

LIFE UNDER MARTIAL LAW – LETTER ANALYSIS - PRIMARY DOCUMENT ACTIVITY

MAIN IDEA

Students will compare and contrast the experience of people in St. Louis with people in the more rural areas of the state during the Civil War.

TIME

45–60 minutes

GRADE LEVEL

8th grade–high school

BACKGROUND

The primary documents in this activity explore the experiences of Lizzie Brannock, a mother living on the western border of Missouri during the Civil War, and Euphrasia Pettus, a woman living in St. Louis during the same period. They give insight into the differences in conditions in urban St. Louis and the rest of the state. Those living on the western border had been dealing with violent conflict between slaveholders and abolitionists for years as the border wars with Kansas raged. Lizzie Brannock describes in her letter the raid of Kansas Jayhawker (anti-slavery) Charles Jennison and his gang. Jennison was a brutal and unscrupulous leader. He was matched on the Missouri side by numerous gangs of guerrillas led by men like “Bloody” Bill Anderson and William Quantrill. These factions made Federal control of the western border of Missouri next to impossible and encouraged the extreme measures taken by the Federal government

while the state was under martial law. Martial law is the suspension of civilian law in favor of military power. Provost marshals, or military officials in charge of enforcing Federal law, often implemented fines or assessments without proving any wrongdoing. The most extreme action taken was the passage of General Order No. 11, which vacated several counties on the western border.

In St. Louis, in comparison, violence was minimal following the Camp Jackson Affair, in which Captain Nathaniel Lyon captured the largely secessionist Missouri Militia. St. Louis served as the command post for the Department of the West, which directed the Union army inside Missouri, Kansas, and Arkansas. In addition, the large population of Eastern elites and Germans made the city a Union stronghold. Life was far from pleasant in the city, however. Banishments and fines were the norm, and the cost of goods rose far faster than wages, leading to worker discontent and strikes in the city.

The experience of both of these women in their respective homes will inform students as to the conditions on the ground, but will also force them to analyze with a critical eye how these women's politics might have affected their perspective.

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

1. Increase their familiarity with primary documents and how they are used.
2. Develop an understanding of the varied experiences of people living in Missouri during the Civil War based on geographic location and political perspective.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Civil War St. Louis. <http://www.civilwarstlouis.com/>. Content information on the Civil War in St. Louis, including timelines, articles on various themes, and suggested books.
- Missouri Digital Heritage: Missouri State Archives. <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/civilwar/>. Guide to Civil War resources at the Missouri State Archives.
- Monaghan, Jay. *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854–1865*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1955. Chapters on Battle of Carthage, Battle of Wilson's Creek, fall of Lexington, Battle of Westport, and more.
- Neely, Jeremy. *The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2007.
- Parrish, William E., ed. *A History of Missouri*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971–2004.
- Winter, William C. *The Civil War in St. Louis: A Guided Tour*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1994.

MATERIALS

- Euphrasia Pettus letter (one copy per student)
- Lizzie Brannock letter (one copy per student)
- Document analysis worksheet (two copies per group)
- The Two Missouris section of the online exhibition (presents on overhead, or provide one copy per student)

- Pencils
- Paper
- Map, optional

GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

GLE	Content
SOCIAL STUDIES	
SS7.A Identify, select, use, and create appropriate resources for social science inquiry	Students will use and interpret primary documents.
SS3a.B Knowledge of the ways Missourians have interacted, survived, and progressed from the distant past to present times	Students will explore the ways that Missourians adapted for survival during the Civil War.
SS3a.I Understanding the causes and consequences of the Civil War	Students will develop an understanding of how conflict between factions helped precipitate the war. In addition, they will see the consequences of war on innocent citizens.
SS5.B, C, F Understanding the concept of location to make prediction and solve problems; understanding the concept of place; understanding relationships between and among places	Students will find on the map the location of the authors of primary documents and analyze how their experiences differed.

SS7.A, C Identify, select, use, analyze, and create appropriate resources, primary and secondary, for social science inquiry; understanding fact, opinion, bias, and points of view in sources	Students will analyze two primary documents for contextual information and personal bias.
COMMUNICATION ARTS	
Reading 1H, G, I	Students will read documents for context and be able to summarize their findings. They will also compare and contrast the statements of separate documents.
Listening and Speaking 2A	Students will present their findings several times 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.

PROCEDURE

Phase	Description
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<p>Introduction</p>	<p>Step 1: Discuss with students, “How do people and their experiences differ depending on geographic location?” Use this conversation as a lead-in to tell students, “In Missouri during the Civil War, conditions were different depending if you lived in urban St. Louis or the more rural areas of the state, especially the western border.” Point out on the map the locations of the two authors if students are unfamiliar with them.</p>
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Main

Step 2: As a class read the Lizzie Brannock letter about life on Missouri's western border during the Civil War.

Step 3: Split class into groups of three or four.

Step 4: Instruct students to complete the document analysis worksheet. Tell them that they need to read critically and answer each question thoroughly because they will use this information for the next step of the activity. While students work, circle between groups and make sure that they understand the instructions.

Step 5: Once all groups are done, have them present their findings. Record all group findings on an overhead, chalkboard, or flip chart.

Step 6: Follow steps 2–5 with the Euphrasia Pettus letter.

Step 7: Once both letters have been fully analyzed, have students use a blank piece of paper to draw a Venn diagram. Have students use the diagram to compare and contrast the letters' descriptions of conditions in St. Louis and the western border of Missouri.

Conclusion	Step 8: As a class read “The Two Missouris” section of the online exhibition. Ask students: “How does this history reinforce what the letters expressed?”; “How does this contradict what the letters said?”; “What do you think explains the dissonance between the history and the primary documents?”; and “How did the authors’ political views affect their perspective?”
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**THE CIVIL
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Document Analysis Worksheet

1. Type of document (check one)

- Letter
- Business Document
- Interview
- Newspaper
- Government Report
- Broadside
- Other _____

2. When was it written? Is there a date or other information that indicates this?

3. Who wrote the document? How can you tell? What can you tell about the author?

4. For whom was the document written? How can you tell?

5. Why was the document written? Cite the evidence indicating its purpose.

6. What people are mentioned in this document and what can you tell about them?

People	Information

7. What dates are mentioned in this document?

8. What is the topic of the document?

9. Is the author credible? What is fact and what is opinion?

10. Key Facts—List facts you think are important.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

11. How does this document add to what you learned from the other documents?

A.

B.

C.

D.

Many Faces of Missouri (Civil War factions)

Main Idea

- Missouri struggled with its identity since it achieved statehood in 1820. It had elements of both a Southern and a Western state. This resulted in groups or factions

leading up to the Civil War.

- The different factions of Missouri during the war were:
 - secessionists, like Claiborne Jackson
 - unconditional Unionists, like Frank Blair
 - conditional Unionists, like Hamilton Gamble
- Below are descriptions of each faction shown through a historical character.

Governor Claiborne Jackson - Secessionist

- Secessionists wanted to leave the Union. They thought Missouri was Southern and felt that slavery was a right given by the Constitution of the United States.
- Some Missourians felt that separation from the Union was the only choice after the conflict that was caused by the border wars with Kansas and the election of 1860.
- One of the leading secessionists in Missouri was Claiborne Jackson. Only a small group of Missourians were secessionists. Jackson was elected governor of the state because he lied about his beliefs. After the election he revealed he really wanted to pull Missouri out of the Union.
- Governor Jackson attempted to bring Missouri into the Confederacy. After failing, he spent the rest of his life fighting for the South.

Frank Blair - Unconditional Unionist

- The unconditional Unionists believed two things: 1) the Union must be preserved, and 2) it could not continue to enslave human beings. Those who became unconditional Unionists thought Missouri was Western and its progress was being held back by slavery.
- Col. Frank Blair Jr. was a leader of the unconditional Unionists in Missouri.
- Blair realized early on that war was unavoidable and began organizing the Unionists of Missouri. He created a Committee of Safety and organized Union clubs to fight secessionists.

Hamilton Gamble - Conditional Unionists

- The conditional Unionists made up most of the state's population. The conditional Unionists were different from unconditional Unionists because they didn't think

slavery had to end.

- Hamilton Gamble, who became the head of Missouri's provisional government during the Civil War, was a leader of this group.
- Gamble ran the state with the beliefs of a conditional Unionist. He did what it took to keep Missouri in the Union with or without slavery. For Gamble what was important was maintaining law and order and keeping Missouri in the Union.

Vocabulary

Provisional government – a government provided for a temporary need.

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Transcript of letter of Euphrasia Pettus to sister, May 20, 1861 (Civil War Collection)

May 20, 1861

Dear Sister,

We have tired ourselves to death to-day undoing the work of packing. The doing of which cost us so much labor last Monday. We filled this morning a large goods box with house linen & our most valuable winter clothes. Well sprinkled with camphor & the dray has just come to haul it down to the Keokuk packet. Willy had Mr. Parsons' named marked on it & Ma asks as a favor that you will give it house room until such time as she will send for it. If it encumbers your house wouldn't it be as safe at Mr. Parsons' bank?

I don't think there is any immediate danger to be feared for us to remain here but we are so little able to replace such expensive articles as linen & silver if they are once gone that we thought it prudent to get them in a safe place & then if we have to run our flight will not be impeded.

The town is filled & surrounded by troops. Harney's regulars occupy Russell & Kennett's houses on 4th Street & there are Dutch regiments out by the fair grounds, at the water works, all around & in the Arsenal, on the Gravois Road, at the railroad depots, and everywhere. This of course ensures our quiet. Until we have a force equal to engage with them, there can be no resistance. Frank Blair is dictator. He has assembled troops from all parts of Illinois & stationed them at Belleville, Caseyville, Alton, St. Charles, all within an hour's ride & if the slightest show of resistance is made, we will be crushed out. My blood boils in my veins when I think of the position of Missouri — held in the Union at the point of Dutchmen's bayonets. I feel outraged and you may imagine how hard it is for men to endure it. Frank Blair has stolen every weapon in town to arm his bloodhounds against us & we must submit. But the sullen submission of downtrodden men will be avenged the more terribly in the day of their uprising. May I live to see that day!

Mrs. Henry Kayser came for me one day last week to take dinner with her. I had a very pleasant day. We were entirely alone & we almost talked ourselves to death. You may be assured that she talks Southern or I wouldn't have talked with her. Her home is surrounded by armed men. The adjoining buildings filled with them & two sentinels stand at her gate & challenge people that go in or out after dark. We talked almost in a whisper, lest we should be overheard. It is like the French Revolution.

Wednesday night Mrs. Lindell took me out to stay all night with her. I had got so pale & nervous from loss of rest that she told Ma she would keep me until I got some color in my cheeks, but Thursday morning I was walking around among the flowers forgetting war & its terrors when I heard the fife & drum right near to me & the road was filled with soldiers. They encamped on a part of Mrs. Lindell's property.

I knew Ma would be uneasy about me & so Mrs. Lindell brought me home after dinner.

She has such a sweet place & lives very nicely. I would have enjoyed staying longer but I am so anxious away from home. You know they all sleep so soundly if the town were to burn no one would waken but me. I scarcely slept during the four days & nights of excitement & even now I am on guard nearly all night. Not a sound escapes me & Fanny day or night.

However, I trust we are quiet for the present. We are bound hand & foot & in this galling condition we must remain. We are like Maryland – “It is not our fault that we are helpless, nor our shame that our helplessness is abused” – & it is abused in every way. The Republicans are as grandiose & sneering as if they had won a great victory. It is only a political one. They are below par socially. The line is being drawn every day.

Joe has come down to his dinner & says he shipped the box on the Hannibal City but did not pay its passage. If Mr. Parsons will see to it & the drayage & let us know the amount we will be much obliged. Joe says the Journal is to be suppressed & martial law to be proclaimed here to-morrow.

Transcript of Lizzie Brannok Letter

Chapel Hill Jan. 13th 1864

Dear Brother Edwin,

Yesterday I was most pleasantly surprised in receiving a letter from you whom I had almost given up for lost. Often Have I thought of you, and prayed for you, and have longed so ardently to hear from you the dear playmate and companion of my childhood. I thank god you are yet alive and prosperous, seemingly so at least, thus far you have survived in this most horrible reign of terror which has been so long desolating our once happy land- I grieve for your losses and yet you know thousands have been left as you were though that is no consolation but rather doubles our own sorrows. I have nothing much to loose [*sic*] and what I had is gone – but most of all my dear husband our comfort and support. I have two lovely children Eva Florence a little over 4 years old and my boy John Arthur now past 2 years. We call him artie. He is a noble little fellow and a perfect match in mischief and frolics for your little ones. I would love to see. Also your good wife Georgiana, did you name lizzie for one, if so, kiss the little fat cheek for me and tell her Auntie hopes to have an opportunity to send her something for her name someday.

No dear brother I care not for myself but for my little ones I fear, I could endure anything but to see my little ones suffer with hunger and cold for scant of clothing is what I dread. So far we have not really suffered but the days have been very dark. God has always opened the way for me and this winter finds us well clothed and in a comfortable home, my father in laws. I taught a school last summer which brought me just enough and no more to supply my then pressing wants, you ask me what are my means of support. I have none at all , only the hope to get a school of some kind somewhere, I want to get a music class, can you assist me in your section, as teacher of music I could have my children with me. Last summer I was separated from them. I do not like it but it was necessity compelled me, our country is desolate indeed almost entirely a wilderness, robbery is an everyday affair so long as there was anything to take. Our farms are all burned up, fences gone, crops destroyed. No one escapes the ravages of one party or the other. We will remain where we are this winter but this spring we shall be obliged to leave. Where I shall go or what do, I do not know....

....

At the out breaking of the war Mr. Brannock was in college at Fayette, Mo. But troubles thickened so fast he left and came home the summer of 1861. He taught school in Woovensburg. 20 miles from here the fall and winter he was stuck for about five months that life was almost gone but he at length recovered. Jennison and his gang came upon us stripped us of nearly everything and would have burned us out but for proving that we were union and had never done anything against government at that time. They burned 150 houses. Helpless women and young children were taken out and left standing in the snow while all they owned on earth save the land was destroyed before their eyes. That same winter they came upon us while going a few miles from home put me and my two children off (artie then only two months old) in the mud a good distance from any house and took Mr Brannock's wagon and team. He found among the officers an old college chum who luckily procured his release and he came home, the next spring 1862. We went into Cass Co. on the farm of William Brannock he having gone to Ky but the Kansas troops would give us no rest anything that was in Missouri was to be destroyed and taken, yes brother, we are what is called Rebels. I do rebel against anything dishonest and cruel in any way and we have suffered everything from the most inhuman and barbarous set of men that could have been turned loose upon any soil or country. Bro. John made a mistake in saying Mr. Brannock was conscripted, he went voluntarily to that army which he believed to be the right one rather than go into the militia. He could stay home no longer, so on the 18th of August 1862 he bade me farewell and has been a soldier ever since. An honest Christian soldier from principle and conscience battling for what he thinks the right. Do not think that I became rebel because my husband was, for I was rebel at least 5 months before my husband....

....

My husband and his brother Thomas came in with Shelby he would not have come had it not been he thought that we would get to see us once more but at Marshal Bro. Thomas was wounded in the left cheek ball lodged in the right jaw. And my husband would not leave him so they were both taken prisoner. They were well treated, kindly cared for, but the last time I went down they would not allow me to see him at all, after many efforts I got a permit for one hour interview in the hospital they are now in St. Louis Gratiot

Street Prison McDowell College in good health and tolerable spirits. He belongs to Company G. Shelby Brigade. He does not like war and fighting it is against every feeling in his refined mind an upright man who has not a personal enemy in the world. And if he could honorably be released would be most happy, but at the time he went in it was go one side or the other he chose the side and of course wants if you can do anything for him dear bro do so. Said you write to him he will be glad to find a friend in you let not our differences in opinion make any difference in our hearts we are both god fearing....

....

Alas that we should have to write it. My father in law has been crippled with rheumatism all the winter and but for our few neighbors we should have suffered sometime. I have obliged to gather the wood from under a deep snow and cut it up as best I could. Could we stay here papa is not able to raise anything of a crop but I trust to the one who has never failed me all will be well. Eva says tell Uncle Edwin she thanks him for his nice little present it will buy her a dress wont it ma. My father in law is old nearly 68 mama 63. and no one to help them they talk of going to their older children in Ky which they will do as soon as spring opens. Write to me again soon for though so long separated I can never forget my brother. And the sunny eye curly head and rosy cheek of our Robin. We were traveling on the high road of life now but we shall soon begin to go down the hill but let us even look with upward gaze to the golden city new Jerusalem and pray for the day when lion shall lie down with the lamb and a little child shall lead them. Let us be wise as shepherds and harmless as doves keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. Much love to your dear wife. Kisses for the children and to yourself

Your loving sister Lizzie E. Brannock

Pages from the Brannok Letter

leave him so they were both taken prisoner they were well treated, kindly cared for, but the last time I went down they would not allow me to see him at all, after many efforts I got a permit for one hour's interview in the hospital they are now in St Louis Grant Street Prison Mc Dowel college in good health and tolerable spirits, he belongs to Company G, Shanker Regiment, Shelby brigade, he does not like war and fighting it is against every feeling of his refined mind an upright man who has not a personal enemy in the world, and if he could honorably be released would be most happy, but at the time he went in it was on one side or the other he chose his side, and of course went, if you can do anything for him dear Bro etc do, you write to him he will be glad to find a friend in you let not our differences in opinion make any difference in our hearts, we were honest neighbors and but for our few neighbors

god fearing, doing our duty to God and man and the mans inhumanity to these aids countess thousands brown let us throw the mantle of charity around our fellow man and do what good we can, I know your good sense will not cause you to think less of us for our position, we cannot all see alike, and I honor a man who with honest principles stands by them and defends them, it human nature to hate those who do us wrong and the party to which they belong yet know that the good on both sides do not uphold it more than we three times we have ^{been} threatened to be burned out a book to kill you of all troubles, and let out some after time not a month had left for ^{our} children, alas that we should have to write it, my father in law has been crippled with rheumatism all the

we should have suffered, sometimes I have
been obliged to grovel the road from under
a deep snow and cut it up as best I could
could we, stay here papa is not able
to raise anything of a crop but I shall
do the one who has never failed me
all will be well - Eva says all Uncle
Eckin she thanks him for his nice letter
presents it will buy her a dress worth it one
My Father-in-law is old nearly 80. Mama is 83,
and no one to help them - they talk of
going to their older children in N.Y. which
they will do as soon as spring opens
write. As we again soon and give me
a long letter. it does me much good
to hear from you for the so
long separated I can never forget
My Brother - and the sunny eye and
Crimy head and rosy cheeks. of our Robin.
we are travelling on the high road of
life now but we shall soon begin to
go down the hill but let us ever look
with upward gaze to the Golden City
New Jerusalem and pray for the day when
Leon shall lie down with the Lamb and a
little child shall lead them - let us be wise
as serpents and harmless as doves keeping
ourselves unspotted from the world. much
love to your dear wife, kisses for the children
and to your very loving Sister Lizzie & Prudence

9th
11

and if I am a rebel, know Bro. Thos. I do
not look with any degree of allowance
upon robbery, and driving honest people
from their homes, or bushwhacking in
any shape, if we have war let there be two
armies and fight honorably but could we
have peace I would be glad upon almost
any terms, Mr. Brammle would be willing
to live as a loyal citizen if he could, but
I am not willing he should take an oath
that he desires the north to triumph over
the south in this unhappy struggle and
which was required at (Warshel) it would be
against conscience and it would be guilt
before God and Man. My husband and his
Bro. Thomas came in with Shelby he would
not have come had it not been he thought
that he would get to see us once more
but at Warshel Bro. Thomas was wounded in
the left cheek ball lodged in the right
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