Through The Eyes of The Blue and The Gray

Civil War Perspectives

written and illustrated by Ms. Burke’s 5th Graders

Stony Point Elementary School
December 2005
We dedicate this book to Miss Burke, who is a fantastic social studies teacher, taught us about the Civil War, helped us with this project and we wouldn’t be learning so much without her.
How It Happened!

As Virginian 5th graders, we were studying the brutal, yet interesting Civil War. As a result, we did a project on it. Each individual chose a man or woman that played a role in the American Civil War. We studied what that person did, what they believed and other interesting information. We wrote a letter, in their perspective to a close friend or relative about what was happening to them at that time and how they felt.

Once we finished writing and editing, we drew sketches of what our person would see during the Civil War era. After we finished four sketches, we chose our favorite one. Next, we looked in books to see what it would have really looked like at that time. Then we started our final drawing. We used normal pencils very lightly to get the general idea of what it would look like. Then we colored it in with colored pencils. We layered (using different shades of similar colors to make it stand out) and burnished our picture to give it a waxy, glazed look.

When we finished our picture, we typed our letter, adding to it and improving it. We printed that out and crumpled it up to make it look like a really old letter from the Civil War. We took our letter and drawing and glued them to blue (Union) and gray (Confederate) pieces of construction paper, depending on what side of the Civil War your person was on.

This project was educational, but at the same time, very enjoyable. Thank you to Miss Burke, Mary Lou and Donna for all of your help and support. We hope you enjoy our book.

By Reagan Palmer
and
Adriel Barrett- Johnson
The Valley of the Shadow
University of Virginia

Civil War Database

The Valley Project details life in two American communities, one Northern and one Southern, from the time of John Brown’s Raid through the era of Reconstruction. In this digital archive you may explore thousands of original letters and diaries, newspapers and speeches, census and church records, left by men and women in Augusta County, Virginia, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Giving voice to hundreds of individual people, the Valley Project tells forgotten stories of life during the era of the Civil War.

http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/
June 16, 1864

Dear Cousin Alex,

My world has changed, we are right in the middle of a war. Everyday so far there has been bad shelling, but today however is quiet calm. We have to go to the cellar, I don’t like to go in the cellar because it’s cold down there. There have been bodies scattered everywhere. Cousin Henry got wounded and we are afraid he won’t make it past today. The Yankees keep coming and taking peoples’ pigs and mules. Every time I look outside I see Yankees taking over our land. I wish I could go outside to walk around, but mother says it’ll be too risky. I saw uncle’s house burning down, if anyone was in there they could’ve gotten hurt. He said he was going to build another house. Mother was right, it is too risky.

We have to sew and knit our own clothes because we are afraid to go to the store. I started knitting some stockings for school. I hope I can get them done soon. Mother has been helping me sew doll clothes for my little sister, so she has something to do. Aunt Healy came over with some new materials, it felt almost like Christmas. This Christmas I hope there will be peace in our land, so we can have a big celebration.

Love,
Carrie Berry

Autumn
May 4, 1863

Dear President Davis,

The fight in Chancellorsville has been taking riskful turns, although it appears to be in our favor despite enormous odds. The shrill, eerie sounds of bullets are frequently heard throughout the region; occasionally followed by an eerier-yet cry of vile anger. Although the Union forces are overflowing with damnable determination to crush us, it truly seems as though our forces are far more of a danger to themselves. Two days ago, on the second of May, Lt. General Jackson was shot by one of the troops of the 18th North Carolina Infantry regiment leaving him temporarily out of action. He was transported to a nearby field hospital, near Guiney Station, Virginia where he underwent amputation.

Although many have died, explosions from cannons grimly rattle the ground and the conditions of weather can weaken us, nothing could be more disheartening than the loss of my dear friend Stonewall Jackson.

Sincerely,
Robert E Lee

Douglas
August 27, 1867

Dear Butch,

I was a photographer during the Civil War. I lived in New York City and Washington D.C. I took pictures of battles and of dead people. I also had other photographers that took pictures for me. I said, “No one will ever know what I went through to secure those negatives. The world can never appreciate it. It changed the whole course of my life.” It also changed everyone else’s life. I love to take pictures. I am including one of my favorite pictures of a ship in the Civil War. I hope you like it.

Your son,
Mathew Brady

Eddie
October 31, 1869

Dear Best Friend Devin,

I know it’s been a long time since I’ve written to you, but I served in the Civil War. We attacked Fort Sumter and wanted them to surrender. They had a new supply of ammunition, so they had the advantage. They had cannons and cannon balls. We were onboard a ship. The cannons kept hitting the ships and many people drowned. It was hard, but our victory was complete. It was under Almighty God, plus the skill and resolution of General Beauregard that we made it through. I also owed thanks to the courage and unyielding firmness of our patriotic volunteers. Hope to see you soon!

Your friend,
Joseph

Ellie
April 10, 1864
Sharpsburg, MD

Dear Lovely Wife,

I miss you terribly, but I felt honored to lead our troops. My men have been extremely brave. I was so honored when Robert E. Lee surrendered to me at Appomattox Court House. There is talk of me running for president in a few months. This would be another great honor.

Do you remember when I almost had to change my name? I decided to not attend West Point, because I really did not want to change my name, so I am still your Ulysses. All of my love and take care.

Best wishes,
Ulysses

Emily
Dear Sister,

The war is a cold cruel place. There is little to eat, and it been very cold and we’ve had a very hard winter. How are mother and the farm doing? I’m doing fine besides the fact it’s freezing here! We don’t have much of a fire.

I bet the Yankees have it good with a big fire and a lot of food. I’m not complaining. At least I have some food and shelter. We’ve been marching somewhere around Staunton, and we’ve lost a lot of soldiers! Some died from the cold and the Yankees shot the others!

Your brother,
/ Michael Reid Hanger
/ M. R. H

Ian
April 2, 1865

Dear Colin,

As president of the United States of America I’m writing to invite you to Ford Theater. We will see a play to celebrate the Union victory over the Confederate army in the Civil War. I have been celebrating for the two days, but I know we have a lot of work ahead. I will meet you at Ford Theater on April 3rd at 5:30pm. I’m looking forward to seeing you. I think the play going to be really good.

Sincerely,
Abraham Lincoln

Jacob
October, 1862

Dear Jamal,

I’m doing fine and the war is going great. I took part in the first battle of Manassas. It was so distinguishing for me that general J.E.B Stuart recommended that I form and lead a six-gun battery of artillery. We are moving with the Calvary towards more than 60 battles. I displayed genius by sizing up the situation at a glance and I dashing to a spot that commanded the battle field.

Sincerely,
John Pelham

Jamal
May 13, 1865

Dear Ninnie,

I feel so miserable. The Civil War is truly a terrible war. During the war the dreadful Southerners scorned me as a traitor and other citizens loyal to the Union suspected me of treason! When I was entertaining, critics accused me of unpatriotic extravagance. As you know, my husband, Abraham, was assassinated. I don’t know who killed my husband, but whoever did is a dreadful person. When Abraham was killed, nobody saw who pulled the cruel trick. I feel so heartbroken. Tad is also very distraught. I hope you don’t mind Tad and I coming to stay with you. Tad and I are so lonely right now we don’t know what to do. See you soon.

Your sister,

Mary Todd Lincoln

Nicole
August 14, 1861

Dear Joseph,

How are you and mother? I’m working in a Union hospital at the time. We have at least 10 men in here every day! Why won’t the Rebels just free the slaves? This war could end right now, but no. The Rebels want “state’s rights”. So do I, but our country would be just fine with federal rights, too. The tent I stay in is not top quality, like we deserve. It is small, green, and crowded. No need to complain, but still I wish they would take some of their money and make some improvements. Well, the nurses need me. Goodbye.

Your loving daughter,

Dorothea

Reagan
Dear Reid,

The war is going great, except it is so bloody and it seems to be all about killing. I heard that you drew a picture of me. Well, we are continuing a battle that doesn’t have a name yet, but I’m positive that we will be calling it the 7 day battle, because it has been going on for 7 days and it is almost over! I’ve got to go get ready. Write me back and tell me how the picture is coming. I am eager to know.

Sincerely,
General Nathan Bedford Forrest

Reid
June, 1864

Dear Lauren,

Sorry I have not written in a long time. The south is taking over my town because Samuel and the guys are not here. Samuel is at war and so are the other men. I have one child that I have to take care of. I also forgot to tell you that Samuel is my husband. My child is three years old and I have to take care of her in this mess. The Civil War is a very powerful war. It is a big war too. The battles are very close to my house and the gun shots terrify my little girl!

Your Friend,
Rachel Cormanay

Taylor
January 1, 1851

Dear Mother,

I miss you so much! How are you? I pray for your health every day. I am currently leading a group of people (African-Americans) north. There are 6 of them (they're a family.) The mother is named Lydia, the fathers' name is David. They have 3 girls and a boy, Emily (14), Grace (11), Eve (7), and Mark (3). Mark gives me a hard time sometimes. He wants to play with his old friends and toys. Emily helps out a lot with him, especially at night when we’re running. We have a hard time at night because the mastiffs are out and looking for us.

We are nearly to the next safe-house! I think that maybe tomorrow evening we will reach it. I can’t wait to wash my hair and have a bath. I need new clothes, too. This old dress is way too small.

The last safe house we were at was two weeks ago. There was a couple there, they were poor though. They only had a few spare clothes in my size. There were quite a lot of children’s clothes though. I’m quite thankful for that, the children really needed them.

Love,
Your Araminta

P.S. I have recently been thinking of changing my name. I haven’t had any fits, or shaking spells lately, which I’m very thankful for. The spells are truly awful. When I shake during the spell, I have no control over myself.
November 18, 1865

Dear Mother,

During my time of Sherman’s March across Georgia, I have witnessed a country side under wrath and desperation. Animals were slaughtered and crops trampled by the Yankees. They tried to starve out the people of the south by destroying their homes. With the abolition of slavery alone, millions and millions worth of property were wiped out completely. I have a lot of pride that I belong to a race which has shown itself capable of rising over such conditions. We overcame the war and the tragedies of those who went down in the struggle, and we came out stronger and wiser for the fight we believed in.

Sincerely,

Eliza Andrews

Ariel
Dear Mother,

Lately, I have not been fighting, but it has still been a hard time. I am vice president and I have been in the White House and Washington, DC most of the war. I am with the Union so I want to get rid of slavery and I think that all African Americans should be free. The Confederate is winning the war right now, but I think that we can come back to victory. The Union and Confederate have not come to Washington D.C. to fight yet.

Ok, Ma’, I’ve got places to go, people to see!

Love your son,

Hanibal

8/21/1862

Ben
June 20, 1864

Dear Father,

The war so far is a success, but the war has dramatically changed since Gettysburg. This war is so dreadful, just watching these young men fall. President Lincoln just passed the Emancipation Proclamation, which you probably know freed the slaves in the north. I’m getting ready to go to a meet with President Lincoln about what to do about the next battle. Father send another letter if you can.

Your son,

George B. McClellan
Dear Granny,

It's been a tough day. Today's battle is over, I think. One of our men is still on guard for any Confederate soldiers. My best friend was wounded. My troop's belongings are all over the ground, this war is very tedious. For every battle I'm the general. I guess I'm the best there is? My friend may not live, even with the care I have been giving him. Other men are coming to our location to help one of our men on guard. Hopefully this war won't go on for much longer. Bam! Bam! Both men that were keeping guard were down. I quickly got up and grabbed the gun that was on the ground. I got behind some stacks of hay, and then I fired. I couldn't believe it, there was too many of them. I looked around to check on my injured friend. He wasn't there. Wish me luck in finding him.

Your Dear Grandson,
Abner Doubleday

Daniel
June 18th, 1863

Dear Family,

How are you? I am well and have had a few close calls. I am very scared, but I can’t run away because, if I did, I would be a coward. Anyway, I just wanted to say that I can’t wait for supper—oh! Here comes General William. He must be tired today because he stayed up ‘til twelve o’clock last night. Well I’ve been called into the battle.

God bless you all,

Ambrose E. Burnside

Ethan
June 2, 1864

Dear John,

Although I am a young man, I have had a hard life. I joined the army, but my mother did not want me to. After a couple of years I became a General of a hundred troops. We burned and destroyed over a dozen houses. We needed the food to survive. We stole all of the horses at every farm that we passed. We killed all of the cows for their meat. I knew it was the right thing to do because we needed all the food we could get. That is all I know right now. Write back.

Your friend,
Beardle

Harrison
June, 1867

Dear Editor,

Here is the information that you asked for to help with your article. The year was 1818 and I was born in Maryland, Virginia. Born into the south, and as a black man, I was forced into slavery. I was abused by my master. Only knowing who my mom was, something was missing, but the only thing I knew about my dad was that he was white. At 8 years old, I was shipped to Baltimore where I learned to read and write, but shipped back at 23. I was put back into slavery, it was hard for me. A few years later, I planned an escape. Then, as soon as the war was over, I made my escape when my master and I went to pick up another slave. I found an abolitionist to help me carry on. I was 29 at the time. I had done it, I was free from everything. Freedom was great, so I decided to help others.

Sincerely,
Frederick Douglas,

James
March 13, 1864
Montgomery County, Maryland

Dear Mother,

I am sorry that I have not written in so long. I have been busy. I was the leader in Washington Society. I was a spy and sent secret messages that helped win the Battle of Bull Run. I went to prison for my efforts. I went to prison at Old Capital Prison. I am writing to you from prison right now, but I am hoping to get out soon.

Your Daughter,
Rose O’Neal

Jaslene
February 19 1861

Dear Mary,

I have been elected president of the confederacy. Today the senate and I discussed a speech I have made. We feel that our cause just and holy; we protest solemnly in the face of mankind that we desire peace at any sacrifice save that of honor and independence; we ask no conquest, no aggrandizement, no concession of any kind from the states. I hope this speech tells the people what we are fighting and persuade more people to join the army to fight Union.

Your brother  
President Jefferson Davis

Joel
Dear Mom,

How are you doing? We just had a battle yesterday and we don’t know of any deaths! We took a day of rest today, which gave me the time to write to you. I’m the only officer in my regiment that is active as of right now. Our sergeant’s horse was shot and it ruined his leg. So, here I am, in my tent that is awash with fine food and my luxurious carpet. I heard Agnes is sick, how is she doing? Commander George B. McClellan left last week on Thursday because of the death of his son. I’ve been using my famous “Kearny Patch” to identify my troops. How is it going at home? How is Dad doing? I guess I’ll write to you soon.

Your Son,
Philip Kearny

John
Dear Jacob,

The Confederate commanders now call me “Stonewall” Jackson because I stood like a “stonewall” against the Union at the Battle of Bull Run. I cradle most of the Union army in my arms because I’m one of the Confederate commanders and we are winning the war right now. I’m coming home soon, isn’t that cool! See you soon.

Best wishes,
Thomas Jackson

October 31, 1862
January 10, 1865

Dear Mother,

I was sold by my master, John Dumont in New York., although in 1828 the state of New York stopped slavery. That was my fourth time being sold. Mother, I prayed everyday for Jesus to help me get out of slavery. Mr. Dumont told me that he would free me the next year, but he never did.

I changed my name to Sojourner Truth, because I started working with the Underground Railroad. I met a handsome young man. His name is Thomas. He was a slave too. I have married that older slave, Thomas. I have 5 kids now. Finally I am free. Mom I love you.

Love your daughter,
Sojourner Truth

Kassandra
Dear Father,

It is your daughter Clara. I was just writing to you about my birthday. Did you forget about it 2 days ago? On December 25, 1821 I was born. It has been hard for me trying to keep care of the soldiers and being a spy for the Union Army. Has the Red Cross been helping you? Are you glad I created it? How is mother been doing in her new job in New York? Does she miss Massachusetts? Well I will be going to Washington D.C. in 3 months to visit the Union soldiers buried there. The South is killing most of our men. I hope it’s not much longer until this war is over.

Sincerely,
Clara Barton
July 26, 1863

Dear Family,

I hope to see you soon. I will be coming home, soon! This war is very frustrating! I have so many jobs that it’s hard to keep up! I’m a nurse, a surgeon, a spy, and guess where I am now? I’m in a Southern prison! I was caught spying on Confederate Soldiers! I’ve been doing surgery on so many captured Union men! Why does the South need slaves anyway? I mean, why can’t they just stop being so lazy and do it themselves?! Well, I have to go. Write back, goodbye!

Sincerely,
Mary

Lauren
July, 1859

‘Dear Mother,

My journey “to abolish slavery,” has been a total destruction for my family! I became an abolitionist, but I am tired of this fighting. An abolitionist is a person who wants to stop slavery. All I wanted was for everyone to be free. Momma, I was fighting in the darkness of the woods. Half of my men died. It was distressing. I was harmed in the raid on Harper’s Ferry. I got shot in the hand. I hate when I see people being treated like slaves. They can’t do what white people can do. They can’t go to the same places or eat what others eat. I’m glad that I’m not a slave. It is hard to be an abolitionist. You have to write letters, you have to fight and so much more. I also just adopted black children. I will try to write again soon.

Your Son,

John Brown

Malik
November 21, 1863

Dear Commander,

We need backup, food, water, ammo, and a new commander because the one we have is crazy! He’s making all of us go over a bridge where the confederates are shooting our army in the head like a target in target practice. Everyone is complaining about the smell of the dead men, gun powder, and the blaring sound of guns going off. The blazing heat from the sun is tiring out our army more and more, and the three day battle is not helping at all.

One of our best soldiers was shot when he was going over the bridge. I rushed over to see if he was still alive.

He hardly had a heart beat, he was going pale and he was coughing up blood. There was blood all over the place.

I was surrounded by Confederate soldiers who said, “Give up now and we might spared your life!” Well, they won’t be shooting us again. I hope you get this letter soon.

Sincerely,
Mike Charlie

Mike
October, 1861

Dear Mamma,

How are you doing? I’ve been doing all right and I’ve been doing all kinds of different jobs. One job was an officer. Now I can’t wait to go back to the South and see you. Since the war is going on, I think you should look around and if you hear a gun shot, hide in the basement. The war is hard, but the good side of it is that I get to see different places. I have had to cuff a lot of bad people like robbers, thieves and killers. Confederates have been burning down buildings, especially in Richmond, because they didn’t want the Union to take stuff from our own Capital. They said “I’d rather us burn it down then for you to take supplies from our Capital.” I hope you get the letter and please be really safe. Write me back if you can and tell my sister hey and my brother and all the rest of the family that I love them.

Sincerely,
Your son, Martin R. Delany

Qualik
Dear Mother,

The war has been tough, as you know. I am scared but yet I am proud to be fighting for the Confederacy. I can’t wait to get home and smell the delicious aroma of your apple pie. But for now I am working hard on my aim. It’s been quite off the last couple weeks. It might be just my gun.

I see nothing but blood, endless blood and gore. It is sad to see all the dead bodies lying on the ground.

Right now I am stationed in northern Alabama. It is surprisingly cold for Alabama. I can’t wait to see you.

Your son,

Thomas.
June 30, 1863

Dear Cousin,

We have gotten at least one good laugh during the Civil War. You know my father has bees, right? One day a Yankee soldier wanted some honey. Obviously he didn’t know anything about bees because he marched right up to a beehive and punched it open. Wasn’t that really stupid of him? When he turned toward us his face was literally black with bees! With a wild yell he tore franticly down the road to the accompaniment of us laughing our heads off. Isn’t that the funniest thing you’ve heard during the Civil War?

Sincerely,
Hattie Brunson

Riley
February 11, 1838

Dear Grandma,

I’ve decided to serve as an army nurse in Knoxville, during the Civil War. I’ve had three husbands, two of them died and one of them I divorced, as you know, considering you were one of the reasons. Anyway, it’s been horrifyingly astonishing, and I mean that in a bad way. As you know, I’ve been working for the Union.

I helped the Union find and kill CSA General John Hutt Morgan; he was hiding behind an old fence, not a very good hiding place I suspect. I agree entirely with the Union, the way that the Confederates treat black people is just astonishing to me, like how they whip them, make them carry things, pull wagons, and they even make sure that the slaves only get a small amount of water and that has to hold them in for the whole day. I’m pretty wealthy right now, especially since I’m working in the war. I treat people with injuries that are fighting in the war. It is not my job to clean up all of the dead bodies.

Sincerely,
Sarah Thompson
June 9, 1861

Dear Family,

Today, I disguised myself as a Union soldier so I could register in the war. I’ve been hearing people say that the war won’t last too long. I was just told that we will attack the Confederates at night. We found a camp where we can stay and sleep. I am scared stiff, and yet I have to do this to win the war. Ironically, now the general wants me to spy on the Confederates, and pretend to be a woman. Wouldn’t he be surprised if he knew I really was a woman. I must be doing a good job trying to be a man. After I’m a spy, I think I’ll become a nurse, although I haven’t met any nurses yet.

I’ve noticed that many soldiers have died. I knew that the Confederates shouldn’t have split from the Union. Farewell everyone.

Best wishes from me,
Sarah

Tara
June 11, 1861

Dear Dad,

My men and I have destroyed and burned all of Georgia. I went to accompany the military governor of California. My men and I went to Atlanta and burned down houses and destroyed Confederate railroads. Flames were on every building in Atlanta and so was smoke. 50 of my men were shot in battle. We retreated back to base and set up camp. The next day, we attacked them at dawn. This time 17 men were shot and our demolition guys set off their bombs. One of my generals was wounded in front of the base. I ran forward towards him. One of the confederate soldiers was still alive and shot me right in the arm. I still went on, but my men took me and the general, to a doctor. Now I’m here writing this letter to let you know I’m OK.

Sincerely,
William T. Sherman

Cory