



Ordnance: Historical Photograph Analysis

Created by Jacob Hamill, SCDNR Heritage Trust Public Information Coordinator (2019). Adapted from *Civil War Photographs: What Do You See?* by Bob Hines and John Day, Library of Congress.

Grade Level

5-8th, High School U.S. History

Estimated Time

45 minutes – 1 hour. More time may be allotted for the completion and solving of the vocabulary crossword puzzles.

Goal

Students will learn how photographs can be used as primary resources as they learn about Fort Lamar, the Battle of Secessionville, and the importance of artillery during the Civil War.

Objectives

After the completion of the activity and viewing of *The Swamp Angel* short documentary film, students will be able to:

1. *Observe* historical events featured in *The Swamp Angel* documentary film.
2. *Summarize* key events from the documentary.
3. *Identify* the location of Fort Lamar and the Battle of Secessionville in South Carolina.
4. *Explain* the significance of the Battle of Secessionville in the context of the Civil War.
5. *Discuss* the importance of artillery in the Civil War.
6. *Analyze* historical photographs and *observe* important details.
7. *Combine* photographic evidence with relevant secondary resources to *formulate* conclusions based on historical photographs.
8. *Define* and *demonstrate* an understanding of artillery vocabulary.

Academic Standards

English

- 5-I.1 Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.
- 5-I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.
- 5-I.4 Synthesize information to share learning and/or take action.
- 5-RI.7 Research events, topics, ideas, or concepts through multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.
- 5-RI.9 Apply a range of strategies to determine and deepen the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple-meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.

- 5-W.6 Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.
- 6-I.1 Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.
- 6-I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.
- 6-I.4 Synthesize integrated information to share learning and/or take action.
- 6-RI.7 Research events, topics, ideas, or concepts through multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.
- 6-RI.9 Apply a range of strategies to determine and deepen the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple-meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- 6-W.6 Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.
- 7-I.1 Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.
- 7-I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.
- 7-I.4 Synthesize integrated information to share learning and/or take action.
- 7-RI.7 Research events, topics, ideas, or concepts through multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.
- 7-RI.9 Apply a range of strategies to determine and deepen the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple-meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- 7-W.6 Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.
- 8-I.1 Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.
- 8-I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.
- 8-I.4 Synthesize integrated information to share learning and/or take action.
- 8-RI.7 Research events, topics, ideas, or concepts through multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.
- 8-RI.9 Apply a range of strategies to determine and deepen the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple-meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- 8-W.6 Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.
- E-I.1 Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.
- E-I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.
- E-I.4 Synthesize information to share learning and/or take action.

- E-RI.7 Research events, topics, ideas, or concepts through multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.
- E-RI.9 Apply a range of strategies to determine the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- E-W.6 Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.

Social Studies

- 8-4.5 Compare the military strategies of the North and the South during the Civil War and the fulfillment of these strategies in South Carolina and in the South as a whole, including the attack on Fort Sumter, the Union blockade of Charleston and other ports, the early capture of Port Royal, and the development of the Hunley submarine; the exploits of Robert Smalls; and General William T. Sherman's march through the state.
- 8-4.6 Compare the differing impact of the Civil War on South Carolinians in each of the various social classes, including those groups defined by race, gender, and age.
- USHC-3.2 Summarize the course of the Civil War and its impact on democracy, including the major turning points; the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation; the unequal treatment afforded to African American military units; the geographic, economic, and political factors in the defeat of the Confederacy; and the ultimate defeat of the idea of secession.

Activity Type: In-Class

This lesson plan is to be done as an in-class activity. The teacher will provide the required materials. To save time, students may complete their crossword puzzles outside of class and solve their classmates' puzzles the next class period.

Materials

- Historical Photograph Analysis Worksheet
- Enlarged graph paper for crossword puzzle (optional)

Fort Lamar History

- By the spring of 1862, Union forces under the leadership of Brigadier General David Hunter, commander of the Union's Department of the South, were poised to launch an assault on Charleston by way of land. A Union victory at the Battle of Port Royal in November of 1861 provided the Federals an excellent staging area for organizing an attack on the city. Logistical information provided by Robert Smalls, a runaway slave who had commandeered a Confederate steamer, the C.S.S. Planter, opened the way for Union troops to advance on James Island.
- Capturing Charleston early into 1862 could have dramatically turned the tide of war in the Union's favor. The North could have utilized Charleston's large harbor and railroad connections to launch large-scale campaigns into the South's

interior, potentially forcing the Confederacy to divert its eastern forces away from Virginia.

- To protect Charleston's southern flank, the Confederates, under the command of Major General John C. Pemberton, constructed a string of fortifications on James Island, extending from Fort Pemberton on the Stono River to a small fort built on the neck of the Secessionville peninsula. General Pemberton placed South Carolinian Brigadier General Nathan George "Shanks" Evans in charge of the island's defenses.
- The Secessionville fort, then known as the Tower Battery for the watchtower constructed at the site, was flanked by marsh on both sides and was built on the narrowest portion of the peninsula, which measured only 125 yards wide. Colonel Thomas G. Lamar was placed in command of the fort and tasked with overseeing its construction.
- On June 2, 1862, Union forces under the command of Brigadier General Henry W. Benham, who was placed in charge of the operation by General David Hunter, landed on the southwestern tip of James Island at Grimball Plantation.
- A few minor skirmishes followed as Union forces began to unload supplies and organize troops, in turn prompting the Confederates to reinforce their fortifications.
- Worried that they did not have enough men to capture Charleston, General Hunter ordered General Benham to not advance on Charleston or Fort Johnson until he received reinforcements or direct orders to attack.
- Despite these instructions, in the early morning of June 16th General Benham launched a surprise attack on the Secessionville fort. This force, totaling around 6,500 men organized into two columns, was expected to easily overwhelm the Confederate garrison of 500.
- As the Union force approached the fort, they had to navigate through overgrown hedge rows and open cotton fields, slowing their advance. As the land approaching the fort narrowed, the left side of the Union column was pushed into the marsh, breaking the line and compressing the center, causing the second wave to run into the first.
- At this point, around 5:00 am, the fort's defenders were alerted to the Union's presence. As the Confederates rushed to their stations, Colonel Lamar took personal command of the 8-inch Columbiad cannon. When the Union lines were within two hundred yards of the fort, they were met with the mighty Columbiad's blast.
- Despite sustaining heavy fire from the fort's cannons, the Union forces managed to climb onto the fort's parapets where they fought hand to hand with the Confederate defenders.
- The fort's garrison was quickly reinforced by surrounding Confederate battalions, who were able to repel the Union's foothold.
- The marshes inhibited the Union army from launching a successful flanking maneuver to assist the main assault, as the water and pluff mud proved to be impassable.

- Confederate artillery fire to the Union's flank, in addition to Confederate reinforcements, forced General Benham to order a retreat. Despite the battle only lasting around two and a half hours, losses were heavy.
- The Union sustained nearly 700 casualties, with 107 killed, while the Confederates experienced around 200 casualties, with 52 killed. Most of the battle's casualties occurred either on the narrow peninsula immediately in front of the fort or on the fort itself.
- After the battle, the Secessionville fort, which was referred to as the "Tower Battery" at the time of the battle, was renamed to Fort Lamar in honor of its commander. Colonel Lamar, who was wounded during the battle, died a year later from fever contracted while on serving on the island.
- By July 8th, the Union army vacated James Island and returned to Port Royal.
- For disobeying orders and losing the battle, General Benham was court martialed and demoted.
- Fort Lamar was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Civil War Artillery Background

- Artillery was an important part of many Civil War battles. Artillery was used against infantry, buildings, fortifications, and ships, and a weapon's size, style, and ammunition varied depending on its purpose.
- Most artillery pieces at this time were muzzle loading guns, meaning they were loaded in the front and not in the back, or the breech.
- Barrels were either smoothbore or rifled. The grooves in the barrel of a rifled artillery piece forces a projectile to spin rapidly as it exits the barrel and flies through the air, stabilizing the projectile, and allowing the weapon to have a longer range and higher accuracy compared to smoothbore guns.
- Smoothbore pieces are smooth on the inside of their barrels and therefore do not have the stabilizing grooves of rifled guns. However, smoothbore guns were easier to produce and maintain, and soldiers could use a smoothbore to fire a variety of items without fear of damaging the inside of the gun.
- Artillery pieces also utilized multiple types of ammunition. Solid cannonballs were used to destroy fortifications and enemy artillery, while case shot was used against infantry. Case shot is a hollow shell filled with shrapnel that was designed to explode mid-air and spread the shrapnel across a large area. In close range combat, artillery crews could switch to canister shot, or containers filled with small metal balls. The container would disintegrate when fired, spreading the metal balls outward like a shotgun.
- Field artillery was a powerful weapon to have on the battlefield, however moving and operating these weapons was difficult and required large amounts of resources.
- Each gun was very heavy and required about six animals to move the weapon into position and six to eight more to move each caisson, or the cart that carried powder and ammunition.

- On the field, artillery was organized into a battery. A Union battery was typically composed of six guns of uniform size and type, while a Confederate battery was made up of four guns of varying types.
- Each gun and its accompanying caisson was operated and managed by a team of fifteen to twenty people. It took about six people to properly clean, load, and fire a single artillery piece.

Vocabulary

- **Artillery:** A class of heavy, large-caliber guns designed to launch munitions with a greater range and power than infantry firearms.
- **Battery:** A unit of artillery.
- **Breech:** The part of a gun behind the gun barrel.
- **Caisson:** A wagon accompanying an artillery piece containing gunpowder and ammunition.
- **Canister Shot:** Anti-personnel artillery ammunition intended for close-range combat. Canister shot is a container filled with small metal balls. When fired, the canister disintegrates, spreading the metal balls outward like a shotgun's blast.
- **Cannonball:** A solid spherical projectile without an explosive charge. Used by artillery to destroy fortifications and other artillery pieces.
- **Case Shot:** Anti-personnel artillery projectile packed with shrapnel and designed to explode in midair over infantry.
- **Muzzle:** The front end of a gun's barrel where a projectile will exit.
- **Rifling:** Grooves inside the barrel of a gun that forces a projectile to spin rapidly as it exits the barrel, stabilizing the projectile as it flies through the air, allowing the weapon to have greater range and higher accuracy.
- **Smoothbore:** Guns that are smooth on the inside of the barrel and do not have the stabilizing grooves of rifled guns. Easier to produce and maintain than rifled weapons, but have lower accuracy and range.
- **Swamp Angel:** The nickname given to a 16,500 pound Union cannon with an eight-inch bore that shelled Charleston in August 1863. The weapon was positioned near Morris Island in a sandbagged earthwork.

Lesson

1. Distribute the "Historical Photograph Analysis" worksheet. Start the lesson by showing your class the "Interior of Fort Putnam on Morris Island" photograph, taken in 1865 on Morris Island, S.C., available at: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2018671275/resource/>.
2. Ask your students to describe what they see, including specific details they notice from the picture, and anything they are unsure about. Have your students write their answers on the worksheet.
3. Next, give a brief overview of Fort Lamar and the Battle of Secessionville, and show the *Fort Lamar – The Swamp Angel* short documentary film. Tell your students to write down any unfamiliar terms from the documentary on their worksheets.

4. Discuss the documentary as a class, clarifying any terms or questions the students have.
5. Show the “Interior of Fort Putnam on Morris Island” photograph again. Utilizing the information from the documentary, ask you students if there is anything in the photograph they now understand that they were previously unsure about. Is there anything they now notice that they previously did not? Zoom in on different sections of the image to analyze small details. Was there anything they thought they knew but was proven incorrect by the documentary? Have your students write these answers on their worksheet.
6. Emphasize the importance of using evidence, facts, or observations to support one’s conclusions. Students can use background knowledge from class, information from the documentary, or observations from the photograph to support their conclusions or claims.
7. Next, show the students the “Federal mortar battery with crew on Morris Island” photograph: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cwpb.03182/>.
8. Have your students compare this picture to the previous one. Both images are from the same location and year. What is similar? What is different? What information does this image tell that the other does not? Have your students write these answers on their worksheet.
9. Even though photographs are useful sources of information, there is a lot of information photographs do not show us, or information that is unclear. Written primary sources, as well as secondary resources, are useful in providing background information and clarifying information present in a photograph. Archaeology is important for “ground-truthing” historical documents and testimonies.
10. Show your students the “Artillery in 4 Minutes” by the Civil War Trust, available at: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/artillery-civil-war>.
11. After watching the video, revisit the “Federal mortar battery with crew on Morris Island” image. Is there anything the students now notice in the photograph that they did not notice before?
12. Finish the activity by having your students review the unfamiliar terms they wrote down while viewing *The Swamp Angel* short documentary film. Have your students create a crossword using these vocabulary terms and distribute them next class period so students can solve each other’s crossword puzzles.

References

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Historical Photograph Analysis Worksheet

For this activity you will be viewing two historical photographs and two short documentary films. Photographs are useful sources of information. However, it is important to use written primary sources and / or secondary sources when analyzing historical photographs to better understand the information presented in them. Using photographic evidence in conjunction with written accounts, archaeological research, and secondary background information is important for correctly interpreting a photograph and making an accurate claim or conclusion.

1. Observe this first photograph. What do you see? What details do you notice about the image? What questions do you have about this photograph?
2. Next, watch the *Fort Lamar – The Swamp Angel* documentary short. Write down any unfamiliar terms from the documentary in the space below.
3. Look at the first photograph again. After watching the *Fort Lamar – The Swamp Angel* short documentary, is there anything in this photograph that you now understand that you previously did not? Was there anything you thought you knew that was proven incorrect by the documentary?
4. Look at this second photograph. This image is from the same year and place as the previous photograph. What similarities do these images have? What is different? What information does this image give that the first did not?
5. Watch the *Artillery in 4 Minutes* film. After watching this video, is there anything in the second photograph that you now notice or understand that you previously did not?
6. Review the unfamiliar terms you listed for question number 2. Use these terms to create a crossword puzzle and trade your puzzle with a classmate's puzzle.