

Civil War Battles in Tennessee

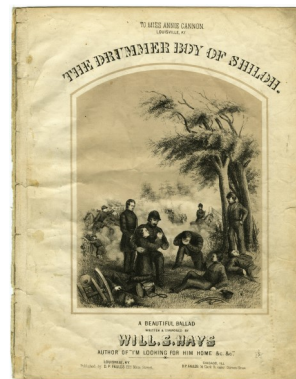
Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

Author: Rebecca Byrd, New Center Elementary

Grade Level: 5/8th grade

Date Created: May 2018, standards updated 2019

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Civil War Battles in Tennessee

***Due to changes in the Tennessee Academic Standards for Social studies, this lesson would primarily be used in the 5th grade unit of Tennessee during the Civil War. However, the sources in these different Tennessee battles would be an excellent extension in 8th grade classrooms.*

Intro: Tennessee's Civil War experience was unique. Tennessee was the last state to secede and the first to rejoin the Union. Middle and West Tennessee supported secession by and large, but the majority of East Tennessee opposed secession. Ironically, Middle and West Tennessee came under Union control early in the war, while East Tennessee remained in Confederate hands. Tennessee is second only to Virginia in number of battles fought in the state. In this lesson, students will explore the economic and emotional effects of the war on the citizens of Tennessee.

Guiding Questions

How can context clues help determine an author's point of view?

How did Civil War battles affect the short term and long term ability of Tennesseans to earn a living?

How did Civil War battles affect the emotions of Tennesseans?

Learning Objectives

The learner will analyze primary source documents to determine whether the creator/author supported the Union or Confederacy.

The learner will make inferences to determine the long term and short term economic effects of Civil War battles on the people of Tennessee.

The learner will make inferences to determine the emotional affect the Civil War had on Tennesseans.

Tennessee State Library & Archives

Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett

Standards:

SSP.02 Critically examine a primary or secondary source in order to: ● Summarize significant ideas and relevant information ● Distinguish between fact and opinion ● Draw inferences and conclusions ● Recognize author's purpose, point of view, and reliability

SSP.03 Organize data from a variety of sources in order to: ● Compare and contrast multiple sources ● Recognize differences between multiple accounts ● Frame appropriate questions for further investigation

SSP.04 Construct and communicate arguments supported by evidence to: ● Demonstrate and defend an understanding of ideas ● Compare and contrast viewpoints ● Illustrate cause and effect ● Predict likely outcomes ● Devise new outcomes or solutions

5.42 Describe the significance of the following Civil War events and battles on Tennessee: ● Siege of Ft. Donelson, ● Battle of Stones River, ● Battle of Franklin, ● Battle of Nashville, ● Battle of Shiloh

Materials Needed:

Fort Donelson

[Lucy Virginia French diary entry, February 16, 1862](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

[Nannie E. Haskins diary entry, 1863 February 16](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

Shiloh

[The drummer boy of Shiloh](#)

[Rachel Carter Craighead diary entry dealing with Battle of Pittsburg Landing](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

Lesson Activities Continued:

Stones River

[Letter from Tennessee Union soldier James N. Levi](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

[Letter from Quartermaster General about restitution claim](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

Franklin

[David M. Dotson confederate pension application \(page one only\)](#)

[Specially constructed Army shoe for David M. Dotson](#)

[Carte-de-viste of McGavock cemetery](#)

Nashville

[Letter from William H. Givens, Assistant Surgeon, Federal Army](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

[Lucy Virginia French diary entry, 1864 December 25](#)

(Adapted transcription provided at the end of the lesson plan)

Document Question Cards (1 per battle)

Note on Materials: The transcriptions of the documents provided at the end of the lesson plan have been adapted for readability by students. Adaptations include adding punctuation, correcting misspelled words, replacing pronouns with nouns for clarity, replacing challenging vocabulary with synonyms and omitting irrelevant sections of the documents. Teachers are encouraged to look at the original documents and their transcriptions and to consider using the original documents along with the adapted transcriptions in the lesson.

Lesson Activities Continued:

Background:

[Tennessee Blue Book History- The Time of Troubles](#)

Lesson Activity 1 - Modeling and Group Practice

Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4. Provide each group with the primary source documents related to the Battle of Franklin and the question card for that battle. Guide students through the process of reading and discussing the documents to answer the questions.

Key Points:

Look for terms such as “rebel” or “Yankee” in helping to determine the author’s point of view. Dotson is applying for a Confederate pension so he was a Confederate soldier.

The Battle of Franklin affected Dotson in the short term by causing the wound to his foot and his imprisonment in Nashville. In the long term, Dotson claims that the injury made it difficult to work for the rest of his life.

The carte de viste of the McGavock cemetery shows the high Confederate death toll at the Battle of Franklin. Students might also note that it was necessary to take farmland to create a burial place for the dead.

Lesson Activity 2 Learning Stations

Set up stations for each of the remaining four battles at locations around the classroom. Each station should have the primary source documents and adapted transcriptions for the battle and multiple copies of the questions as each group will need a copy. You may wish to create 2 identical stations for each battle so that groups can remain small and no group has to wait to visit each battle’s station.

Allow each group 10 minutes at each station. When every group has completed each station, allow students to share their findings. It will be helpful to create a chart on the whiteboard with one column for economic effects and another for emotional affects.

Note: If you run short on time, you may allow groups to only visit 2 battle stations.

Lesson Activities Continued:

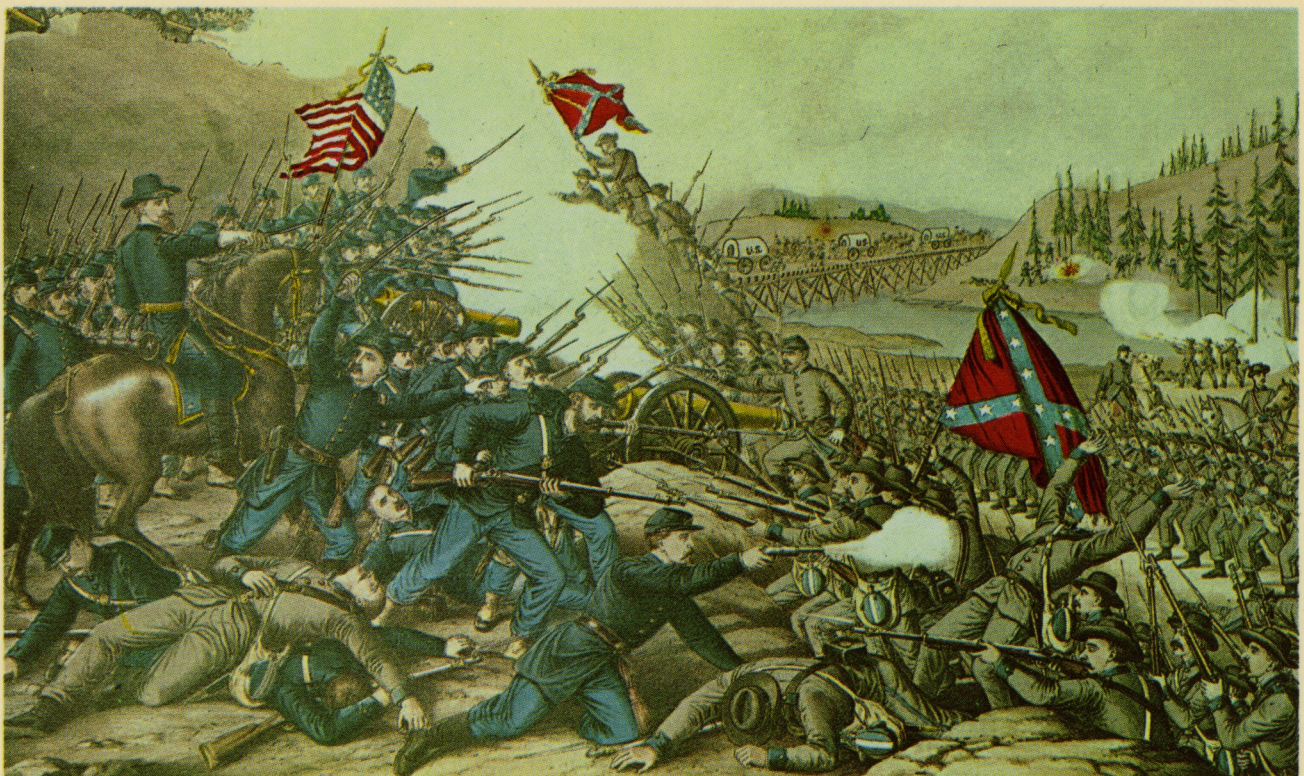
Assessment

Have each student write a paragraph summarizing the effects of the Civil War on Tennessee. Encourage the students to refer to the chart the class created and to provide specific examples from the primary source documents they analyzed. You may wish to provide students with a sample topic sentence such as “The Civil War had many economic and emotional consequences for the people of Tennessee.”

Extensions

1. Investigate [David Dotson's](#) story further by looking at the remaining pages of his pension application and the letters attached. Students may be surprised to find that a neighbor of Dotson's claimed that Dotson was a wealthy man who did not deserve a pension. Another neighbor claimed that the first neighbor was lying because he was angry over the election. These documents provide an excellent example of the lingering grudges related to the Civil War.
2. Learn more about Lucy Virginia French, Nannie Haskins and Rachel Craighead Carter in the online collection [Women in the Civil War](#).

Battle of Franklin, November 30, 1864



Battle of Franklin, Nov. 30th, 1864

Lucy Virginia French Diary Entry, February 16 and 22nd (Adapted transcription)

Sunday 16th Feb.

Two weeks have passed since I have written upon these pages... The war news was not inspiring to us, Fort Henry being taken, and the Federal gun-boats making a reconnaissance as they call it, up Tennessee river.... News came in the evening that they were fighting hard at Fort Donelson, and that our troops were evacuating Bowling Green & falling back to the Tennessee line. Tennessee is now invaded, and every man will be called out to defend her soil...The last night's news is that we have whipped the Federals badly at Fort Donelson notwithstanding their invulnerable gun-boats & overwhelming numbers.

Feb 22nd Saturday.

I cannot remember that I have ever experienced a more gloomy week than that which is just past. On Sunday evening last, when we were confident of victory at Fort Donelson, the news came that we were at last completely overpowered that hundreds were killed & thousands made prisoner that Nashville had surrendered unconditionally the Federals having taken possession, & that our Bowling Green army had fallen back to Murfreesboro! A deeper shock I never felt, I gave up the Confederacy as lost. All this week we have been in a state of the utmost anxiety & suspense not a mail has reached us from any point and we are dependent altogether upon rumors, of which there are a thousand & all conflicting. Today it seems settled that we met with a disastrous defeat in the end at Donelson by the enemy's overpowering numbers surrounding our men, who fought bravely & well. Gens. Floyd & Pillow escaped with some of the troops but Buckner is a prisoner.

Nannie Haskins Diary Entry February 16, 1863 (Adapted transcription)

Wednesday the fight began, Thursday it raged. Friday was still more furious and Saturday evening was the worst of the battle up to that time, we had whipped them, driven them back, killed slaughtered, whipped them as dogs were never beaten before. There was from 10,000 to 12,000 of our men fighting against from 25,000 to 30,000 of their land forces, besides their innumerable gun boats which were contending with us. Sunday morning, ah what terrible news did we hear! That "Fort Donelson" had -- "surrendered"- Would to God that such a great misfortune had not befallen our young republic [!] but I write as if I was complaining against heaven; No after all it may have been for our good, we had been victorious so far and were becoming too optimistic. Now we were awakened from lethargy, but it was an awful stroke; our soldiers were worn out fighting and fasting and freezing and after whipping the Yankee devils they were surrendered prisoners of war; to day just one year ago this terrible disaster took place; and my dear brother was among the number, who was to be sent and incarcerated in a Northern prison where he languished and died.

Rachel Carter Craighead Diary April 9 and 10 (Adapted transcription))

Wednesday 9th- Very gloomy, stayed at home all day until late in the evening. Ma and I went down to see Mrs. Smith. She told us terrible news of a terrific battle at Pittsburg [Landing]. 6 of our Generals killed. Oh mercy such feelings as I experienced. Perfectly indescribable. While we were there a number of sick soldiers came to head quarters stood about there 15 minutes... Pa and Sam brought the Extra (the first Yankee Extra) if it had been true how dreadful, but thanks be to Almighty God - it is not. [The paper says there was a complete [defeat] of the Rebels. Those [Confederates] killed from 35,000 to 40,000. Federal [Union] from 18,000 to 20,000. Pa and Tom neither believe it. Those two lovely days Saturday Sunday & Monday were seeing such awful carnage. All our loved ones are down there. Heaven only knows who is killed.

Thursday April 10th- The papers full of the Federal Victory. Lasted two days 6th 7th. [The] first day we whipped them, but on Thursday they [defeated] us. Gen. Johnston killed, Genl. Bushrod Johnson killed, Genl. Beauregard had an arm shot off. Genl. Cheatham, Hardee, Breckenridge, Hindman & Polk all wounded. Dreadful luck! We don't believe all that.. not half of it. I know we whipped them.

Letter from Tennessee Union soldier James N. Levi to his wife April 24, 1863 (Adapted transcription)

We march to Nashville and there we stayed a few days and then we marched to Murfreesboro...While there we saw the [battlefield]. My dear it was a dreadful sight to see the dead on this Battlefield. They lay in every position imaginable. Some bodies were torn all to pieces, while others had their heads shot off close to their shoulders. And the rebels lay there more than a week before they [were] buried. Many a man floated down the Stone River in a watery grave and many a man was seen with his hands and feet sticking out of the grave and [driven] over by the horses and wagons. This battlefield is long to be remembered by our friends my beloved. Wife, the horrors of war are terrible and many a good and lovely wife and children left to weep and mourn the loss of a husband or father. Remember these lines if I see you no more until the last trumpet sounds.

Letter from Quartermaster General about Restitution Claim, June 11, 1864 (Adapted transcription)

Honorable R.J Meigs,
Washington City,

Sir:

Your letter of the 3rd instant enclosing certain letters relative to the claim of Thomas Ford of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, for the use and occupation of his dwelling house as a hospital and for cotton used for bedding for the wounded has been received.

The regulations of the Army authorize the Quartermaster to furnish straw for bedding for troops and [money is budgeted] to cover the purchase of that article, but I do not consider that the money can properly be used for the payment of cotton taken and used for bedding.

Besides, the quantity of cotton taken is not shown. Mr. Ford makes out an account for 45,000 pounds at \$.15= \$6,750, while in his bill he states that from 48,000 pounds in his gin he sold nearly \$2000 worth leaving the government "justly and fairly in my debt \$5,200." Acting assistant surgeon Russell, who states that he was one of the surgeons who took possession of Mr. Ford's dwelling house for hospital purposes, and that said cotton was taken from the gin house, has no knowledge of the quantity so taken.

Mr. Ford does not present an account for the rent of his house. Nor is it shown for what period, and between what dates it was used for hospital purposes. If he intends to make a claim for rent in this case, he should obtain from the officer under whose direction the building was taken and occupied, certified vouchers setting forth the fact and period and purpose of its occupation; what would be a fair rent to allow in the case and the fact and cause of non-payment.

Letter from William H. Givens, Assistant Surgeon, Federal Army (Adapted transcription)

Nashville, Tennessee, December 18, 1864

Dear Wife,

I wrote you yesterday while the fighting was going on- it kept growing harder and harder until after noon until it got to be something like Chickamauga. We have suffered severely in loss of men- but we have gained one of the greatest victories of the war. ...our Headquarters are the house of a wealthy old planter by the name of Rains. I do not know whether he was a rebel or not- at any rate the rebels have stripped him of everything that was moveable- probably our soldiers helped somewhat as his house is between the two lines and was first in possession of one and then the other. Splendid furniture, mirrors, sofas and in fact everything to make a house comfortable- most beautiful shady groves, gardens and outbuildings nearly all ruined. [The Rains family] just returned this morning. The rebels just left yesterday morning and we came in last night. I could not help pitying them. I see so much destruction- clothing- bedding- carpets- all gone-all gone.

The fighting was quite severe all around here and just in sight of here dozens of dead men have lain in the rain and mud all day. Nearly every one [of them] had been stripped of some articles of clothing- all of them of their boots and shoes. Most of them of pants, and many of coats, hats and all.

Lucy Virginia French diary entry, 1864 December 25 (Adapted transcription)

Christmas Dec. 1864. 7 o'clock P.M.

Tonight I have but one thought- the cause of the South has gone down. The news all around us is evident of the fact. For my part I freely acknowledge that I can see no brightness now for the Confederacy. Hood has been beaten at Nashville & is now trying to get out of the State, and Sherman's raid through Georgia has been successful- he being now at Savannah if he has not possession of the city. Mr. Sam Black & Mr. Wallace returned from Nashville last night- they brought papers & the news of Hood's disaster. I have just been reading the late Press, Union, & Cincinnati Enquirer. All are full of Thomas' late victory over Hood. The battle was fought on the 16th & 17th [of December] ending, they claim, in the complete defeat of the rebels. Fifty-four pieces of artillery they state to be captured with 5000 [Confederate] prisoners. Hood at last accounts was a few miles beyond Columbia- is said by the latest reports to have abandoned his wagon train at Duck River.... Thomas estimates [Hood's] loss at 3000 rebel killed & 1,800 wounded with no end of prisoners. Mr. Black himself states that there were droves of prisoners brought in. Rumor says that many of the captives [loudly condemned Hood] -cursing him violently for everything, & also that not one half of the poor fellows had shoes. If this is so think of it! In mid winter, & the thermometer standing at nights at 18, 16, or 9! Poor fellows! Their loyalty deserved a better fate!

Fort Donelson Document Questions

Lucy Virginia French Diary Entry, February 16 and 22nd

1. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

2 How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. How does the author's description of the battle change from the first diary entry to the second?

Nannie Haskins Diary Entry February 16, 1863

4. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

5. How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. How is the author personally affected by the Battle of Fort Donelson?

Franklin Document Questions

Specially constructed Army shoe for David M. Dotson

David M. Dotson confederate pension application

1. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

2 How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. How did the Battle of Franklin affect the author in the short- term?

4. How did the Battle of Franklin affect the author in the long-term?

Carte-de-viste of McGavock cemetery

5. What does this image tell you about the effects of the Battle of Franklin?

Nashville Document Questions

Letter from William H. Givens, Assistant Surgeon, Federal Army

1. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

2 How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. According to the author, how was the Rains family affected by the war?

Lucy Virginia French diary entry, 1864 December 25

4. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

5. How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. How does the author view Hood's defeat at Nashville? _____

7. How did the captured Confederate soldiers feel about Hood?

Shiloh Document Questions

Rachel Carter Craighead— Diary April 9 and 10 (Adapted)

1. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

2 How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. Which side does the newspaper report as the winner of the battle?

4. How does the author respond to the newspaper report? _____

The drummer boy of Shiloh

5. Describe the action in the image. _____

6. Describe the emotions of the soldiers shown in the image. _____

Stones River Document Questions

Letter from Tennessee Union soldier James N. Levi to his wife April 24, 1863

1. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

2 How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. How does the author describe the Stones River Battlefield? Cite text evidence to support your answer.

Letter from Quartermaster General about Restitution Claim, June 11, 1864

4. Which side (Union or Confederate) did the author support?

5. How do you know? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. This letter is a reply to a request made by Thomas Ford. What had Ford asked for?

7. Was Ford's request honored? Why or why not? _____
