

Lesson provided by: David Harris, Lakeview Middle School: Catoosa County

“The Battle of Atlanta using Primary and Secondary Sources”

Lesson Plan Goals

The student will gain knowledge of how primary and secondary sources are both used in determining a true understanding of historical events. Many times, individual descriptions and overall explanations of a battle do not seem to mesh. What an individual soldier sees is not always what one reads about in text books. Students will examine individual letters and broad explanations of the Battle of Atlanta to try to gain a different perspective on what actually happened.

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Georgia Performance Standards

SS8H6 The Student will analyze the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia.

b. State the importance of key events of the Civil War; include Antietam, Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, the Union Blockade of Georgia’s coast, Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign, Sherman’s March to the Sea, and Andersonville.

Materials needed

Letters and translations of letters from the “Civil War Letters of the Christie Family.” Found at - <http://www.mnhs.org/library/Christie/atlanta.html>

An overview of the Battle of Atlanta found at <http://ngeorgia.com/history/battleofatlanta.html>

Procedure

All students are familiar with secondary sources. The text book we look at every day is an example of a secondary source. The definition of a secondary source is as follows: Material created by somebody removed from the event being studied – who was either not at the event or working on it later.

Secondary sources, however, are not the only sources available. Primary sources are important, too. A primary source is material directly related to the past. In history, primary sources are usually letters, records, or other documents created during the period that is being studied.

In trying to find out what really happened at the Battle of Atlanta it is important to look at both sources. The student will use both types of sources to create a three day journal entry describing a fictitious soldier’s experiences during this pivotal Georgia battle.

Order of operations –

- a) read the Christie family letters at the web site listed above. (the translation will help a great deal) (this is primary)
- b) read the Battle of Atlanta from the web site listed. (this is secondary)
- c) create a 3 day journal entry describing the things a soldier would hear, see, think, taste, smell, or anything else you can think of, during the Battle of Atlanta. Draw on both sources – primary and secondary – to write your entry.

The journal entry does not have to be on any particular day, and the days don't necessarily have to be consecutive. Each day's journal entry needs to be ½ to 1 page long. Example: Day 1 – ½ page, Day 2 – 1 page, Day 3 – ½ page.

Follow up activity

See if students can find any family letters (with parents permission) from WWII, Korea, or Vietnam that help clarify our knowledge of those time periods.

Grading

The following rubric will be used to grade the assignment

Grading Rubric

1. (25 points) There should be at least 5 references to primary material in your journal entries.
2. (25points) There should be at least 5 references to secondary material in your journal entries.
3. (30 points) The journal entries are of the appropriate length.
4. (20 points) The assignment is well thought out and put together in a orderly, readable fashion.