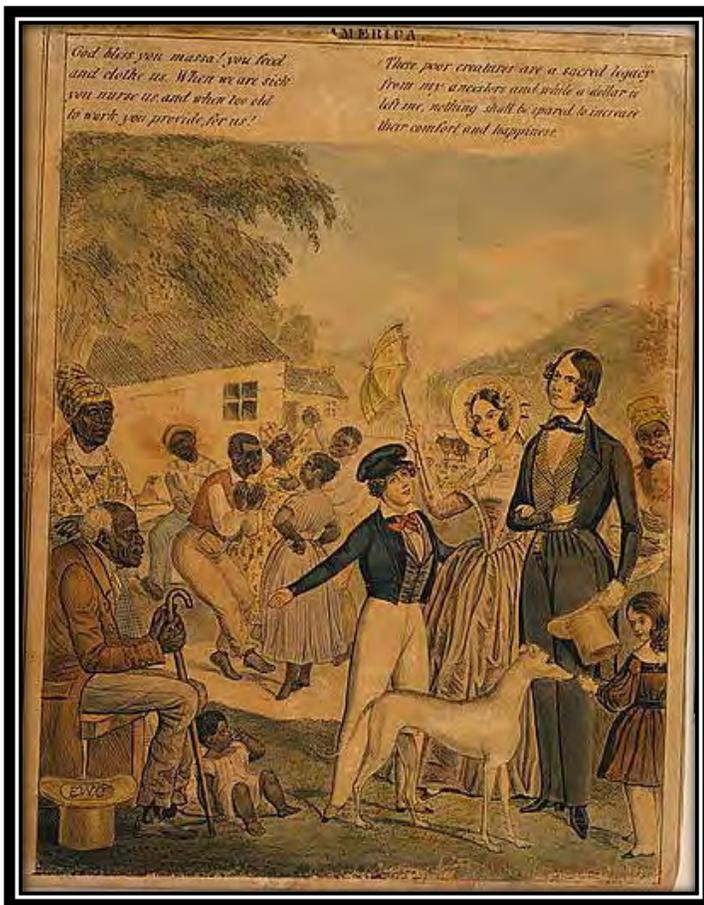
- ✓ Daniel Webster
- ✓ John C. Calhoun

Effect of Perspective on Individuals

- ✓ Guides our understanding of world
- ✓ Tells us what is important to us
- ✓ Means we are all biased

When historians analyze primary and secondary sources to collect evidence about the past, they pay careful attention to the perspective of the creator of those sources.

## CW4.2-Analyzing Perspective Summary Notes (page 2 of 4)



The old slave says: "God bless you, massa! You feed us and clothe us. When we are sick, you nurse us, and when too old to work, you provide for us."

The master says: "These poor creatures are a sacred legacy from my ancestors, and while a dollar is left [to] me, nothing shall be spared to increase their comfort and happiness."

Whose perspective?

- ✓ white or black?
- ✓ rich or poor?
- ✓ slave or free?
- ✓ for slavery or against slavery?

Looking for perspective in primary source text

- ✓ not stated clearly in any one sentence
- ✓ "between the lines"

How to identify perspective

Gather details from his or her biography

- Nationality/Regional Identity
- Date or time period
- Race
- Class
- Gender

-Historical Context: What were the most important events going on at that time? How was this person affected by those events?

Then read his or her words carefully.

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## CW4.2-Analyzing Perspective Summary Notes (page 3 of 4)

### Perspectives of Majority Groups in 1860

#### **Northern and Western whites**

Not for abolition  
Republicans – against expansion of slavery to west  
Free labor and free soil  
Racist  
Freedom means no economic competition from slave labor

#### **Abolitionists**

North and West  
Minority group  
Considered radical  
White and black  
Slavery as a moral issue  
Freedom means freedom for all slaves

#### **Southern blacks**

Mainly slaves  
Freedom means end to slavery, social equality & economic freedom

#### **Southern whites**

Wanted to keep slavery  
Majority did not own slaves  
Worried about North  
Angry at being told what to do  
Freedom means right to keep their property (slaves) and way of life

### Analyzing Perspective Examples

#### **Quote 1**

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## CW4.3 – Civil War Historical Figures Activity Sheet (p. 1 of 3)

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?

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

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

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Unidentified African American soldier in Union uniform with wife and two daughters. 1863-65. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010647216/>

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## CW4.3 – Civil War Historical Figures Activity Sheet (Page 2 of 3)

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**CW4.3 – Civil War Historical Figures Activity Sheet (Page 3 of 3)**

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



*Two unidentified soldiers in Union uniforms holding cigars in each others' mouths, 1861-65. Source: Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010650329/>*

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

## CW4.4.1–Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Louisa May Alcott (1832-88)



*The Late Louisa May Alcott, Harper's Weekly, v. 32, 1888, p. 193. Source: The Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002735645/>*

### Secondary Source:

Louisa May Alcott was born 1832 in Pennsylvania, and she moved with her family to Massachusetts as a young girl. Her parents were abolitionists and reformers, and Alcott grew up to become a social reformer and a writer. From 1862 to 1863, Alcott served as a nurse for wounded soldiers at the Union Hospital in Washington D.C. During the war she also wrote dramatic stories which were published in magazines, including "My Contraband," where she described in detail a friendship between a white nurse and a newly-freed male slave. The nurse admired the former slave for his strength and integrity. As an abolitionist, Alcott openly cheered the Emancipation Proclamation. After the war, she continued to write and became a famous novelist. Her best-known novel is *Little Women*, the story of four sisters growing up during the Civil War.

### Primary Sources:

#### Quotes from Alcott's *Hospital Sketches*, 1863:

"My three days' experiences had begun with a death, and ... a ward [large hospital room] 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 [a deadly lung infection] on the other, five typhoids [a disease caused by bad water and sanitation] on the opposite, and a dozen dilapidated [messed-up] patriots...."

#### Quotes from Alcott's "My Contraband" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1863:

(Note: the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment was the first black military regiment in the Union Army. This excerpt memorializes their attack on the Confederate Fort Wagner in South Carolina).

Everyone knows the story of the attack on Fort Wagner; but we should not tire yet of recalling how our Fifty-Fourth, spent with three sleepless nights, a day's fast, and a march under the July sun, stormed the fort as night fell, facing death in many shapes, following their brave leaders through a fiery rain of shot and shell, fighting valiantly [very bravely] .... the manhood of the colored race shines before many eyes that would not see, rings in many ears that would not hear, wins many hearts that would not hitherto [before this] believe.

## CW4.4.2 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas (1834-1907)



*Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas. Source: Georgia Info, Georgia Digital Library*

### Secondary Source:

Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas was born to a wealthy white planter and slave-owner in Georgia. She is best known for the journal she kept for forty-one years, which described her life and her views before, during, and after the Civil War. Thomas graduated from Wesleyan Female College, which was an unusual accomplishment for women at that time. In 1852, Thomas married Jefferson Thomas, and became a mistress of a plantation supported by the labor of many slaves. She had ten children, but three died before the age of five. When the Civil War broke out, Thomas was a strong supporter of the Confederacy, but the war completely overturned the luxurious, comfortable life she had always lived. As the excerpt below shows, she grew to question the institution of slavery. After the war ended, Thomas was much poorer, and worked for women's suffrage (vote.)

### Primary Sources:

Excerpt from *The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas for January 3, 1865:*

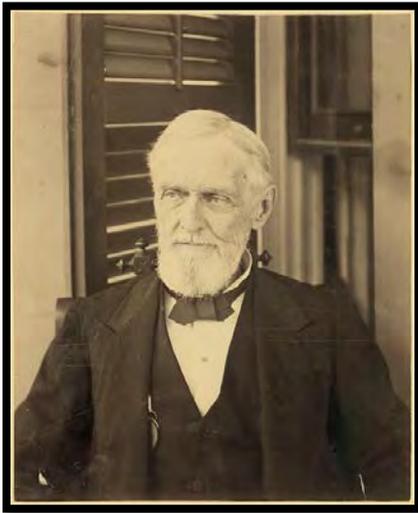
Note: This is a journal entry in which Thomas imagines writing to General Sherman's wife

"I a rebel lady will give you some information with regard to Gen. Sherman's movements. Last week your husband's army found me in the possession of wealth. Tonight our plantations are a scene of ruin and desolation.... You thought it a gallant deed to come amongst us where by his own confession he expected to find 'only the shadow of an army.' A brave act to frighten women and children! desolate homes, violate the sanctity of firesides and cause the 'widow and orphan to curse the Sherman for the cause' and this you did for what? To elevate the Negro race.... As your brave husband considers a southern lady a fair object to wage war against ... I will only add that intensely Southern woman as I am *I pity you.*"

Journal entry for May 8, 1865 (Less than a month after Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox):

*Today I am more intensely opposed to the North than at any period of the war – We have been imposed upon – led to believe that terms of Treaty had been agreed upon which would secure to us a lasting and honourable peace.... I am not cast down.... As to the emancipation of the Negroes, while there is of course a natural dislike to the loss of so much property in my inmost soul I cannot regret it – I always felt that there was a great responsibility – It is in some degree a great relief to have this feeling removed. For the Negroes I know that I have the kindest possible feeling – For the Yankees who deprive us of them I have no use whatever. I only hope I shall see very little of them."*

## CW4.4.3 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Jefferson Davis (1808-1889)



Jefferson Davis, seated, facing front, during portrait session at Davis' home Beauvoir, near Biloxi, Mississippi, c. 1865. Edward L. Wilson, Photographer. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2009633710/>

### Secondary Source:

Jefferson Davis was born in Kentucky on June 3, 1808 and is famous for serving as the president of the Confederacy during the Civil War. After graduating from West Point Military Academy, he served as a United States military officer. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat from his home state of Mississippi, until he left to fight in the Mexican-American War. When he returned, he became a United States Senator and later became the U.S. Secretary of War under Democratic President Franklin Pierce. As a senator, he was a strong supporter of the rights of the states and the extension of slavery to western territories, but he argued against secession. However, when South Carolina and then Mississippi seceded from the Union, Davis resigned from the U.S. Senate and returned home to Mississippi. Six weeks later, he was chosen as president of the new Confederate States of America. Historians have criticized Davis as a poor leader who did not delegate responsibility and had difficulty getting along with people. Davis remained Confederate

President during the entire war, until he was captured by Union troops on May 10, 1865. He was imprisoned for two years and charged with treason, but never put on trial. Later he became president of a life insurance company, and traveled to Europe and South America. He wrote a book, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, which became very popular in the 1870s, especially in the south. He died in 1889 at the age of 81.

### Primary Source:

#### Excerpt from Davis' Farewell Speech in the Senate Chamber, U.S. Capitol, January 21, 1861

It is known to Senators who have served with me here, that I have for many years advocated, as an essential attribute of State sovereignty, the right of a State to secede from the Union. . .

Secession . . . is to be justified upon the basis that the States are sovereign. There was a time when none denied it. I hope the time may come again, when ... the inalienable rights of the people of the States, will prevent any one from denying that each State is a sovereign....

[Mississippi] has heard proclaimed the theory that all men are created free and equal, and this made the basis of an attack upon her social institutions; and the sacred Declaration of Independence has been invoked to maintain the position of the equality of the races. . . .

... when you deny to us the right to withdraw from a Government which thus perverted threatens to be destructive of our rights, we but tread in the path of our fathers when we proclaim our independence, and take the hazard. This is done ... from the high and solemn motive of defending and protecting the rights we inherited, and which it is our sacred duty to transmit unshorn to our children. . . .

## CW4.4.4 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Frederick Douglass (1808?-1895)



[Frederick Douglass, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing right] c 1850? 1860?  
 Source: Library of Congress,  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671911/>

### Secondary Source:

Born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, Douglass was born to a slave mother and an unknown white father in Maryland in 1808. Raised primarily by his grandparents and his aunt, he escaped slavery by fleeing to New York in 1838. Changing his name to Douglass to avoid capture by slave hunters, he later moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he worked for three years as a day laborer. He soon began to speak out publicly about his time as a slave at anti-slavery conventions and later explained the horrors of his own bondage in his three autobiographies, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, published in 1845, followed in 1855 by *My Bondage and My Freedom*, and in 1881, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Douglass was a powerful speaker and wonderful writer. He argued against the institution of slavery in public speeches, through his newspaper, *the North Star*, and in his three autobiographies. During the Civil War, Douglass advised Lincoln, spoke out in favor of emancipation, and recruited black troops to fight for the Union army. After the war, Douglass

continued to speak out against racism, became a supporter of women’s rights and held a number of government positions, including U.S. Minister and Counsel General to Haiti from 1889-91.

### Primary Sources:

#### From an Independence Day Speech at Rochester, NY, to an audience of white Americans, 1852

Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered [chained], in the name of the Constitution and the Bible which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery – the great sin and shame of America!”

#### From *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881)

From the first, I, for one, saw in this war the end of slavery; and truth requires me to say that my interest in the success of the North was largely due to this belief.... the mission of the war was the liberation of the slave, as well as the salvation of the Union... that the Union cause would never prosper till the war assumed an anti-slavery attitude, and the negro was enlisted [as a soldier] on the loyal side.

## CW4.4.5 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Harriet A. Jacobs (1813-1897)



Harriet Jacobs,

Source: *Documenting the American South*,  
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/suppourt18.html>

### Secondary Source:

Harriet A. Jacobs was born a slave in North Carolina. In her early twenties she escaped from slavery, hiding in the attic of her grandmother (a free woman) for nearly seven years before finding the chance to head North and settle in New York. Once there, she joined her abolitionist brother and other reformers, one of whom encouraged her to write of her experiences as a slave. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, published in 1861, became the most compelling autobiography written by an African American woman before the Civil War. During the war Jacobs and her daughter lived in Alexandria, Virginia (occupied), providing relief for (former) slaves and establishing the Jacobs Free School for their education. After the war she and her daughter continued this work in Savannah, Georgia, but eventually had to move North to avoid the dangerous racism present in the South after the war.

### Primary Sources:

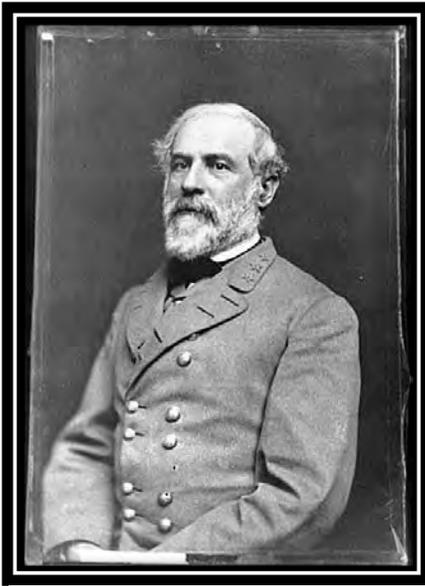
A Book Review of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in *The Weekly Anglo-African*, April 13, 1861:

...In this volume, a woman tells in words of fire... not how *she* was scourged [whipped] and maimed [hurt], but that far more terrible sufferings endured by and inflicted upon woman. No one can read these pages without a feeling of horror, and a stronger determination arising in them to tear down the cursed system [slavery] ....

Harriet Jacobs' report to abolitionist W.L. Garrison on her visit to the newly freed slaves in Washington, D.C., from "Life Among the Contrabands," *The Liberator*, September 5, 1862:

...[When I went] to the District of Columbia, where the shackles [chains around feet and hands] had just fallen, I hoped that the glorious echo from the blow had aroused the spirit of freedom.... I went to Duff Green's Row, Government head-quarters for the contrabands [escaped slaves] here. I found men, women and children all huddled together, without any distinction or regard to age or sex. Some of them were in the most pitiable condition. Many were sick with measles, diphtheria, scarlet and typhoid fever [deadly diseases]... I felt that their sufferings must be unknown to the people...Those tearful eyes often looked up to me with the language, "Is this freedom?"

## CW4.4.6 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Robert E. Lee (1807-1870)



*[Portrait of Gen. Robert E. Lee, officer of the Confederate Army], March, 1864. Julian Vannerson, Photographer.  
Source: Library of Congress,  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/cwp2003000435/PP/>*

### Secondary Source:

Robert E. Lee commanded the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Born in Virginia, Lee went to West Point Military Academy and served in the U.S. Army prior to the war. The day after Virginia seceded from the Union, Lee resigned his post from the Army, prepared to fight for his native state. During the Civil War he led Confederate troops at the battles of Fredericksburg, Antietam, and Gettysburg, among others. He was known for his military skill and his care for his soldiers. On April 9, 1865 he surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at the Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia, which officially ended the Civil War. After the war, Lee went on to become a college president at what is now called Washington and Lee University. He strongly supported a quick reconciliation of the union.

### Primary Sources:

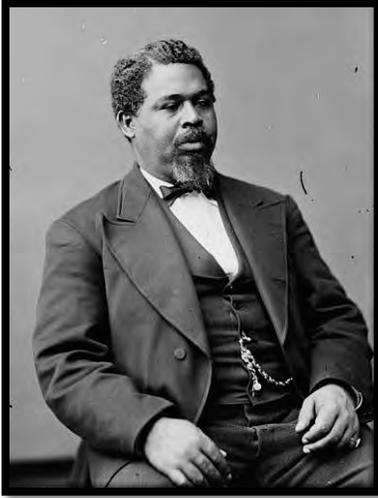
[Letter from Lee to Winfield Scott, written two days before he refused command of the Union Army, April 20, 1861:](#)

I have felt that I ought not longer to retain any Commission in the Army.... [My resignation] would have been presented at once but for the struggle it has Cost me to separate myself from a Service to which I have devoted all the best years of my life, & all the ability I possessed. ...Save in the defense of my native state shall I ever again draw my sword...

[Letter from Lee to his brother Carter, Richmond, March 14, 1862:](#)

I wish indeed that I could see you all, but that is a happiness I can hardly expect. Indeed no one has a right to look for any happiness these days except such as he might derive from his efforts to do his duty. I have been called here very unexpectedly to me & have today been placed in duty at this place under the directions of the President [Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy]: I am willing to do anything I can do to help the noble cause we are engaged in, & to take any position; but the lower & more humble the position the more agreeable to me & the better qualified I should feel to fill it.

## CW4.4.7 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Robert Smalls (1839-1915)



Robert Smalls, S.C. M.C. Born in Beaufort, SC, April 1839 Between 1870 and 1880. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/brh2003000291/PP/>

### 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*....

## CW4.4.8 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: George Templeton Strong (1820-1875)



*Camp scene at Fortress Monroe, Va., Stereograph shows soldiers, including George Templeton Strong, seated (second from left) at a table; many Zouaves are present. c. 1861-65. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2009630913/>*

### Secondary Source:

George Templeton Strong was born in New York in 1820. Strong graduated from Columbia College and went to work as a real estate lawyer in his father's law firm. He was a strong supporter of the union, but never fought in the army. Strong found several ways to become involved in the Union's efforts. He helped create the Sanitary Commission to help improve soldier health and recovery from battle wounds. Before the war ended, Strong and seven other men founded the Union League Club of New York to "cultivate a profound national devotion" and to "strengthen a love and respect for the Union." Starting at age 15, Strong wrote in a diary almost every day. Below are excerpts from his diary.

### Primary Source:

*January 31, 1861.* Three months ago, I thought with horror and incredulity [disbelief] of the chance that poor little South Carolina might be mad enough to "secede" alone. Now I am content to let her go...Let the barbarians ... rebel if they like, and call it "secession." We can get on without them...We need not attempt to reconquer and retain the territories of the new Southern Confederacy. It cannot sustain itself long.

*March 2, 1861.* Much depends on the tone of Lincoln's Inaugural ...the general belief is it will announce Lincoln's intention to uphold the law.... The logic of the situation is inexorable [unquestionable], and war is the only possible deduction [interpretation] from the premises [evidence]. Civil war is at hand; within a week, if the fire-eaters of Charleston take the initiative and open their batteries on Fort Sumter, which they are like to do at once ....

*March 20, 1861.* In the Slave-ownian Confederacy, ... secession ignores or contradicts and overrides the "self-evident truths" of all the Democratic platforms .... The non-slaveholders and poor whites, who do the hurraing and the lynching, are blindly assisting at their own political annihilation [destruction].

*September 13, 1862:* (written during an intense battle where Confederate successes led Lincoln to name a new general-in-chief of the Union Army) "Disgust with our present government is certainly universal. Even Lincoln himself has gone down at last.... This honest old codger [man] was the last to fall, but he has fallen. Nobody believes in him any more. I do not, though I still maintain him. I cannot bear to admit the country has no man to believe in, and that honest Abe Lincoln is not the style of goods we want just now.

## CW4.4.9 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Confederate Soldier Clinton Hatcher

### Secondary Source:

Clinton Hatcher was a soldier in the Confederate army. He was white and came from August County, Virginia. Because he was an ordinary man who did not write a memoir [book about past experiences], not much is known about his life. Because he writes that he just voted in his first election, he was probably in his early 20s in 1861.

### Primary Sources:

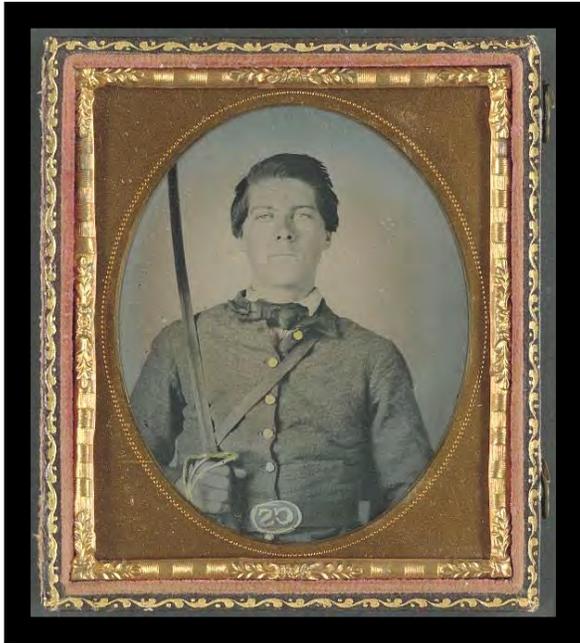
#### Letter to "Miss Mary," May 29, 1861

...I think now that Virginia is invaded it is becoming [right] that every true Virginian should shoulder his rifle and march to the rescue. I should have enlisted sooner but disliked to go without the consent of my Parents and now that they have very reluctantly consented I am preparing to hurry on as fast as possible.

I had the pleasure of casting the first vote of my life last Thursday and was happy to give it in so good a cause as that of ratifying the ordinance of Secession....We have several abolitionists here round us but I can't get any one to help me hang them. I wish I could....

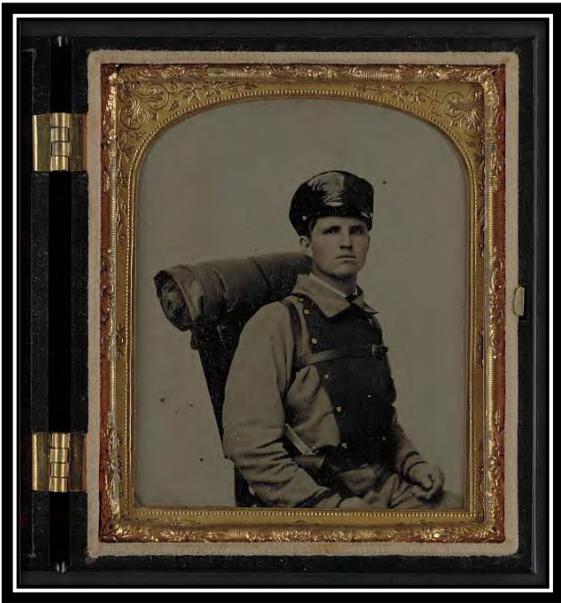
#### Letter to "Miss Mary," June 21, 1861

.... Last night there was so much noise that I found it impossible to sleep much with a soft pair of boot heels under my head... Our fare is splendid except that the coffee is so hot that it takes all the skin off of our mouths, the butter (what little we get) is old enough to vote, the beef is tougher than sole leather and the bread is hard and stale. I knew before I came into camp exactly what I would be compelled to endure and as it is in the cause of my country I am determined not to become dissatisfied and shall do all I can to keep others in good spirits. ... there are 1500 Yankees just across the river. Since I last wrote to you I have been riding nearly all the time trying to get more recruits for our company. Last Monday night I rode all night and until Noon on Tuesday. I do hope the Yankees will cross the river soon for they will keep us here for some time drilling and unless the Abolitionists come over to us we will not get a shot at them. My gun has a splendid bayonette and I hope to have an opportunity to use it...As I have been going round recruiting, the cowardice of some of our Virginia boys has made me wish I could swing them all to a limb. Any man who would not risk his life to defend such ladies as we have in the Old Dominion [Virginia] does not deserve the name of a Virginian....



[Unidentified soldier in Confederate uniform and CS belt plate with sabre], c. 1861-1865. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011647957/>

## CW4.4.10 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Confederate Soldier Michael F. Rinker



[Unidentified soldier in Confederate uniform of the 11th Virginia regiment with knapsack and bedroll] c. 1861-65.  
Source: Library of Congress,  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645302/>

### Secondary Source:

Michael F. Rinker was a soldier in the Confederate army. He was a private in Company F, 136<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Virginia Militia. This means that he was white and came from Virginia. Because he was an ordinary man who did not write a memoir [book about past experiences], not much is known about his life. He wrote the letter below after he had fought in the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse.

### Primary Source:

Letter, dated May 17, 1864, addressed to his father and mother:

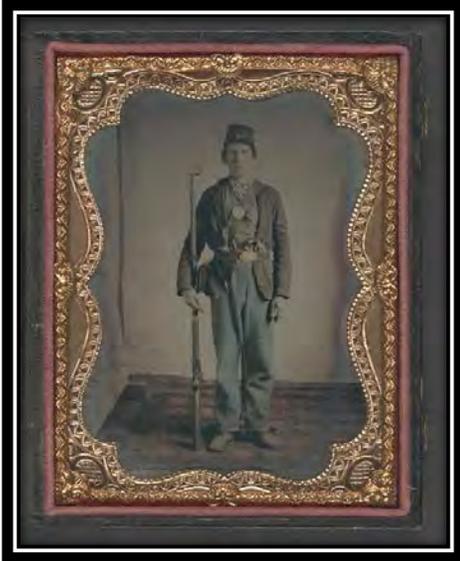
We have been so busy since we came over here, that indeed this is the first chance that I have had to write. The second day after we arrived here, we commenced fighting and it is not over yet. Father, indeed, for 5 days we were so busy fighting that we could hardly get time enough to eat our meals...There was one continual roar of thunder all the time from the artillery and small arms.

For six days the Battle was kept up, all the time day and night, in the dead hour of midnight, the cannon & musketry [rifles and guns] was thundering all the time. Column after column the Yankees pushed their men up to our Breastworks [defensive walls] and our men were cutting them down as fast as flies. The dead Yankees are heaped up in piles half as high as a man, in front of our Breastworks, and all around on the Battlefield the dead yanks are lying just as thick as they can be, and none of them buried, they will all rotten on top of the ground.

...Our men are still in line of Battle, day & night all the time; sometimes they commence [begin] fighting at midnight. There is no telling how much longer the fight will last. Our men lay in our Breastworks day and night. One night last week the yanks charged our Breastworks 9 different times, and every time our men run them back, with great slaughter. If I can get time I will write to you soon or as soon as I hear from you all. I will close.

Your son, Mike.

## CW4.4.11 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Union Soldier Charles Berry Senior



[Private Hiram M. Kersey, 44th Iowa Infantry regiment, standing on rug with bayonet, knife, revolver, and cartridge box], between 1864-65.  
Source: Library of Congress,  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010648892/>

### Secondary Source:

Charles Berry Senior was born in England in 1845, but he came with his family to the United States in 1857, when he was 12 years old. He lived in Rock Falls, Iowa. In 1864, when he was 19 years old, he enlisted in the Seventh Iowa Infantry. Charles served in the Union army for 18 months, and took part in General Sherman's conquest of Atlanta and destructive "March to the Sea." In the summer of 1865, Charles was discharged from the army and returned home to his family's farm near Rock Falls, Iowa.

### Primary Source:

#### Letter from Charles Berry Senior to his Father, May 17, 1864

I have not seen a part of what is called the horrors of war. Luckily I have not been called upon to suffer myself, but alas how many of our brave boys have. I still have but very narrowly escaped, almost miraculously been spared my life. I have heard the hissing of bullets the shrieking of shells & the loud bellowing of artillery. . . . The rest of the regiment were engaged & lost 54 killed & wounded. They drove the rebels however & killed & wounded ... many of them. We were skirmishing [fighting] by the flank [the side of the advancing enemy army] & when the battle was going on we were nearly in rear of the rebels...the bullets of our men came over the rebels & whistled around us. We came out of the wood to an opening & the rebels had retreated. Then came the scene of the killed & wounded; I can not describe it, so I will not attempt. But if it may be called satisfaction, I saw many of the rebels in their death agonies. One poor fellow begged of us to kill him. He said he would rather be dead than laying there. Though they had been fighting against us, I thought it was enough to soften the heart of the hardest man to see even a rebel in such a condition.

Paper is very scarce. I must stop. I could fill one volume nearly. I shall not be able to write home regular but you have the chance of writing regular to me & I wish you to do it.

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## CW4.4.12-Civil War Historical Figure Sources handout: Union Soldier John P. Wilson

### Secondary Source:

John P. Wilson was a white Northerner who served in the Union army during the Civil War. He served in the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Because he was an ordinary man who did not write a memoir [book about past experiences], not much is known about his life.

### Primary Source:

Letter written on June 22, 1862

Dear Sister,

I embrace this opportunity to let you know that we are all well at present except Jim McCaskey and Hugh Wilson that you knowed. We had a big fight on the 16th of June. We attacked a fort close to Fort Sumpter. We had about 5000 men, and we had about 1000 killed, wounded and missing. Among the wounded was Hugh Wilson, but they think he will get well. He had one of his eyes shot out by a musket ball. Jim McCaskey and Jacob Leary fell dangerously wounded close to the fort, and we did not get the fort, and we could not find them, and we don't know whether they are dead or if the rebels have them. They have some of our men and we have some of theirs.

We run up close to the fort, and the rebels were raining showers of grape [little pieces of metal shot from cannons], cannister, chains, and musketballs [shot from cannons], but I did not care for them a bit more than if it had been a shower of rain. Henry Guy has 3 holes through his blouse, but he is not hurt. There was one ball struck my bayonet. I was the only one standing for several rods [yards] around for a while. The rest laid down to avoid the grape, but I wanted to see where it was coming from. Several that laid down never got up again, but there was not one of the balls touched me. We could not get in the fort when we got to it. We stayed for over an hour and then we got the order to retreat. And I know you never saw a lot of men walk so slow, and every little bit they would stop and look back. I did not hear the order to retreat, and I did not go back until the Colonel told me to fall back to the regiment. And when I looked around I could not see only about 20 of our regiment. And I walked 3 times along in front of the fort, but the rebels did not hit me, but balls was flying as thick as hail.

But I expect you will have read all about the fight in the papers before you get this. And I think we will have the fort and maybe Charleston soon. We have the batteries [cannons] pretty near finished that will knock the fort clean off the ground.

General Benham is under Arest for taking the men in the way he did. General Wright is in command now. But I must close for this time, so good bye, Elli. I will write soon.

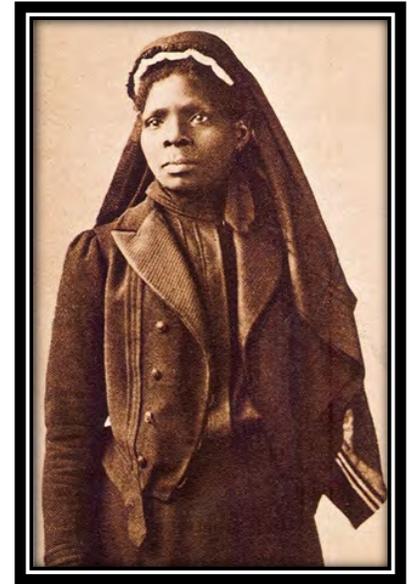
You must not be uneasy about us, for we want to try it again soon.

## CW4.4.13 – Civil War Historical Figure Sources Handout: Susie King Taylor

### Secondary Source:

Susie King Taylor (1848-1912) was born in Georgia into a slave family. Despite the strict rules against education for African Americans in Georgia, Taylor went to two secret schools taught by black women, and later studied with two white young people. In April 1862, Taylor escaped slavery by going to the Union Army on St. Simons Island. The army officers there gave her books and asked her to start a school for the freed slaves. She married Edward King, a black noncommissioned officer in the Union army. She traveled with his regiment for 3 years, employed as a laundress, but spending most of her time nursing and caring for the soldiers. After the war, she and Edward went to Savannah, Georgia, where she opened a private school for children. Unable to support herself by teaching, she moved to Boston and became a domestic servant. She remarried Russell Taylor in the 1870s. In the 1890s, she wrote an autobiography, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33d United States Colored Troops, Late 1st S.C. Volunteers*. She was the only African American woman to write and publish a memoir about her experiences in the Civil War.

She died in 1912.



Susie King Taylor in 1902.  
Source: Library of Congress,  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003653538/>

### Primary Source:

From Taylor's book, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp*

[In Georgia during the Civil War, every slave] had to have this pass, for at nine o'clock each night a bell was rung, and any colored persons found on the street after this hour were arrested by the watchman, and put in the guard-house until next morning, when their owners would pay their fines and release them. . . . About this time I had been reading so much about the "Yankees" I was very anxious to see them. The whites would tell their colored people not to go to the Yankees, for they would harness them to carts and make them pull the carts around, in place of horses. I asked grandmother, one day, if this was true. She replied, "Certainly not!" that the white people did not want slaves to go over to the Yankees, and told them these things to frighten them. "Don't you see those signs pasted about the streets? one reading, 'I am a rattlesnake; if you touch me I will strike!' Another reads, 'I am a wild-cat! Beware,' etc. These are warnings to the North; so don't mind what the white people say." I wanted to see these wonderful "Yankees" so much, as I heard my parents say the Yankee was going to set all the slaves free.

... The first colored troops did not receive any pay for eighteen months, and the men had to depend wholly on what they received from the commissary, established by General Saxton. A great many of these men had large families, and as they had no money to give them, their wives were obliged to support themselves and children by washing for the officers of the gunboats and the soldiers, and making cakes and pies which they sold to the boys in camp. Finally, in 1863, the government decided to give them half pay, but the men would not accept this. They wanted "full pay" or nothing. They preferred rather to give their services to the state, which they did until 1864, when the government granted them full pay, with all the back pay due.... I was the wife of one of those men who did not get a penny for eighteen months for their services, only their rations and clothing....