

Walsh School



## PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE CIVIL WAR

**Grade:** 5th

**Teacher:**

Rosemary Johnson

**Artist:**

Krystin Grenon, visual artist and photographer

**Academic Content and Learning Skills:**

Civil War History & Language Arts

**Arts Content:**

Photography

### Overview

This 5th grade unit integrates the study of photography with the study of the Civil War. The Civil War was the first American war that was photographically documented. Students made and used their own pinhole cameras, and developed their photos at nearby Dvorak Park. Students studied Civil War photography, and compared their photographs with Civil War photographs.

### Classroom Goals Addressed by Project

- To understand the causes and outcomes of the Civil War
- To use primary and secondary sources
- To compare photography at the time of the Civil War with photography today

### State Goals Addressed by Project

Civil War history

- Historic and formal aspects of photography

### What Resources were used

- Civil War unit from "Collections for Young Scholars," Volume 5, Book 2, Open Court Publishing
- "Charley Skedaddle" by Patricia Beatty (historical fiction)
- Chicago Historical Society: Civil War and Lincoln Exhibit
- Vintage Photographs: tintypes, daguerreotypes
- Dvorak Park Darkroom facilities- Chicago Park District
- Students made their own "pinhole" cameras out of oatmeal and shoeboxes, using aluminum cans, needles, sandpaper, and black photo tape. They also used photographic paper and chemicals to process and print.

### Key Words/Vocabulary that are most important to this unit

- Photograph
- Darkroom
- Tintype
- Shutter
- Exposure

- Develop
- Camera obscura
- Safe light
- Daguerreotype
- Agitate
- Positive
- Emulsion
- Light tight
- Pinhole camera
- Light source
- Negative
- Enlarger

### **Brief Step-by-Step daily/weekly lesson plan for this unit**

10 two-hour sessions ending with an exhibition at the school and at the park.

For the darkroom work the class of 24 was split into two groups of 12, one group going one session, the next 12 going the next session.

1. Trip to Historical Society to view the Lincoln memorabilia and Photographs of War
2. Make pinhole cameras in classroom
3. & 4. Load cameras with photo paper in Darkroom, make test exposures, develop negatives.
5. & 6. Make test strips and develop positive prints from negatives
- 7 & 8. Continue making prints and reload cameras to take family portraits at home
9. & 10. Develop home negatives and print photos
11. Mount photographs, hang exhibition

### **Assessments Used for this project**

For integrated project:

1. Tested camera exposures by grouping students by same size boxes and assigning different estimated times for exposure of picture.
2. Tested exposure of positive print by making "test strip," exposing of photo paper through the negative at timed intervals and choosing the best one to print.

For subject Areas/ Art Forms:

The students wrote about their experiences in the "Fifth Grade Gazette."

Students wrote "How To" assignments on the pinhole photography process. This writing accompanied the exhibition.

### **Comments/Reflections from Teachers, Artists, Students, Parents**

Teacher:

"With the integrated arts Civil War unit we try to combine as many subjects as we can, so the kids get hands on experiences in addition to what they read in a book. They can actually participate, and understand more by doing it."

Artist:

"The students' interest in photography could be expanded to include making different pinhole cameras, i.e. wide angle with oatmeal box, or stereograph, using 35 mm camera with film."

Students:

"What's a camera without film? That's what I asked until I made a pin hole camera. When our picture came out I was amazed that a shoe box can take a great picture."

"I recommend Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10. They are the best chapters. For those of you who haven't read it, you should. At first I thought it would be a phoney book, but as I got to chapter 7 it all got exciting."