

LESSON TITLE: BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM – CIVIL WAR MUSIC
LESSON DESIGN BY: TANA SNYDER, MAYSVILLE R1, 9-12
AMERICAN HISTORY
JULY 2007

Teaching Traditional American History Program
Funded by U.S. Department of Education
Mike Lair, Project Director
<http://www.chillihistoryproject.com/>

Lesson Overview:

Using primary sources and cooperative group activities students will become aware of the importance of music for the morale of soldiers in the field and encouraging civilian support for war.

Essential Question:

What part did music play in gaining support for either side during the Civil War?

Objective:

(Missouri Standard/ SS6, Performance Goals/ 1:5,1:8,1:10,2:3,2:4,2:5,4:1,4:6
GLE: 8grade Concept H)

- Students will be able to explain the importance of music to soldiers and civilians during times of war.

Assessment:

- Students will answer 5 comparison questions about the Northern and Southern version of the song *Battle Cry of Freedom*. Scoring guide: 25 points total for answering all 5 questions correctly and in complete sentences. For each question not answered completely and correctly deduct up to 5 points from the total possible points.
- Cooperative groups will write new lyrics to any existing song showing support for either the Northern or Southern cause during the Civil War. Scoring guide: 25 total points. The song must contain four verses (2 points each), one chorus (2 points), clearly show support for one side of the Civil War (10 points), lyrics match up with the music (5 points).

Materials:

- Copy of the Northern version of the *Battle Cry of Freedom*. (Appendix I)
www.geocities.com/patriotictexan/Battlecryoffreedom.html
- Copy of the Southern version of the *Battle Cry of Freedom*. (Appendix III)
www.civilwarpoetry.org/confederate/songs/southern_battcry.html
- Word Tournament process. (Appendix II)
www.hazelwood.k12.mo.us/~ccook/7thgradescience/strategies/wordtournament.doc
- List of five comparison questions (Appendix IV)
- Answer key to the five comparison questions (Appendix V)

Class Time: Two to Three 50 min. class periods.

Background and Introduction to the Lesson:

The teacher should open the lesson by a discussion of how historic events worked to influence popular music. (For example, soon after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Lee Greenwood's "God Bless The USA" became extremely popular, even though it had been written 20 years before. Sergeant Barry Sadler's "Ballad of the Green Beret" was a Top 40 hit during the early rock and roll era because of its relationship with the early days of the Vietnam War. "The Star Spangled Banner" became a number one hit for Whitney Houston after she sang it on Super Bowl Sunday during the Gulf War in 1991.) The teacher should then discuss with the students that music seemed particularly important during the Civil War era, including its use to promote the abolitionist cause. Both North and South used music extensively during the Civil War to rally troops, as recreation, to march by, and many other reasons. Frequently both sides would borrow each other's tunes or lyrics. It was not uncommon for each side to serenade the other, or for battle to stop while an impromptu concert was held. Probably the most famous Civil War era song was Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic", which used the tune of the abolitionist song, "John Brown's Body". However, there were many other songs that both sides knew well. In this activity, students will examine lyrics of songs of both sides, and make conclusions about the lyrics.

Teacher Input:

- **Day one:** The teacher will read the background and introduction to the lesson. The teacher will hand out a copy of the Northern version of the *Battle Cry of Freedom* for each student (Appendix I). Teacher will assign cooperative groups of three or four members. Teacher will hand out one copy per group of the Word Tournament instructions and bracket sheet (Appendix II). In their cooperative groups the students will read the lyrics of the Northern version and fill out the Word Tournament brackets. The group will discuss and decide together the eight words to use and the ultimate winning word. A spokesperson from each group will defend the group choice to the class. Teacher will take a few minutes to summarize the groups' findings. If time allows the teacher will hand out the lyrics for the Southern version of the song (Appendix III) and the groups will repeat the process for the Word Tournament (Appendix II).
- **Day two:** Individually students will answer the five comparison questions (Appendix IV) about the two versions of the *Battle Cry of Freedom*. The students will then return to their cooperative groups and together create new lyrics to an existing song showing support for either the Northern or Southern cause in the Civil War.
- **Day three:** If needed, students will complete their lyrics and if they so choose, perform the song before the class. The cooperative groups will discuss their new lyrics and tell how it defends their position on the Civil War.

Activities:

- Cooperative group Word Tournament for the Northern Version of the *Battle Cry of Freedom*.
- Group choices for winning word.

- **Cooperative group Word Tournament for the Southern Version of the *Battle Cry of Freedom*.**
- **Group choices for winning word.**
- **Individual answer 5 comparison questions**
- **Cooperative group new song lyrics**

Closure:

- **If students wish, let them perform their new songs in class.**
- **Discuss what war songs would be like today about the war in Iraq.**

Extension:

- **Analyze other Civil War songs and their impact on the soldiers and civilians.**

Instructions to Word Tournament (Appendix II)

1. Complete the reading assignment
2. Use word comprehension strategies assigned by your teacher.
3. Select what you (your pair or your group) consider the eight (8) most important terms in the reading assignment.
4. Copy those terms into the numbered spaces in the order they appear in the reading or word identification assignment.
5. Compare each pair of words (connected). Decide which of the pair is more important and copy it to the next space to the right.
6. Compare each new pair of words in the same manner until only one word appears to the right most space. That is the winning word.
7. Defend your choice orally to the class why that word is the most important in the reading assignment.

(Appendix I)
THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM
(Northern Version)

Oh, we'll rally 'round the flag, boys,
we'll rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom
We will rally from the hillside,
we'll gather from the plain,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

Chorus:

The Union forever, hurrah, boys, hurrah!
Down with the traitor, up with the star,
While we rally 'round the flag, boys, rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

We are springing to the call
of our brothers gone before,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom,
And we'll fill the vacant ranks
with a million free men more,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

Repeat Chorus

We will welcome to our numbers
the loyal true and brave,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom
And although they may be poor
not a man shall be a slave,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

Repeat Chorus

So we're springing to the call
from the East and from the West,
Shouting the battle call of freedom
And we'll hurl the Rebel crew
from the land we love the best,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

(Appendix III)

THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM

Music by George F. Root

(1820-1895)

Our flag is proudly floating
On the land and on the main,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!
Beneath it oft we've conquered,
And we'll conquer oft again!
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!

CHORUS:Our Dixie forever!
She's never at a loss!
Down with the eagle
And up with the cross!
We'll rally 'round the bonny flag,
We'll rally once again,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!

Our gallant boys have marched
To the rolling of the drums,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!
And the leaders in charge cry out,
"Come, boys, come!"
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!--**CHORUS**

They have laid down their lives
On the bloody battle field,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!
Their motto is resistance --
"To tyrants we'll not yield!"
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!--**CHORUS**

While our boys have responded
And to the fields have gone,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!
Our noble women also
Have aided them at home,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!--**CHORUS**

(Appendix IV)
Question Sheet for Civil War Music
(for student distribution)

Compare the lyrics for " Battle Cry of Freedom", and answer the following questions.

1. In the first stanzas of the two versions of the song, what seems to be the main difference between them?

2. What does the Southern version mean by "Down with the Eagle, And Up with the Cross"?

3. Summarize the meaning of the third stanza of the Northern version of the song, which begins, "*We will welcome to our numbers...*"

4. How do you think the Southern version of the song symbolizes the Confederate cause?

5. How do you think the Northern version of the song symbolizes the Union cause?

(Appendix V)

Question Sheet for Civil War Music

(With possible answers)

Compare the lyrics for "Battle Cry of Freedom", and answer the following questions.

1. In the first stanzas of the two versions of the song, what seems to be the main difference between them?

[The Southern version of the song seems to infer that the Confederates have taken the offense to advance their cause ("Beneath it oft we've conquered, And we'll conquer oft again!") The Union version seems to be more peaceful... the use of the word "rally" compared to conquer, gathering, etc.]

2. What does the Southern version mean by "Down with the Eagle, And Up with the Cross"?

[Some Southern flags had crosses on them, or it may mean they wanted to support the "Stars and Bars" of the Confederacy over the American Eagle.]

3. Summarize the meaning of the third stanza of the Northern version of the song, which begins, "*We will welcome to our numbers...*"

[This stanza seems to equate the fight between north and south to the issue of slavery, especially when the author notes, "*not a man shall be a slave, shouting the battle cry of Freedom.*"]

4. How do you think the Southern version of the song symbolizes the Confederate cause?

[Answers vary. At several points in the song, the lyrics promote the Southern idea, such as "Down with the eagle, up with the cross", "rally round the bonny flag", as well as "their motto is resistance—to tyrants we'll not yield..."]

5. How do you think the Northern version of the song symbolizes the Union cause?

[Answers vary. At several points in the song, the lyrics promote the Northern cause, such as "The Union Forever..." "Not a man shall be a slave..." "From the East to the West", "We'll hurl the rebel crew from the land that we love best..."]