

Susan Price
Dandridge Elementary School
Dandridge, TN

Unit: Civil War

Lesson Title: Using Drummer Boy of Shiloh Sheet Music

Grade Level: 5th grade

Era: 5- Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Lesson Time: one class period

Curriculum Standards:

5.51- Interpret section differences in the North and South

5.52- Recognize military and nonmilitary leaders from the North and South during the Civil War

5.53-Interpret timelines that depict major historical (i. e. clothing, music or radio sales).

Materials Used:

Copies of song or overhead transparency of The Drummer Boy of Shiloh available on Volunteer Voices website: <http://idserver.utk.edu/?id=200800000001488>

May also use p. 47-55 of the book Connecting Children with Children-Past and Present by Eula T. Fresch

Lesson:

After discussing the Civil War, the teacher will focus on:

- The role of the drummer boys. These boys were usually too young to be accepted as soldiers, but held the job of alerting the troops through different drum rhythms.
- Students may discuss what the drummer boys did and whether or not they would feel strongly enough about the war to join in the battle as a drummer boy. After discussing the pros and cons of being a drummer boy versus staying home and helping out, the students will discuss the dangers facing drummer boys.
- The teacher will distribute copies of the song “The Drummer Boy of Shiloh” and also show pictures of drummer boys from Civil War websites. If possible, the teacher will play the music file for this song. The class will discuss the theme of the song and whether the lyrics were supportive of the war.
- Songs from this era are typically dramatic and focus on the afterlife and a wish to see “mother” I heaven. There was also a religious aspect to many of the songs along with patriotic sentiments.
- Older students might compare this song of war to other songs from different war eras (World War II, Vietnam, etc.)
- Students will discuss whether this song accurately represented the death of a drummer boy or might have exaggerated some details for artistic reasons.

Assessment: Students will write a one-page journal entry from the viewpoint of a drummer boy.