

The Civil War: A Proposed Unit by John Harrison

Materials Needed:

Standard American Studies Survey Text
The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara
Episode Five of *The Civil War* by Ken Burns (PBS)
Gettysburg (The film by Ted Turner)
Sullivan Ballou Letter
Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify important concepts associated with the Civil War by focusing in depth upon the major battle of that war, Gettysburg.
2. Students will be able to analyze the different pictures of history presented to them by a documentary film maker, a narrative historian, and a narrative film maker. By making such a comparison, students will be able to see the unique perspectives of each work, identify the underlying historical facts and relate those facts in an appropriate manner.
3. By focusing upon one particular battle, students will be able to identify the major players concepts and results of America's greatest battle.
4. Using a survey text, students will be able to identify the major battles, persons and events of the Civil War. Students should also be able to relate those events to the specific ideas of the book, *The Killer Angels* and the films.
5. Using the Sullivan Ballou Letter and the Gettysburg Address, students should be able to identify the structural elements of the arguments proposed by the two authors. Students should pay particular attention to the style and structure of the two letters and be able to identify the most notable themes present in the works.

Proposed Activities:

Day One: Teachers should use the survey text and other supplemental materials to relate the events leading up to July 1, 1863. Suggested supplemental materials include Episode One of *The Civil War* which will identify the evolution of the crisis. Additional episodes give overviews of major military events.

Day Two: Students should read the foreword to *The Killer Angels*. Class discussion should focus on the background of the battle. If possible, review The Civil War segment of Fredericksburg.

Day Three: Students will take a reading quiz over the first day's battle. Students will also view the segment of the Ken Burns film which deals with the first day's battle. Students should be able to compare the different focuses of the narrative and documentary and identify the presentation of ideas in both works.

Day Four: Students will take a reading quiz over the second day's battle. Students will also view the segment of the documentary dealing with the pertinent battle. Again, students should be able to compare the different approaches presented by the two works.

Day Five: Students will take a reading quiz over the third day's battle and the prologue of the book. Again, emphasis should be placed upon analysis of the two view points of the book and the film.

Day Six: Students will finish Episode Five, culminating in a discussion of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Students will also be presented with a hard copy of the Sullivan Ballou letter and watch the film presentation of the letter (which will be found at the end of Episode One). Particular attention should be paid to structural analysis of argument presented in both works. If possible it would be helpful to also show what happened to the major players in the Civil War after the conflict had ended. Episode Nine of *The Civil War* will have a section devoted to these issues.

Day Seven until completion: Students will begin to view the Turner film Gettysburg. Attention should be placed upon the narrative upon which it is based, Shaara's *The Killer Angels*. Discussion should center around the presentation of the narrative work in a film medium and the accuracy or lack of accuracy of the film to the narrative work. Focus discussion upon the critical elements of the book that are present or lacking in the film.

Evaluation:

In the case of this unit, evaluation will be twofold. Students will take an objective exam in American Studies over all works presented. Also, in our case, students will be responsible for writing an analysis over a particular issue presented in *The Killer Angels*. A possible prompt for such a paper would be as follows:

At the end of *The Killer Angels*, the following quotation is offered:

“Thus ended the great American Civil War, which must upon the whole be considered the noblest and least avoidable of all the great mass conflicts of which until then there was record.”
- *Winston Churchill, A History of the English Speaking People.*

Using the text of *The Killer Angels*, offer evidence to support Churchill's perspective of the American Civil War. Focus on the issues he centers on in his quotation, specifically “the noblest and least avoidable” aspects presented in the novel as portrayed by the characters.

Name _____

The Killer Angels – Day One, June 1, 1863

- _____ 1. The weather on the morning of June 1 was . . .
 - a. clear
 - b. a heavy rain
 - c. a gentle farmers rain

- _____ 2. Lee's initial orders to his troops on this day were . . .
 - a. to refrain from attacking until all his troops were concentrated.
 - b. To attack as soon as possible
 - c. To report back any information concerning Stuart
 - d. To proceed as they saw fit

- _____ 3. The abundance of cherries accounted for
 - a. food poisoning
 - b. a rise in the "old Soldiers disease"
 - c. incidents of drunkenness on the part of the southerners
 - d. the entire food stocks of the southerners

- _____ 4. The new commander of the northern forces was . . .
 - a. McClellan
 - b. Hooker
 - c. Meade
 - d. Reynolds

- _____ 5. Who commanded the forces that attacked Buford cavalry on the morning of the 1st?
 - a. George Pickett
 - b. Harry Heth
 - c. James Longstreet
 - d. Jubal Early

- _____ 6. Who commanded the first Union infantry corps to relieve Buford?
 - a. Reynolds
 - b. Hooker
 - c. Burnside
 - d. Chamberlain

- _____ 7. By the time of Gettysburg, Lee had begun to demonstrate symptoms of what disease?
 - a. dysentery
 - b. cancer
 - c. heart
 - d. Old Soldiers disease

- _____ 8. Longstreet preferred which type of battle?
 - a. offensive
 - b. defensive

- _____ 9. In the battle of Gettysburg, from which direction did the south enter the city?
- north
 - east
 - west
 - south
- _____ 10. In the battle of Gettysburg, from which direction did the northern troops enter the city?
- north
 - east
 - west
 - south
- _____ 11. What type of factory did the southerners hope to liberate goods in Gettysburg?
- guns
 - clothing
 - shoes
 - food
- _____ 12. On the morning of the 1st, where was Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain's troops?
- the end of the column
 - in the middle of the column
 - at the head of the column
- _____ 13. Which character gives us the background for Shaara's title, the Killer Angels?
- Chamberlain
 - Lee
 - Buford
 - Reynolds
- _____ 14. The following quotation refers to which character?
- “In the winter the fever had come to Richmond. In a week they were dead. All within a week, all three. He saw the sweet faces; moment of enormous pain. The thing had pushed him out of his mind, insane, but no one knew it. They looked at the plain dull stubborn face and saw nothing but dull Dutch eyes, the great darkness, the silence.”
- Lee
 - Chamberlain
 - A.P. Hill
 - Longstreet
- _____ 15. Who was described in the following ways:
- He loved lemons. Pepper made his leg ache. He would go into battle with his arm in the air to relieve pain from a finger that had been shot off.
- Lee
 - Jackson
 - Longstreet
 - A.P. Hill

Name _____

The Killer Angels – Day Two, June 1, 1863

- _____ 1. Freemantle compared the Southerner to what nationality?
- Germans
 - French'
 - Russians
 - English
- _____ 2. Lee's religious affiliations was . . .
- Methodist
 - Baptist
 - Church of England
 - Quaker
- _____ 3. Enfields and Springfields refer to what type of arm?
- cannon
 - bayonets
 - rifles
- _____ 4. When Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain went to war, his wife's response was . . .
- outrage
 - excitement
 - fear
 - support
- _____ 5. When the confederate prisoners were explaining why they were fighting in the war, they referred to their . . .
- slaves
 - "rats"
 - allegiance to the south
 - hatred of Lincoln
- _____ 6. What was the name of the special bugle call for the 20th Maine?
- taps
 - reveille
 - Dan Butterfield
 - Call to arms
- _____ 7. What was the consequence given the men from Maine should they refuse to do their duty in the upcoming battle?
- court martial
 - death
 - reduction in rank
 - eviction from the army

- _____ 8. A sign posted on Northern taverns would sometimes read, Dogs and _____ keep out.
- Irishmen
 - Negroes
 - Catholics
 - Southerners
- _____ 9. the great question Chamberlain asked himself was . . .
- Why am I here?
 - What if it is you who is wrong?
 - Will I survive?
 - Will the Generals be competent?
- _____ 10. On the second day, Longstreet wanted Lee to . . .
- attack the center
 - attack Little Round Top
 - move to the right of the line
 - pull back to Virginia
- _____ 11. To what geographical landmark did the Confederates refer as “The Rocky Hill”?
- Big Roundtop
 - Seminary Ridge
 - Cemetery Ridge
 - Little Round Top
- _____ 12. What general led Longstreet’s men in the attack on the Union left?
- Pickett
 - Ewell
 - Hood
 - Stuart
- _____ 13. What desperate move did Chamberlain order as the Confederates made their last charge?
- retreat
 - surrender
 - right wheel forward
 - hold the line
- _____ 14. Chamberlain’s men had fought Longstreet’s men at what previous battle?
- First Manassas
 - Chancellorsville
 - Shiloh
 - Fredericksburg
- _____ 15. To who is the following quotation referring:
- “It did not take him very long. He was by nature a decisive man, and although this was one of the great decisions of his life and he knew it, he made it quickly and did not agonize over it. He did not think of the men who would die; he had learned long ago not to do that.”
- Longstreet
 - Chamberlain
 - Lee
 - Meade

Bonus: What was the phenomena known as “Acoustic Shadowing”

*On the next quiz, some questions will be taken from the documentary film.

**A week before the battle of Bull Run Sullivan Ballou, a Major in the 2nd
Rhode Island Volunteers, wrote home to his wife in Smithfield.**

July 14, 1861

Camp Clark, Washington DC

Dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days – perhaps tomorrow. And lest I should not be able to write you again I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I am no more.

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how American Civilization now leans upon the triumph of the government and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. And I am willing – perfectly willing – to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but omnipotence can break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly with all those chains to the battlefield. The memory of all the blissful moments I have enjoyed with you come crowding over me, and I feel most deeply

grateful to God and you, that I have enjoyed them for so long. And how hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes and future years, when, God willing we might still have lived and loved together, and see our boys grown up to honorable manhood around us.

If I do not return, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I loved you, nor that when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name . . .

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless, how foolish I have sometimes been! . . .

But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they love, I shall always be with you, in the brightest day and in the darkest night . . . always, always. And when the soft breeze fans your cheek, it shall be my breath, or the cool air your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.

Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for me, for we shall meet again . .

Name _____

The Killer Angels – Day Two, June 1, 1863

1. What was the name of Longstreet's spy? What had been his occupation before the war?
2. As Lee moved into Pennsylvania, what letter had been prepared for Lincoln in the event of a great southern victory?
3. What was Longstreet's nickname?
4. What was J.E.B. Stuart's mission as Lee went into Pennsylvania?
5. From what state did Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain come?
6. What fruit is ripening as the Confederates move into the north?
7. What dilemma faces Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain as he awakens on the morning of the 29th?
8. What appeal does Chamberlain make in his speech to his new men?
9. What cavalry tactic had John Buford introduced to his men? Where had he learned this tactic?
10. Who did George Pickett never allow insults towards in his presence? Why?
11. What appeal did Pickett make to Longstreet before the battle began?
12. What oath did Pickett make to his sweetheart? What was unusual about their relationship?
13. What was Buford's goal as the two armies began to prepare for battle?
14. When Lee had been in charge of the defenses of Richmond, what had become his nickname?
15. What tactic did Longstreet believe was most important in a battle?

The Civil War – Film Quiz

The Birth of the Confederacy

1. Who was the president-elect of the new Confederate States? From what state did he come from? What was his reaction upon hearing the news of his election?
2. What did he share with Lincoln?
3. What was the name of his plantation?
4. How was the Confederate Constitution different from the U.S. Constitution?
5. Vice President Alexander Stephens declared the new government based upon what truth?

Fort Sumter

1. When did the Civil War begin?
2. Who was P.G.T. Beauregard's artillery instructor at West Point? Where was he on the morning the Civil War began?
3. Who fired the first shot? What was the only casualty?

Rush to Arms

1. What was the pattern of enlistment for northern and southern regiments?
2. What is not in harmony with the spirit of Christianity?
3. What was the initial fear of the new soldiers?
4. Where was the permanent Confederate government established.

The Battle of Bull Run

1. What was the initial aim of the Union army as it moved into Virginia for the first time?
2. How many Union troops were sent into Virginia? How many Confederate troops would meet them? How did the southerners know the troops were coming?
3. What did Washington civilians do in response to the first battle?
4. Who commanded the Union troops? The Southern?
5. What was the response of one regiment to the first volley fired at them?
6. Who held the center of the southern line? How did he get his nickname?
7. What sound was first heard that day that would echo from a thousand battlefields?

The Battle of Antietam

1. Who were the two commanding generals at Antietam?
2. Who did Hooker face on Lee's left? What was Hooker's nickname?
3. What was Hooker's objective? Across what feature did they fight?
4. Why was John Bell Hood's division angry?
5. What was Hood's response to the question of where his division was?
6. What was Jackson's reaction to the action of his troops?
7. The second part of the battle took place along what feature?

8. How many times did the Union troops attack?
9. What wound finally stopped Confederate General Gordon?
10. Why did the Union troops fail to follow up on the success along bloody lane?
11. What famous nurse was so close to the battle that a bullet went through her sleeve?
12. Where did the third battle take place? Who was the Union general?
13. How many Georgians held off 12,000 Union soldiers?
14. Why did one soldier run backwards?
15. What was distinctive about A.P. Hill?
16. What was McClellan's response to Burnside's request for support troops?
17. What is notable about Antietam?
18. Why were Lee's losses more significant?

Emancipation

1. What did Lincoln announce on July 2, 1862?
2. Why was this a shocking announcement?
3. Why was the announcement postponed?

4. When did emancipation take place?
5. What were the conditions put upon Emancipation?
6. When was the Emancipation Proclamation issued? What was the catalyst?
7. How did the Emancipation change the complexion of the war?
8. What was the effect of the Proclamation abroad?
9. Who was in attendance at a Boston meeting on December 31, 1862.
10. On the sea island of South Carolina, what was the description given to the song of a newly formed black regiment?

The Battle of Fredericksburg

1. What could not live in that field according to Longstreet?
2. What was the nationality of the brigades assaulting Maries Heights?
3. How many assaults were made against the Confederates? How many casualties were taken by the Union?
4. What was the common belief in taking positions during the Civil War?
5. What was Lee's response to the valor of the Union troops?
6. Where did Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain spend the night?