

Civil War and Technology - WHAT DO YOU SEE? Using Photographic Analysis by Ray Hanson

Objectives – TEAK 5.4A

- Students will analyze Civil War photos
- Students will analyze the Civil War as a catalyst to America's industrial development
- Students will summarize reasons for the North's victory in the Civil War

Time and Materials

- One or two class periods
- Computer and projector and computer Lab Time

Context

This lesson is to introduce photographic analysis to classes studying U.S. history, and insert this lesson into units on the Civil War. Photographic analysis will help the students identify innovations in military technology and explain its impact on humans, property and the final outcome of the war.

Lesson Outline

Start by showing the “Dictator” photograph to the class. Start with low level questions, such as “What do you see?” Encourage factual observations first, not conclusions. Focus on the process of moving from observation to conclusions. Bring in outside knowledge to justify conclusions.



Show the class additional photographs of the Dictator. Ask students to re-



examine their conclusions based on this additional image.

What additional information can you gain by looking at this new picture?

Compare this picture with other view. What is similar? What is Different?

Finally, examine the Dictator and the railroad cars that transport it.

How does this picture compare with the previous ones?

What additional information can you gain by looking at this new picture?



The Dictator, cast at iron works in Pittsburg PA, was used in the summer and fall of 1864 at siege operations in Petersburg VA. Its immense weight is 17,120 pounds, with a 13 inch mortar firing a shell weighing 200 lbs. At an angle of 45 degrees the range is 4,325 yards. A shell fired at Petersburg reached Center Hill, 2.7 miles, 4752 yards away.

Assessment TEKS:

The Union's first plan for defeating the South –

1. blocked goods from going into and out of Southern ports
2. worked to capture major Confederate cities
3. gain support of France and Britain
4. called for the invasion of southern manufacturing areas

Informal Assessment:

Have students search the Selected Civil War Photographs Collection for other photographs to analyze. Provide guidance to search for technology in the Civil War, terms to use could be ironclad – artillery - railroads

Source of the pictures:

1. Selected Civil War Photographs 1861-1865 Library of Congress at American Memory - Caption The "Dictator" a closer view
2. Caption The "Dictator" a 13-inch mortar, in position
3. Mortar mounted on R.R. Car, U.S. Military R.R. Petersburg, VA