

# Civil War Era in North Dakota

## Getting Started

### ABOUT THE LESSONS

The North Dakota Studies program at the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) has developed three lessons to teach about the Civil War Era in North Dakota. These lessons will prepare the students to engage in discussions, debates, research, or writing assignments using primary documents, photographs and maps. High school or 8th grade teachers may find these lessons useful in courses on the Civil War, U.S. History, or North Dakota history. There are materials in these lessons that supplement social studies courses including geography and political science.

#### LESSON 1: The Civil War Era in Dakota Territory

These lessons, delivered in brief, integrated portions, will set the background for this time period. Students will study the process of creating a new civil government in Creating the Territory. The lessons on Military Conflict and Resolution include historical reading, documents, maps, and images for Sibley and Sully Expeditions, Whitestone Hill Massacre, the Battle of Killdeer Mountain, the siege at Fort Dilts, and the building of Fort Rice. Students will also study how federal laws such as the Pacific Railroad Act, Homestead Act, and the Morrill Land Grant Act affected the territory. Activities include analysis of events and debates on issues of that day and perspectives for young historians to consider.

#### LESSON 2: Leaders in Dakota Territory

These short biographies of historical actors include Sitting Bull, Bear's Heart, Inkpaduta, Fanny Kelly, George Northrup, Jerome King, Governor Newton Edmunds, and Generals Pope, Sibley and Sully. Activities lead students to a deeper understanding of history through discussion, writing, and data analysis.

#### LESSON 3: Commemorating the Civil War

The state, many cities, and fraternal organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic and the Masons created memorials to the war and the men who fought in it. Activities encourage students to leave the classroom and explore commemoration in their community or region.

## **NORTH DAKOTA**

### **CONTENT STANDARDS**

#### Grade 8 Social Studies

##### Standard 1: Skills and Resources

###### 8.1.1

Interpret current North Dakota thematic maps (e.g., soils, climate, vegetation, water, climate) to identify where people live and work, and how land is used

###### 8.1.2

Use various primary and secondary resources (e.g., historical maps, diaries, speeches, photos, charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines specific to North Dakota) to analyze, and interpret information.

##### Standard 2: Important Historical Events

###### 8.2.7

Explain the course and consequences of the Civil War (e.g., contributions of key individuals, key battles)

###### 8.2.10

Analyze the rationale for western expansion and how it affected minorities (e.g. reservations, Indian Removal Act, treaties, Chinese Exclusion Act, Manifest Destiny, Pacific Railway Act, Morrill Land Grant Act, Homestead Act)

###### 8.2.11

Explain the significance of key events (e.g., settlement and homesteading, statehood, reservations) and people in North Dakota and tribal history

##### Standard 3: Economic Concepts

###### 8.3.2

Describe how technological advances (e.g., cotton gin, steel plow, McCormick reaper, steamboat, steam locomotives) and industrialization impacted regions of the United States prior to the Civil War.

##### Standard 5: Concepts of Geography

###### 8.5.2

Describe the characteristics, distribution, and effects of human migration within the United States during different time periods (e.g., Westward Expansion, post Civil War, Industrialization, urbanization)

###### 8.5.3

Compare human characteristics (e.g., population distribution, land use) of places and regions (i.e. North Dakota)

##### Standard 6: Human Development and Behavior

###### 8.6.2

Explain how culture influences gender roles, ethics, and beliefs

#### Grades 9-12 Social Studies

##### Standard 1: Skills and Resources

###### 9-12.1.1

Interpret and evaluate a variety of visual representations (e.g. charts, graphs, time lines, graphic organizers, maps, flow charts) of data

9-12.1.2

Interpret and evaluate primary documents to enhance the understanding of social studies content.

9-12.1.3

Draw conclusions based on the research processes (e.g., collect, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information)

9-12.1.6

Analyze the impact of bias and prejudice in historical and contemporary media

Standard 2: Important Historical Events

9-12.2.1

Analyze Federal policy and action regarding American Indians (e.g. Dawes Act, changes in federal and state Indian policies, civil rights movement; current issues surrounding gaming, housing, distribution of wealth, and healthcare, Indian Reorganization Act, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Civil Rights Act, Indian Child Welfare Act, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, Citizenship, American Indian Movement)

Standard 4: Government and Citizenship

9-12.4.1

Explain how political and economic forces have affected the sovereignty of tribal nations (e.g., constitutional provisions; Supreme Court cases; laws used in forming the basis of the federal-tribal relationship including the Pacific Railway Act, Morrill Land Grant Act, Homestead Act; political and economic forces affecting sovereignty of tribal nations)

9-12.4.3

Analyze the content and context of documents, events, and organizations that influenced and established the United States

Standard 5: Concepts of Geography

9-12.5.1

Analyze the Earth's human systems (e.g., population, culture, settlement, economic interdependence)

9-12.5.2

Interpret the relationships between physical environments and society (e.g., humans modify environment, environment modifies society, and use, distribution, and importance of resources)

Standard 6: Human Development and Behavior

9-12.6.1

Explain how group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior (e.g., religion, education, media, government, and economy)

9-12.6.4

Analyze conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions (e.g., gender roles, social stratification, racial/ethnic bias)

## **USING PRIMARY DOCUMENTS TO TEACH HISTORY**

The use of primary source documents has become a standard practice in teaching history at every level. Government documents, letters, diaries, photographs, and maps help to bring history alive for students. Students begin to understand how ordinary people lived their lives, how societies organized, how government works, what families were like, and how history was, and is, recorded. Students learn that the recording of history, as well as the writing of secondary resources such as textbooks, is subjective. Every person who writes a diary, a newspaper article, or a letter imprints the document with their personal outlook. Years later, when historians (or student historians) read those documents, they interpret them in light of their own experience and knowledge. When students work with primary sources, they come to understand the importance of point of view, or historical perspective, and how that shapes what we know of the past and our own present.

Reading primary resources also introduces students to the important intellectual activity of document analysis. Students will learn to order events chronologically, evaluate the relative importance of the known facts, and draw conclusions. They will become close observers of the images and documents, and learn to question the documents for more information. These are the processes that every historian uses to write history. Students who engage in these activities will be growing in analytical or critical thinking skills. These skills prepare them for advanced history courses, other academic subjects, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

By using primary sources in the classroom, students become historians. Primary sources can trigger students' curiosity about historical events that can lead to further investigation. Their views become important as they become more knowledgeable about historic events. Students become participants in the process of understanding, interpreting, and writing history.

## TEACHING THE CIVIL WAR ERA

The Civil War Sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) is under way. This anniversary will celebrate heroism and the power of principled stands on political and moral issues. It will also remind us of the horrific human cost of the war (more than 600,000 dead), the evils of slavery, and the difficult and delicate processes required of a functional democracy.

In North Dakota we need to be mindful of the sesquicentennial of the flight of the Santee Dakota from Minnesota into northern Dakota Territory (1862), the Battle of Whitestone Hill (1863), the Battle of Killdeer Mountain and the subsequent skirmishes in the Badlands (1864), the establishment of Fort Rice (1864), and the events that led to the siege at Fort Dilts (1864). The causes and effects of these events are just as complex, just as morally and politically trying as those concerning the conflict over the preservation of the Union.

Compared to the bloody battles at Civil War sites such as The Wilderness and Gettysburg, battles on the northern Great Plains might seem inconsequential. The generals fighting the war in the states thought the expeditions against the Indians were of little consequence and drained money and manpower from the Union Army. Some Union leaders suspected that Confederate agents were behind Indian hostilities.

Today historians see great significance for the Civil War battles on the Northern Plains. These battles laid the foundation for conflict in the West for the next twenty-five years. American citizens were determined to hold onto their long-standing tradition of westward migration. Indians were determined to hold onto their long-standing traditions of living, hunting, and migrating throughout the Plains. War was not inevitable, but it was likely given the potent blend of conflicting world views of Indians and Anglo-Americans, gold discoveries in Idaho and Montana, shifting federal policy, corrupt agents, broken treaties, and loss of land and lives.

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The Civil War Era in North Dakota lessons were researched and written by Dr. Barbara Handy-Marchello. Dr. Handy-Marchello retired from the University of North Dakota, as an associate professor of history in 2006.

In a recent interview about her work as a teacher and historian, Dr. Handy-Marchello spoke of her belief that for history to be important, it needs to be important to everyone, not just historians. Too often history is seen as a list of facts to memorize, but is really more like a detective story. Teaching how to find and analyze historical clues, especially in the original materials, creates more interested and knowledgeable students and better citizens. This was the approach Dr. Handy-Marchello used in her classes, and which she has tried to model with these three Civil War Era in North Dakota lessons.

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