

# ***BUILDING THE USS CARONDELET - IMAGE ANALYSIS - PRIMARY DOCUMENT ACTIVITY***

## **MAIN IDEA**

Students will use a photograph to learn and theorize about the changing conditions and reality of workers in St. Louis during the Civil War.

## **TIME**

25–35 minutes

## **GRADE LEVEL**

8<sup>th</sup> grade–high school

## **BACKGROUND**

As the Civil War approached, the city of St. Louis and the state of Missouri were going through important economic and social changes. Immigrants from Europe as well as the East Coast of the United States were coming to St. Louis and establishing prosperous businesses, like Giles Filley’s Excelsior Stoveworks and James B. Eads’s shipyard at Carondelet. These men desired a modern and industrial Missouri and saw slavery as an impediment to progress as it undermined the free labor system. Many of these new business leaders and German immigrants became leaders in the emerging Republican Party and subsequent strong Union supporters when the Civil War broke out.

The industrialism that they fostered created new and unforeseen problems as people left their small communities and

moved to cities. Instead of working more autonomously on farms many people became wage earners for the first time and subject to the rules of their bosses. Conditions were often dangerous and very difficult.

Even before the war had ended, the economic and social changes that these men had established began to breed conflict between workers and business owners, and foreshadowed the labor movement that would emerge in the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in 1864 the iron molders of the city went on strike in opposition to their low wages and the hiring of children.

## OBJECTIVES

Students will...

1. Increase their familiarity with primary documents and learn how they are used.
2. Explore the realities of work in Civil War–era St. Louis.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Gerteis, Louis S. *Civil War St. Louis (Modern War Studies)*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004.
- How, Louis. *James B. Eads*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970.
- Jackson, Rex T. *James B. Eads: The Civil War Ironclads and His Mississippi*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 2004.

## MATERIALS

James B. Eads info sheet (one per student)  
 1864 iron molders strike info sheet (one per student)  
 Carondelet Boatyard image (one per group)  
 Pencils  
 Paper

## GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

| GLE  | Content   |
|--|---|
| <b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>  |   |
| SS7.A Identify, select, use, and create appropriate resources for social science inquiry | Students will use and interpret primary documents.  |
| SS2a.H Understanding the causes and consequences of the Civil War                        | Students will learn how the Civil War helped to foster the creation of a new industrial Missouri without slave labor. |
| SS7.A Using primary and secondary sources  | Students will analyze three primary documents and contextualize them.   |
| <b>COMMUNICATION ARTS</b>  |   |
| Writing 1A, B, C, D, E   | Students will write a creative story based on what they observe in a photograph.                                      |
| Listening and Speaking 2A  | Students will present their findings in a clear, concise manner.  |
| Information Literacy 1B  | Students will use primary sources to acquire relevant information.  |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Information Literacy 1C | Students will record information in an organized fashion. |
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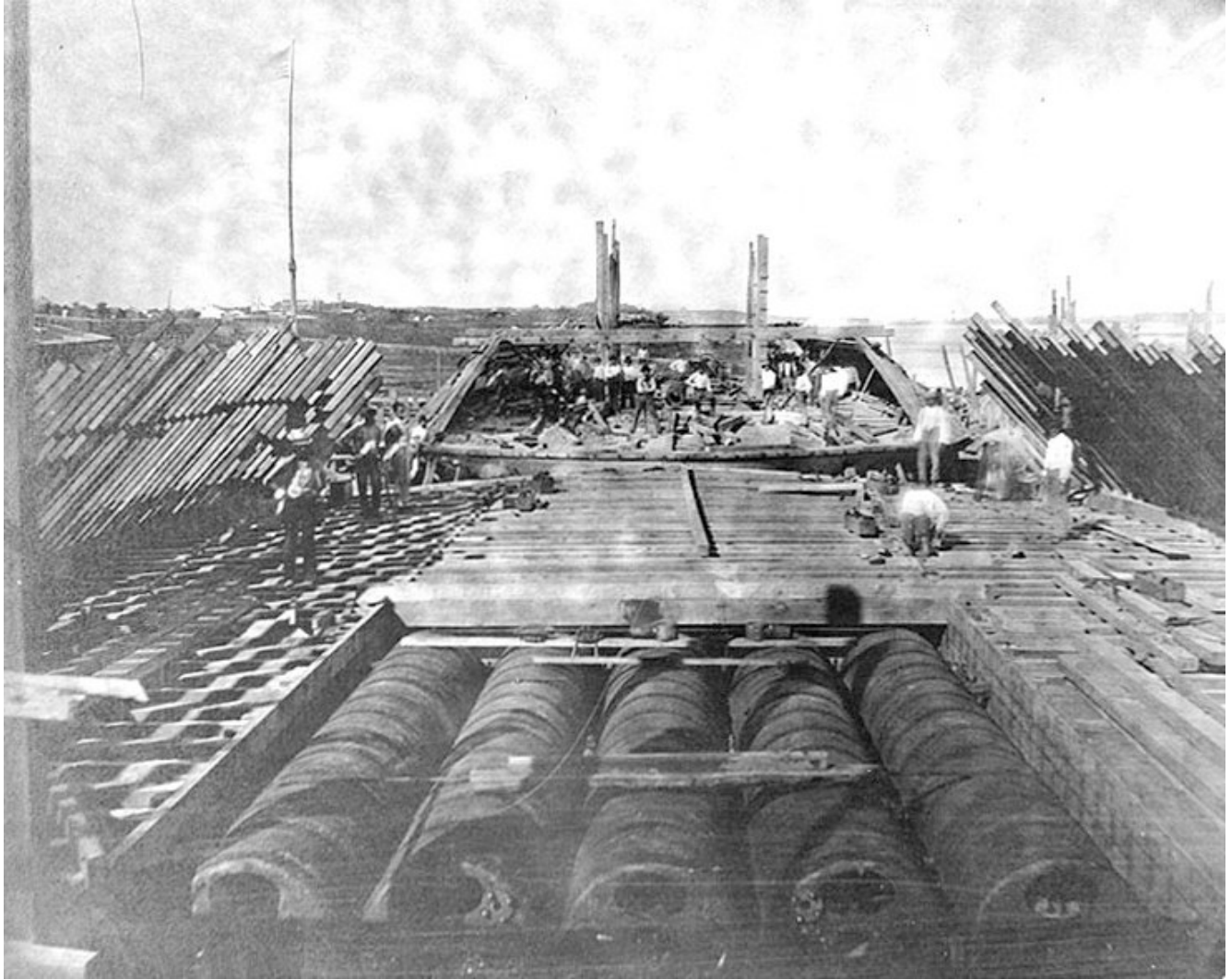
## PROCEDURE

| Phase        | Description   |
|--------------|---|
| Introduction | <p>Step 1: As a class, read the info sheet on James B. Eads.</p> <p>Discuss: “How did Eads and his gunboats affect the outcome of the war?” and “What do you think conditions were like for the workers who built the boats?” Tell them that industrialization brought with it new conditions of work that were sometime difficult and dangerous.</p> |

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|------|---|
| Main | <p>Step 2: As a class, discuss what it might have been like to build these ships.</p> <p>Step 3: Instruct students to create a list of things they can learn from the picture about working on Eads's gunboats. You may choose to have students do this as partners or in groups.</p> <p>Step 4: Once they have completed their lists, have them present their findings to the class. If necessary, prompt them with a few suggestions so they understand what kinds of things to look for.</p> <p>Step 5: Tell students that they need to use their imagination to individually write a fictional story based on the image and the list they made. Give students specific length and content requirements as you see fit.</p> <p>Step 6: When students are done, have volunteers read their stories aloud.</p> |
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|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Conclusion | <p>Step 7: Tell students that as the war went on, conditions of work deteriorated. In addition, the cost of goods skyrocketed. These difficulties led to some of the earliest strikes in St. Louis.</p> <p>Step 8: Read the 1864 iron molders strike info sheet.</p> |
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Carondelet Boatyard Image



## 1864 Labor Unrest and General Order No. 65

### *Strike*

- By 1864, labor discontent had taken hold of the country.
- The cost of goods was rising much faster than wages, and strikes began to break out in cities across the North. St. Louis was no exception.
- Faced with low wages, and frustrated by the hiring of women and boys at substandard wages, many workers went on strike.

### *Employer Response*

- In response to the strike, employers turned to military authority to solve the problem.
- This had its desired effect. General William Rosecrans, the head of the Department of the Missouri, became convinced that the strikers were “bad men”<sup>1</sup> and were hindering the production of Federal gunboats by disrupting the production of iron.
- He issued General Order No. 65 on April 29, 1864, which forbade association with labor unions and required the names of strikers to be turned over to Federal authorities.

### *Effect*

- This order had the desired effect of ending the strikes. It also symbolized the growing conflict between labor and capital that would continue through the latter part of the 19th and into the 20th century.

### *Learn More Sections*

### *Strike*

**By 1864, labor discontent had taken hold of the country. The cost of goods was rising much faster than wages, and strikes began to break out in cities across the North. St. Louis was no exception. Faced with low wages, and frustrated by the hiring of women and boys at substandard wages, many workers went on strike.**

Industries on strike included “stove and hollow ware molders, machine molders, brass finishers and molders, carpenters and joiners, ship carpenters and caulkers, brick molders, steam-and-gas pipe fitters, paper hangers, horseshoers, plasterers, painters, tanners, and members of the typographical union”<sup>2</sup> as well as shoemakers.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert N. Scott, *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, vol. 34 (Harrisburg, PA: National Historical Society, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> Louis S. Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).



## *Employer Response*

**Employers struck back fiercely against the union activity.** Molders working for Oliver and Giles Filley, who were leaders among St. Louis Republicans, fired strikers and published their side of the story in the *Missouri Republican* and *Democrat* newspapers. **Employers also turned to military authority to solve the problem. This had its desired effect when General William Rosecrans, the head of the Department of the Missouri, became convinced that the strikers were “bad men”<sup>3</sup> and were hindering the production of Federal gunboats by disrupting production of iron. He issued General Order No. 65 on April 29, 1864, which forbade association with labor unions and required the names of strikers to be turned over to Federal authorities.**

## *Effect*

**This order had the desired effect of ending the strikes. It also contributed to the growing conflict between labor and capital that would continue through the latter part of the 19th and into the 20th century, and** the coming to power of a new economic order in Missouri, one that desired industrial growth, expansion of railroads, and the abolition of slave labor.

## *Original Text*

General Order No. 65

Hdqrs. Dept. of the Missouri  
St. Louis, Mo., April 29, 1864

It having come to the knowledge of the commanding general that combinations exist in the city of St. Louis, having for their object to prevent journeymen mechanics, apprentices, and laborers from working in manufacturing establishments, except on terms prescribed to the proprietors thereof, by parties not interested therein, which terms have no relation to the matter of wages to be paid to employees, but to the internal management of such establishments; and it appearing that in consequence of such combinations and the practices of those concerned in them, the operations of some establishments where articles are produced which are required for use in the navigation of the Western waters, and in the military, naval, and transport service of the United States, have been broken up, and the production of such articles stopped or suspended, the following order is promulgated. Any violation thereof will be punished as a military offense:

I. No Person shall directly or indirectly attempt to deter or prevent any persons from working, on such terms as he may agree upon, in any manufacturing establishment where any article is ordinarily made which may be required for use in the navigation of the Western waters, or in the military, naval, or transport

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<sup>3</sup> Scott, *The War of the Rebellion*.

service of the United States.

II. No person shall watch around or hang about any such establishment for the purpose of annoying the employees thereof, or learning who are employed therein,

III. No association or combination shall be formed or continue, or meeting be held, having for its object to prescribe to the proprietors of any such establishment whom they shall employ therein, or how they shall conduct the operations thereof.

IV. All employes in such establishments will be protected by military authority against all attempts by any person to interfere with or annoy them in their work, or in consequence of their being engaged in it.

V. The proprietors of every such establishment in the county of St. Louis will forthwith transmit to the office of the provost-Marshal-general the names of all persons who have, since the 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1864 left their employ to engage in any such combination or association as that above referred to, or have been induced to leave by the operations of any such combination or association, or by the individual efforts of any one concerned therein. The places of residence of such persons, so far as known, will be stated, together with a list, by name, of all who have taken an active part in any combination or effort to control the conduct of any such establishment or to prevent persons from working therein.

VI. The post commander, Col. J. H. Baker, Tenth Minnesota Volunteers, is charged, under the direction of the district commander, with the execution of this order. All persons applying for the aid of the military forces in this connection will report direct to Colonel Baker.

VII. In putting down this attack upon private rights and military power of the nation by organizations led by bad men, the general confidently relies upon the support and aid of the city authorities, and of all right minded men.

By command of Major-General Rosecrans:

O. D. Greene

Assistant Adjutant-General

James B. Eads

*Early Life ([Learn More Link](#))- see below*

- James Buchanan Eads was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana on May 23, 1820. He came to St. Louis when he was 13 years old.
- In 1842, Eads developed a partnership with Case & Nelson boat-builders. The business that developed involved rescuing wrecked boats and cargo from the Mississippi river.

- In 1857, he retired from the wreck recovery business due to his poor health.

*Civil War Years (Learn More Link)- see below*

- With the outbreak of the Civil War James Eads over saw the construction of Ironclad gunboats for the War Department from spring 1861 to spring 1864 from his boatyard in Carondelet.
- Eads received his first contract from the War Department in October 1861. The contract asked for seven boats which Eads instructed his artisans to complete in only three months.
- He was successful in this timetable and his boats were accepted into service on January 15, 1862.
- It wasn't even a month before the ironclads would prove their effectiveness aiding General Grant in the taking the Confederate Fort Donnellson and Fort Henry, and again in the taking of New Madrid and Island #10.
- Fourteen of the Twenty Two Ironclad gunboats used during the Civil War were made by Eads and his artisans. These boats would be integral in opening the entire Mississippi to commerce by July of 1863.

*Later Life (Learn More Link)- see below*

- In 1867, James Eads formed an organization dedicated to building a bridge across the Mississippi river in St. Louis. Seven years later that goal had been achieved and the first bridge across the Mississippi had been built.
- James Eads died on March 8, 1887 and the headline in the Augusta Chronicle read "The Greatest Engineer in the World is Dead."

*Learn More Sections*

Early Life

**James Buchanan Eads was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1820. He came to St. Louis when he was 13 years old.** The boat trip to St. Louis ended in disaster when the boat caught fire. The family was left with only the clothes on their back. The financial needs of his family required young Eads to work, but he studied mechanics and other scientific books at night. **In 1842, Eads developed a partnership with Case & Nelson, boat-builders. The business that developed involved rescuing wrecked boats and cargo from the Mississippi river.** This was quite profitable as insurance companies would often pay a large portion of what was recovered to Eads and his company. In addition, freight that had been wrecked for five years belonged to whoever found it. At

the age of 26 Eads married Miss Martha Dillon the daughter of a wealthy St. Louis resident. After a brief run at establishing a glass factory Eads continued and expanded his wreck recovery business making him very wealthy. **In 1857, he retired from the wreck recovery business due to his poor health.** His wife passed away about the same time. Two years later he remarried the widow of his first cousin.

## Civil War Years

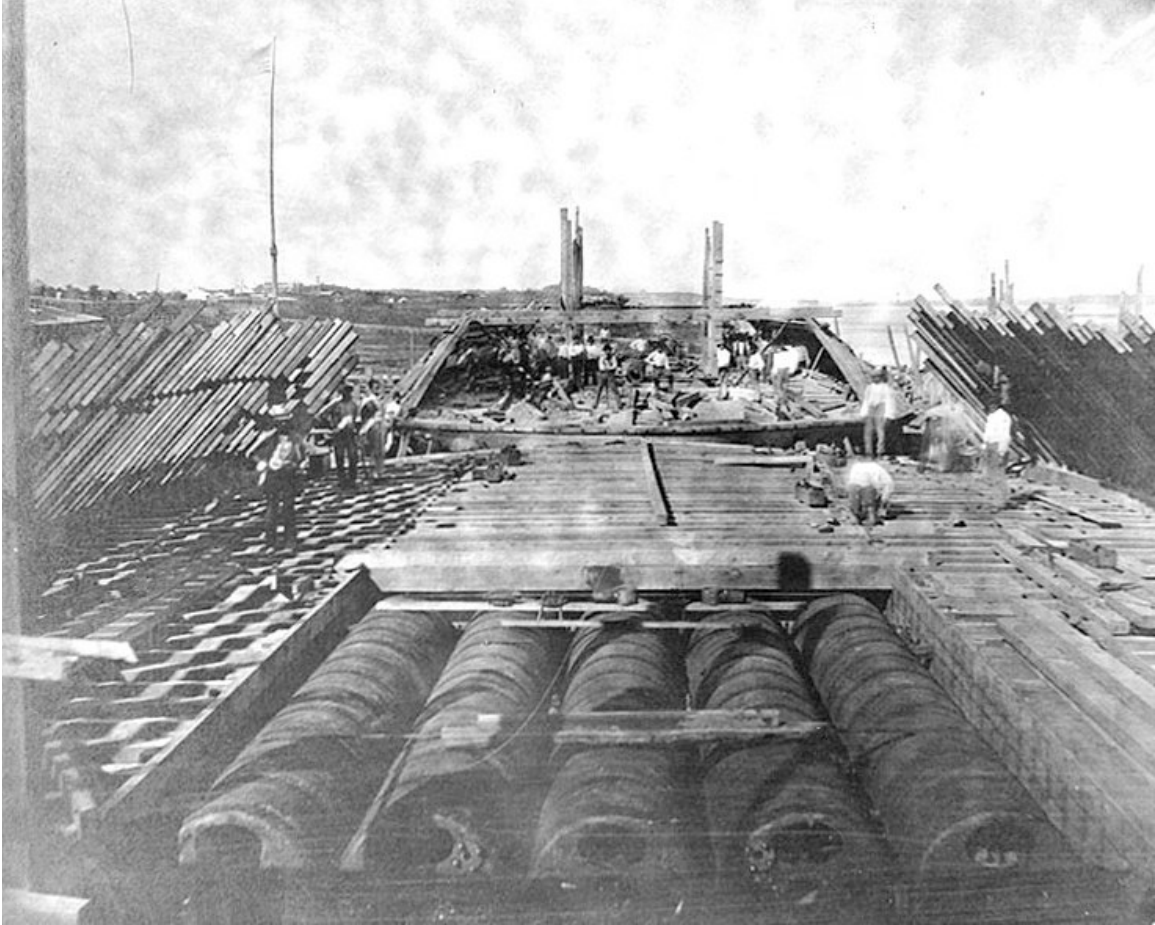
**With the outbreak of the Civil War James Eads over saw the construction of Ironclad gunboats for the War Department from the spring of 1861 to the spring 1864 from his boatyard in Carondelet.** He constructed boats at an incredibly fast pace that put pressure on the cities carpenters and Iron workers. This included the Excelsior Stove Works owned by the Filley brothers who switched their production from stoves to cannons and iron plating in support of the war effort. **Eads received his first contract from the War Department in October 1861** thanks to a letter from Frank Blair to his brother- in – law army quartermaster general, Montgomery C. Meigs. The contract asked for seven boats which **Eads instructed his artisans to complete in only three months. He was successful in this timetable and his boats were accepted into service on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1862. It wasn't even a month before the ironclads would prove their effectiveness aiding by General Grant in the taking the Confederate Fort Donnellson and Fort Henry, and again in the taking of New Madrid and Island #10. Eventually Eads would produce fourteen of the twenty two Ironclad gunboats used during the Civil.** These boats would be integral in opening the entire Mississippi to commerce by July of 1863.

## Later Life

**In 1867, James Eads formed an organization dedicated to building a bridge across the Mississippi river in St. Louis. Seven years later that goal had been achieved. James Eads died on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1887 and the headline in the Augusta Chronicle read "The Greatest Engineer in the World is Dead".** In the 1930's a group of deans from prominent engineering schools selected the five best engineers of all time. They were Leonardo Da Vinci, James Watt, Ferdinand de Lesseps, Thomas Edison, and James B. Eads.



Ironclad Construction



USS Corondelet