

RELIVE AMERICA'S PAST

The War Between the States was a pivotal event in our Nation's history. As part of Idlewild's Outdoor Classroom program, your students will experience a day in the life of a Civil War Soldier at our authentic encampment of Union and Confederate re-enactors. Meet members of the Civil War Society of Western Pennsylvania and the Second VA Volunteer Infantry Company B dressed in authentically reproduced uniforms of the Civil War era. Soldiers will interact with your students and participate in Question and Answer sessions informing students about what the Civil War was really like. The encampment will depict a scene of an average day in the life of a soldier with tents, mess area, campfire, and other necessities. It's a unique educational experience your students are sure to remember.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

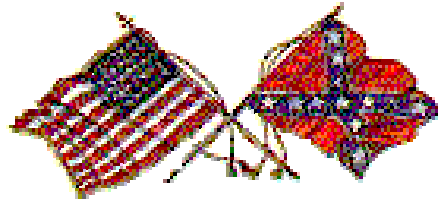
9:30 AM ENCAMPMENT OPEN - ALL DAY

11:00 AM PARADE THROUGH PARK

- SKIRMISHES THROUGHOUT THE DAY -

LIVING HISTORY

FOREWORD TO TEACHERS



LEARNER OBJECTIVES:

Idlewild's Civil War Living History Program is designed for students of all ages. The Civil War brought out many emotions for both the North and South. Friends, families and even states were torn apart. The goal of this program is for students to be able to describe in detail what it was like to be a Confederate or Union soldier. While at the park, students will collect information and record their thoughts and feelings. A letter written from the point of view of either a Union or Confederate soldier is to be completed at home or in the classroom.

PROCESS:

- 1.) Determine if you would like to be a Confederate or Union soldier.
- 2.) Research and participate in Question and Answer sessions at the encampment.
Take notes remembering what you need to include in your letter.
- 3.) Write your rough draft of your letter. Remember, you want the recipient to feel and see what you do as a Confederate or Union soldier.
- 4.) Proofread and revise your letter.
- 5.) Read your letters to each other and participate in a classroom discussion.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS:

Be a War Correspondent: Select one specific battle. Pretend you are a news reporter and submit your report of the event.

Write a Poem or Song: During the Civil War, many soldiers reacted to the events of the war and their own situations by writing poetry and song lyrics. Try your hand at writing a poem or song that reflects the experiences of the day in the life of a Civil War soldier.

Select the Top 10 Events: Identify the ten most important events of the Civil War and create a timeline showing when and where they occurred.

Make a Soldier's Lunch: Experience the same type of meal that Civil War soldiers had. Pack your haversack with hardtack that you bake. In addition, pack some dried beef, salt pork or bacon, rice, sliced carrots, nuts, dried fruit, apples, or peaches and water -Yum! Enjoy your feast with your messmates.



Hardtack

LIVING HISTORY

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT

What was a soldier's life like during the Civil War?

Imagine if you will, living on raw, green corn day after day; traveling on crusted snow with bare feet; not seeing your loved ones or friends for months, possibly years. And, doing so willingly, because of love of state or your sense of duty! Such was the life of an American Civil War soldier.



*Washington City, D.C.
Sunday, Dec. 14th 1862*

*Dear Mother and Family,
will take the pensil to let you know
e are all well . . .*

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:

After visiting the Living History encampment and talking to the re-enactors, you now realize that the life of a soldier was not an easy one.

Your assignment is to write a fictional letter from the point of view of either a Union or Confederate soldier. Your letter should identify who you are. It should be dated and can be written to parents, spouses or friends. To demonstrate an understanding of what life was like as a soldier, you should include as much detail as possible, describing how you feel and what you are going through. Try to include in your letter some Civil War terms, slang and phrases listed on the attached "student information" page.

LETTERS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Are you a Union or Confederate soldier?

- Who is your leader(s)?
- How many soldiers are in your unit?
- What battle(s) are you fighting in?
- What does your uniform look like?
- What kind of weapons are you using?

2. Describe your living conditions:

- How do you spend your time?
- What do you eat?
- Where do you sleep?

3. Explain your feelings about the war:

- Do you agree or disagree about the cause of the battle you are fighting?

REFLECTIONS:

Read your letters to each other and think about the following questions for discussion.

- If you could have chosen sides, which one would you have chosen and why?
- Do you think that we are a stronger nation for going through this turmoil and this war? If so, why?

LIVING HISTORY

STUDENT INFORMATION



LET'S GET READY. . .

THE BASICS

In the United States, the Civil War was between the Confederacy, or southern states, and the Union, or northern states. The U.S. Civil War is also known as the War Between the States and the War of Secession. It began April 12, 1861, when Southern troops opened fire on Fort Sumter, a U.S. military post in Charleston, S.C. More Americans were killed in the Civil War than any other war in history. The number that is most often quoted is 620,000. At any rate, the casualties exceed our nation's loss in all its other wars, from the Revolution through Vietnam. The war divided the people of the United States; in some families brother fought against brother, father against son. The war ended four years later on April 9, 1865, when Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

SOME BACKGROUND

Soldiers wrote many letters during the war. Letter writing was the main form of communication with loved ones at home and letter writing helped to relieve boredom.

Soldiers had to purchase paper and pens to write their letters and also purchase stamps. Later in the war, organizations gave out paper and envelopes to the soldiers free of charge. In 1864, the U.S. Mail Service announced that Union soldiers could send their letters home for free as long as they wrote "*Soldier's Letter*" on the outside of the envelope. The Confederates never had such a luxury and shortages in paper, stamps, and even writing utensils were hard to come by as the war progressed.

Many soldiers only had an education up to the fourth grade. Many had never attended school and could neither read nor write. Still, everyone tried to write letters and made every effort to describe their experiences, give their opinions, and to assure their families not to worry. Sometimes soldiers described battles, but more often they wrote about their daily existence and desire to be at home. Not all soldiers could write very well or spell words properly. Many spelled words as they heard them – "raison" for reason, "horspittle" for hospital, "rafel" for rifle. Just for fun, try including a few in your letter.

LIVING HISTORY

STUDENT INFORMATION

Terminology, Soldier Talk & Civil War Slang

The Civil War soldier had a wide variety of names for different army items and many slang terms or nicknames for their equipment, experiences, and other soldiers. Many of these expressions were based on military terms and lighthearted humor and can still be found in our everyday language. The terms, slang and phrases listed are only a sampling. Try to include a few in your letter or use them when talking with our re-enactors.

accoutrements: *A soldier's fighting equipments, made of leather.*

a beat: *A lazy soldier who dodges work.*

battery: *Usually, six guns, each attached to a limber(a two wheel ammo chest), drawn by three pairs of horses in tandem. A Standard battery consisted of 155 men with various jobs to perform.*

buck and gag: *A form of punishment where the soldier sat on the ground, and had his hands and feet bound. His knees were drawn up between his arms and a rod inserted under the knees and over the arms. The offending soldier was normally placed in full view of the command and had to endure this punishment for hours. It was normally use for shirkers, stragglers and drunkards.*

bummers: *The term applies to foraging or marauding soldiers in the war. Military rules often disallowed foraging but when allowed, supposedly, had strict rules. A discreet officer was placed in charge; soldiers could not use threatening or abusive language; they could not trespass in a private dwelling and must leave enough for family subsistence.*

butternut: *Many soldiers of the Confederacy wore uniforms colored a yellowish-brown by dye made of copperas and walnut hulls. The term later became a synonym for the soldier.*

cummutation: *A legalized form of evading the draft during the Civil War. The "commutation fee," normally about \$500 allowed one to avoid military service altogether.*

company: *Normally consisted of any unit of 50-100 men, commanded by a Captain. 10 of these generally made up a regiment. Companies had 4 squads made up of a sergeant or corporal.*

coup de main: *A French term used by both North and South, meaning a quick, vigorous attack that surprises the enemy.*

digs: *Camp*

dogrobbler: *The soldier of a group who cooked for everyone else.*

dog tent: *A small, two-man tent.*

engagement: *Term used to employ combat of different scales. In descending order: battle, engagement, skirmish, action and affairs.*

first rate: *Feeling well and very happy.*

forage: *To search for food from nearby farms.*

fresh fish: *New recruits.*

furlough: *Any leave granted to a soldier by his superior. A soldier on furlough left his arms and accoutrements behind. He carried furlough papers detailing his leave dates, assignment and return to duty date. Since photos were noticeably absent, such furlough papers gave a physical description of the man.*

grab a root: *Phrase meaning to help oneself to some vegetables.*

graybacks: *Slang term for Confederate soldier or Confederate dollar.*

greenbacks: *Money or script.*

gum blanket: *Rubber-coated cloth sheet used as a rain cover.*

hardtack: *A cracker made of flour, vegetable fat, water and salt. It was a staple of northern and southern soldiers alike. There were a number of ways to eat them; plain or prepared with other ration items. Soldiers would crumble them into coffee or soften them in water and fry the hardtack with some bacon grease. Soldiers were usually allowed six to eight crackers for a three-day ration.*

haversack: *Cloth bag for carrying rations, utensils and personal items. Officers sometimes had theirs made out of leather.*

housewife: *A sewing kit.*

horse sense: *Smart or to use good sense.*

impressment: *A Southern enactment, allowing the Confederacy and state governments to seize property, horses, food, clothing, etc. for the benefit of the war.*

Johnny: *Union soldier's terms for a confederate soldier.*

Jonah: *A soldier who always brought misfortune and bad luck with him.*

paper collar man: *Someone who has money or is financially well off.*

parole: *Prisoners took an oath not to fight anymore and were released to their prospective commands.*

picket: *A guard or guard duty.*

rations: *The daily allowance of food issued to soldiers. Everything was given out uncooked so the soldiers were left up to their own ingenuity to prepare their meals.*

rifle pit: *A semi-shallow pit, built from earth which sheltered the common soldier against attack. It was often described as a Civil War soldier's foxhole.*

running the guard: *A Civil War term for desertion. Also known as "flanking the sentinel."*

sacred soil: *Virginia mud.*

sawbones: *The surgeon of the regiment.*

seeing the elephant: *A man's first experience in combat.*

shebang: *A temporary shelter of poles & branches.*

shirker: *A soldier who would not do his duty on the battlefield.*

skillygallee: *A common and easily prepared meal made with salted pork fried with hardtack crumbled into the mixture.*

sutlers: *Civilian businessmen, appointed by the service to be camp vendors. They often inflated prices and extended credit making themselves wealthy.*

the boys: *Fellow soldiers.*

tough as a knot: *In good health.*

unreconstructed: *Unrepentant, bitter, former Confederate veterans who refused to accept defeat.*

vittles: *Food or rations.*

Yank: *Confederate soldier's term for a Union soldier.*



**NOT FOR FAME, NOT FOR PLACE OR RANK,
NOT LURED BY AMBITION OR GOADED BY NECESSITY;
BUT IN SIMPLE OBEDIENCE TO DUTY
AS THEY UNDERSTOOD IT
THESE MEN SUFFERED ALL, SACRIFICED ALL, DARED ALL
AND DIED**

