

## Civil War Border States

Lesson Designed by: Brian Swink  
Eugene Field Elementary  
Fourth Grade  
July 2007

### **Teaching Traditional American History Program**

Funded by U.S. Department of Education

Mike Lair, Project Director

<http://www.chillihistoryproject.com/>

Lesson Overview: When states began to secede from the union in 1861, four states were caught in the middle. The border states were a region important to both sides for the manpower they could provide to the armies, the transportation routes within their borders and their proximity to the enemy for launching invasions.

#### Essential Questions:

1. What were border states?
2. Which states were border states in the American Civil War

Objectives: After completing this lesson the student will be able to:

- Explain Missouri's role in the Civil War, i.e., Missouri as a border state  
SS 2a Level 4

Assessment: Take 1863 map of the United and Confederate States of America and color border states. (Visual 2)

*Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware.*

Did Missouri have a large number of slave holders?

*No, Missouri had a small number of slave holders. They were mainly located along the Missouri River where farm land had richer soil. Since the rest of Missouri soil couldn't support big staple crops like cotton, there weren't as many southern sympathizers living here.*

## Materials:

- Reading A-Z subscription (Optional)  
This site offers printable books for reading instruction that also works well for introducing social studies topics. “Sally’s Secret Ambition” and “Abraham Lincoln, from Lob Cabin to White House” both do a great job of introducing the concept of civil war and border states.
- Map of Border States (Visual 1)
- Blank map of border states (Visual 2)
- Internet Access and video viewing equipment
- Photo of Missouri Slave Holding (Visual 3)

Class Time: 40 minutes

## Teacher Input:

1. Begin by reading aloud or together any books that can give background to what the American Civil War was about. Suggestions have been listed in the materials section of this lesson.
2. Show border states map (Visual 2)
3. Share information on the border states. The following information comes from The Everything Civil War Book by Donald Vaughan.

Border states were cautious after the first states left the union. Slavery was still legal in all four border states, just as it was in some of the north. The proportion of slaves and slave owners was less than half of the deep south.

Delaware: Voted quickly to remain in the United States

Maryland: In the beginning this state was favoring the confederacy. This would have been scary since the state surrounds the District of Columbia, our nation’s capitol. When soldiers were passing through the state from Ft. Sumter (the start of the war) they were harrassed and threatened by local citizens. At this Baltimore riot soldiers fired blindly and killed several Maryland citizens. It was agreed that no more federal troops would go through the state. When the confederates began to destroy railroad bridges, soldiers did come back and then held the state for the remainder of the war.

Missouri: Governor Claiborne Jackson was upset when the Missouri Legislature rejected joining the Confederacy. He pleaded Confederate President Jefferson Davis to take the federal arsenal in St. Louis. Jackson sent Missouri State Guard to take it, and Nathaniel Lyon stopped them with a part of the federal army. Jackson moved the state government to Neosho and declared Missouri a Confederate State. The

true government in Jefferson City did not follow and declared Missouri to be Northern. In another measure to take the state, Lyon drove back confederate troops at Wilson's Creek but lost his life. He stalled the southern army just enough for reinforcements to arrive and keep the state for the United States.

Kentucky: Voted to remain neutral. This was viewed as very close to secession, since they didn't outright say the southern states were wrong, but they wanted to protect everything in their state from both sides.

4. Share picture of Missouri slave holder regions (Visual 3) Ask students why they think most slaves are concentrated along the rivers.

#### Activities:

1. Color Northern states Blue, Confederate states Red and Border states yellow on a copy of Visual 2.

#### Questions for review:

Why were border states important to the United States and the Confederate States?

Which states were considered border states? Why?

#### Closure:

Take a sheet of paper. Down the right margin write Missouri. Down the left margin write Kentucky. Across the top margin write Delaware. Across the bottom margin write Maryland. This creates a picture frame. Ask students to draw in the center pictures to explain what they learned about these four states in the Civil War. Give students time to find a partner and explain what their pictures mean.

#### Extension:

1. Have students research Missouri during the civil war for more information.
2. Study the Battle of Wilson's Creek or the Battle of Lexington to know more about the biggest battles in the states borders. Reenact the battle on the playground.
3. Plan a field trip to either Wilson's Creek or Lexington in Missouri to step on a battle field.

Visual 1 – The United States of America during the Civil War (1861-1865)



Visual 2



