

The Civil War in Art

TEACHING & LEARNING THROUGH CHICAGO COLLECTIONS



Lesson Plan

Lincoln and Tad Visit Richmond, April 4, 1865

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Grades/Subject: 7–8th grades, U.S. History

Schedule: 4 sessions (class periods)

Lesson Summary: In this lesson, students compare and contrast artwork and excerpts from primary source documents that are about the same historical event. While analyzing different interpretations of the past, they will explore the possible reasons artists and writers develop diverse points of view concerning one incident. In the end, students will recognize the need to examine multiple sources to construct their own interpretation of a past event.

Artworks on Which Lesson Is Based



Painting 1

Dennis Malone Carter (1820 –1881)

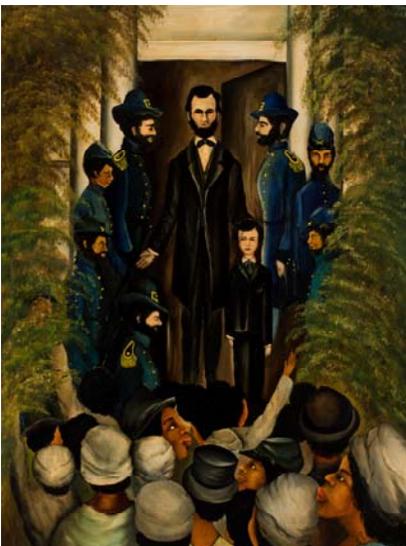
[*Lincoln's Drive Through Richmond*](#),
1866

45 x 68 in., oil on canvas

Chicago History Museum

Gift of Philip K. Wrigley

1955.398, ICHI-52424



Painting 2

Gus Nall (life dates unknown)

[*Lincoln Speaks to Freedmen on the Steps of the Capital at Richmond*](#),
1963

39 .62 x 29.5 in., oil on canvas

DuSable Museum of African
American History

1987.15.24

Big or Main Ideas Students Will Understand

- Artists and historians interpret what happened in the past; their interpretations may differ.
- Artists and writers have a point of view and/or purpose that guide their interpretations of the past. (e.g., limited point of view, personal bias, a commission, desire to create propaganda, and/or desire to use symbolism to comment on events)
- Students of history must examine multiple sources to construct their own interpretation of a past event.

National Standards and Lesson-Specific Objectives

Fine Arts & Common Core English Language Standards	Objectives—Students will...
NA-VA.5-8.4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.	<p>Interpret the meaning of artworks based on their cultural/historical context.</p> <p>Compare and contrast two American oil paintings from different time periods that depict Abraham Lincoln's historic visit to Richmond with his son Tad.</p>
<p>RI.8.9. Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.</p> <p>RH.6-8.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.</p>	<p>Compare and contrast two primary source documents describing the event: a newspaper article and an eyewitness account written in a memoir.</p>
<p>RI.7.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.</p> <p>RH.6-8.6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).</p> <p>NA-VA.5-8.6. Making connections between the visual arts and other disciplines.</p>	<p>Discuss possible reasons why the paintings and written accounts about the same event are different (e.g., limited point of view, personal bias, a commission, desire to create propaganda, and/or desire to use symbolism to comment on events).</p>
<p>RH.6-8.7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, video or maps) with other information in print or digital texts.</p> <p>RH.6-8.9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.</p>	<p>Match each painting with the primary source document that best supports the scene depicted in it. Then explain why they convey their messages better together than separately, or why the accounts are contradictory.</p>

Vocabulary Students Will Learn or Review

See Civil War in Art Glossary, <http://www.civilwarinart.org/glossary>. Additional terms defined below.

- **Bias**: a partiality that prevents objective consideration of an issue or situation
- **Civil Rights Era**: refers to the mass protest movement in the United States aimed at outlawing racial discrimination against African Americans and restoring their voting rights in Southern states; 1955–1968
- **Contraband**: enslaved people who escaped and fled to the Union lines for protection
- **Emancipation Proclamation**: the executive order issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863 which proclaimed enslaved people in the Confederate states were now free
- **Oil Painting/oil on canvas**: pigment such as ground minerals are suspended in oil and painted on a rough fabric
- **Primary Source**: original works in various media formats that date to the time of the person, event or idea under consideration, including photographs, drawings, letters, diaries, documents, books, films, posters, play scripts, speeches, songs, sheet music, and first-person accounts
- **Propaganda**: false or misleading information that is spread to further a cause; information used to sway public opinion
- **Reconstruction Era**: the period after the American Civil War when the southern states were reorganized and reintegrated into the Union; 1865-1877
- **Symbolism**: the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities

Key Information for Understanding the Artwork

About the Time Period

- Both paintings are about an event that happened at the end of the Civil War. President Lincoln brought his 12 year-old son Tad to visit Richmond, Virginia on April 4, 1865. Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, was surrendered to Union forces the previous day.

Sources: *New York Herald*, 4/4/1865; *Richmond Whig*, 4/6/1865; *New York Times*, 4/8/1865.

- Painting 1, Dennis Malone Carter's *Lincoln's Drive Through Richmond* was painted in 1866, one year after the event and during the era of Reconstruction (1865–1877).
- Painting 2, Gus Nall's *Lincoln Speaks to Freedmen on the Steps of the Capital at Richmond* was painted in 1963, 98 years after the event and during the centennial anniversary of the Civil War. The Civil Rights Movement was also making headlines at this time. The Civil Rights Movement is generally described as lasting from 1955 until 1968.

About the Artists

- Dennis Malone Carter (painting 1), 1820 – 1881, was born in Ireland and moved to the United States with his parents in the 1830s. He was living in New York City when he created this oil painting and was most likely influenced by the newspaper accounts printed there about the visit. Carter is known for painting historical images.

Source: *Art Education Daily*, <http://arteducationdaily.blogspot.com/>

- Gus Nall (painting 2), an African American painter, is not as well known as Carter. He was active in Chicago during the 1950s and 1960s. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and later taught art. Another African American painter, Clarence Major, studied under Nall in Chicago during the 1950s. Nall is known for painting scenes of African American daily life. Witnessing the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the United States may have influenced his choice of subjects.

Source: *Fine Art America*, <http://fineartamerica.com/>

About the Artworks

- Painting 1, Dennis Malone Carter's *Lincoln's Drive Through Richmond*: Accompanied only by a few officers and sailors, Lincoln and Tad walked through the city streets of Richmond, Virginia to the White House of the Confederacy, once inhabited by President Jefferson Davis and his family, but now deserted. At first, only small crowds gathered, consisting mostly of cheering African Americans whose freedom had been gained by the terrible war. After touring the home and meeting with the Union army officer in charge of the occupation, Lincoln drove through the city in an open-air carriage. This time, even larger crowds greeted him.
- Carter's painting portrays this second part of the visit in a very respectful way. By surrounding Lincoln with light, Malone suggested a sacred quality to the president. In painting the crowd, the artist has included more white people than actually attended Lincoln's ride. Though some whites loyal to the Union came out to see the president, the vast majority of those who gathered around his carriage were African American. Notice, as well, that although men are tossing their hats in the air to celebrate Lincoln's arrival, the scene depicts the burned out buildings of heavily damaged Richmond, a somber reminder of war's destructive powers.

Sources:

The Civil War in Art: Teaching and Learning with Chicago Collections,
<http://www.civilwarinart.org/>

Chicago History Museum, <http://www.chicagohistory.org/>

- Painting 2, Gus Nall's *Lincoln Speaks to Freedmen on the Steps of the Capitol at Richmond*: The state of Illinois commissioned this painting in celebration of the centennial of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. In creating it, artist Gus Nall imagined the scene during President Lincoln's April 4, 1865 visit to Richmond, Virginia, the conquered Confederate capital. As Lincoln walked through the streets, some formerly enslaved people came up to him and knelt down. Lincoln was quoted as saying, "Don't kneel to me. You must kneel to God only and thank Him for your liberty."
- Nall's painting shows Lincoln at the top of the steps of the Confederate Capitol building with formerly enslaved people gathered below. His son, Tad, and a group of black and white soldiers are clustered around him. By showing Lincoln with his palm turned upward, the artist suggested a sacred quality to the president. Though there were black soldiers present during the surrender of Richmond the day before, it is unlikely they were with Lincoln during his visit. Nall most likely included the African American soldiers to symbolize the effect the Emancipation Proclamation had on the Civil War. Without it, there would not have been African American soldiers in the Union army.

Sources:

The Civil War in Art: Teaching and Learning with Chicago Collections,
<http://www.civilwarinart.org/>

Du Sable Museum of African American History, <http://www.dusablemuseum.org/>

Resources, Materials, and Supplies Needed for Lesson

- *The Civil War in Art : Teaching and Learning with Chicago Collections*,
<http://www.civilwarinart.org/>
- Excerpt from the *New York Times* article published on 4/8/1865 about Lincoln's visit.*
- Excerpt from the memoir of Private Hiram T. Peck, a Union soldier and an eyewitness to Lincoln's visit, published in the *National Tribune* on 10/4/1900.*

Note to teacher: Warn students that the *National Tribune* source is offensive today. Also, remind them:

- Racism existed in the North too, which might explain the author's attitude toward the African Americans he saw that day.
- The majority of African Americans were uneducated because it was against the law to teach them to read and write, which might explain the quotes the author attributes to them.
- * See end of the lesson plan for copies of these primary source documents.
- Venn diagrams
- Clear/non-stick sheet protectors to preserve your art reproductions for multiple uses

Classroom Activities

DAY 1, Focus: Compare and contrast two American oil paintings from different time periods that depict Lincoln and Tad's visit to Richmond, Virginia.

1. After briefly telling the class why Lincoln and Tad were in Richmond that day, separate students into pairs.
2. Give each set of partners a Venn diagram and a copy of each painting. Tell students what year each painting was created, but no other information. Together, they should compare and contrast the paintings and list their findings on the graphic organizer.
3. Pairs report findings to the class.
4. Finish by asking, "Why do you think the paintings are different if the subject matter is the same?" Homework: Tell the class to brainstorm some possible ideas to be discussed in class the next day. (Do not give them the titles or artists' names yet, so they actually have to think about it and not just try to look it up.)

DAY 2, Focus: Discuss possible reasons why the paintings about the same event are different (e.g., personal bias, a commission, propaganda, and/or the use of symbolism). Compare and contrast two primary source documents describing the event, a newspaper article and an eyewitness account written in a memoir.

1. Re-distribute copies of the paintings and discuss answers to the last question from the previous day.
2. Share the relevant information about the artists and artworks. Afterwards, ask the class if anybody has changed his or her mind about the answer to the question. Follow up with the question, "If yes, why? And what is the new answer?"
3. List and discuss reasons that might affect an artist's interpretation of an event. Then, ask "What else would be helpful in determining what really happened that day?" (Hopefully at least one student will say, "A written account describing the visit!")
4. Distribute the sheet with the 2 excerpts detailing Lincoln and Tad's visit. Compare and contrast the information as a class and have a recorder list the findings in a Venn diagram on the board/overhead in the correct places.
5. Finish by asking, "Why do you think the accounts are different if the subject matter is the same?" Homework: Tell the class to brainstorm some possible ideas to be discussed in class the next day.

DAY 3, Focus: Discuss possible reasons why the written accounts about the same event are different (e.g., personal bias, a commission, propaganda, and/or the use of symbolism). Match each painting with the primary source document that best supports the scene depicted in it. Then explain why they convey their message better together than separately.

1. Re-distribute copies of the paintings and written accounts. Then discuss answers to the last question from the previous day.

2. Review reasons that might affect a writer's interpretation of an event.
3. Ask students to discuss with their partners which painting they think matches each account the best and why. How do they complement each other?
4. Conclude the lesson with a class discussion centered on these questions: a) "Which source do you find more credible, the memoir or newspaper article? Why?" b) "What might a Union-leaning newspaper have to gain by reporting that more white people greeted Lincoln and Tad than actually did?" c) "What might an artist in the North have to gain by matching his painting to the description in the *New York Times*?" d) "What did we learn in the relevant information about the artwork, artists and time periods that might help explain choices made in the second painting?"

Homework: Ask students to make rough sketches that describe their own version of what happened in Richmond that day, based on what they have learned. (Due the next class period.)

DAY 4, Assessment

- Based on what they have learned in this lesson, students create a final draft of their homework sketch, give it a title, and write a caption that explains it. Below the caption, students should provide an explanation about how they came to this interpretation of the event using information learned in class. These creations will be displayed in a rotating "art gallery" (10 at a time for a few days, for example) in the class for everyone to see.

Students should not be graded on their skills as artists. Instead, the focus should be on how the final project demonstrates what they learned in the lesson.

Extension Activities

1. Have students research the reaction in Richmond, Virginia, when a statue of Lincoln and Tad was erected in 2003 to commemorate their visit. (See photograph below.)
2. Diary entries— Let each student choose one:
 - a. Tell the class that the Richmond visit is how Tad spent his 12th birthday! Have students create a diary entry describing the visit to war-torn Richmond from Tad's point of view. Remind them to use prior knowledge and the information they have learned from the four sources as well as the relevant facts about the time period and artwork.
 - b. Remind the class that any Confederate supporters still present in Richmond would have been very upset about Lincoln's visit. Have students create a diary entry describing the visit from a Confederate's point of view. Tell them to use prior knowledge and the information they have learned from the four sources as well as the relevant facts about the time period and artwork.



FROM RICHMOND.

Visit of President Lincoln to Richmond – His Interview with Prominent Citizens – Immense Enthusiasm of the Colored Population – The City Perfectly Tranquil – Navigation on the James Again Resumed.

From Our Own Correspondent.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE JAMES.
RICHMOND, Tuesday, April 4, 1865.

The most interesting fact to be recorded to-day is the visit of the President to Richmond.

Mr. LINCOLN, accompanied by his young son and Admiral PORTER, arrived at the Rocketts at 2 P. M., in the *Malvern*, and proceeded at once to the mansion of Ex-President DAVIS, now the headquarters of Maj.-Gen. WEITZEL.

The arrival of the President soon got noised abroad, and the colored population turned out in great force, and for a time blockaded the quarters of the president, cheering vociferously.

It was to be expected, that a population that three days since were in slavery, should evince a strong desire to look upon the man whose edict had struck forever the manacles from their limbs. A considerable number of the white population cheered the President heartily, and but for the order of the Provost-Marshal, issued yesterday, ordering them to remain within their homes quietly for a few days, without doubt there would have been a large addition to the numbers present. After a short interval the President held a levee – Gen. DEVINS introducing all the officers present. The president shook hands with each, and received the hearty congratulations of all.

The Presidential party attended by Gens. WEITZEL, DEVINS, SHEPLEY, and a brilliant staff of officers, then made a tour round the city – drove rapidly round the capitol – stopping for a few moments to admire CRAWFORD'S magnificent statue of WASHINGTON, in the grounds of the capitol, and returned to Gen. WEITZEL'S headquarters at 5:30.

The President and party left Richmond at 6:30 P. M.

THE FALL OF RICHMOND

Personal Recollections of the Triumphal Entry of Union Troops into the rebel Capital.

By HIRAM T. PECK.

An inspiring feature of the first evening of our occupation of the city was the music of our military bands, discoursing such patriotic airs as "Yankee Doodle," "Hail Columbia," "The Star Spangled Banner," etc. - airs that must have fallen rather oddly on the ears of the citizens, after having listened four years to the music of treason.

Brig.-Gen. G. F. Shipley, Chief of Staff to Gen. Weitzel, was the Military Governor, and Lieut.-Col. F. L. Mannins, Provost-Marshal-General of the Army of the James, was the Provost-Marshal of the city.

CITY VISITED BY PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

On the afternoon of the following day, April 4, President Lincoln arrived in the city; coming up the river from Petersburg, the vessel he was on encountered many obstructions in the river, just below Richmond, in the shape of the sunken ironclads and other craft. It was the first and only opportunity that I ever had of seeing Abraham Lincoln, whose tragic death at the hands of an assassin only 10 days subsequent gave him the title of "the martyr President." When I saw him he was on foot, leading little "Tad" by the hand, on his way from Rocketts Landing to the Jeff Davis Mansion, which was then the headquarters of Gen. Weitzel. A National salute was fired in his honor, and the most enthusiastic cheering took place.

The "contraband," of which there were a large number in the city, exhibited the wildest excitement, bursting into all sorts of characteristic ejaculations, throwing up their hands and dancing about, as if the Savior of mankind Himself had made his second advent on earth. Such expressions as "God bless massa Lincun!" "De dear old man!" etc., were upon every colored lip. Even some of the young ladies of the city caught the general spirit of enthusiasm and were observed to wave their kerchiefs as the President passed along.

After remaining awhile at headquarters he proceeded to the Capitol, followed by the same excited crowd of admirers. Here, as he ascended the steps, while the Star Spangled Banner was waving gaily above the roof, was presented a scene which artists and newspaper correspondents might well portray in colors and in language befitting the glorious nature of the event.