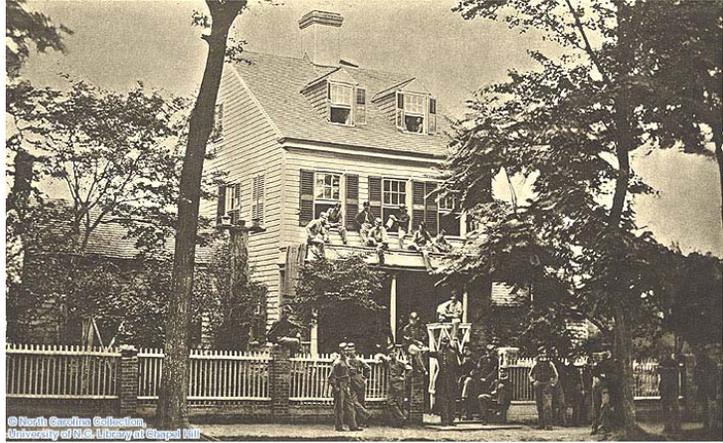


Supplemental Lesson Plan

The Occupation of New Bern: Two Perspectives

When Federal troops landed on the barrier islands off the coast of North Carolina, shock waves resounded across the state. As General Burnside continued his forays into coastal Carolina, people who supported the Confederacy were filled with anxiety and dread. The enslaved people of



North Carolina, however, saw this as their best opportunity for freedom. In this lesson, students will examine two different accounts of the period in New Bern when Union troops began the occupation of the city.

Competency Goals

This lesson can be used in partial fulfillment of the following:

NCSCOS Social Studies Grade 8: 4.02; 4.03

Objectives

After classroom discussion, historical background reading, and examination of two primary source accounts, students will:

- Learn about the fall of New Bern, North Carolina to Union forces on March 14, 1862.
- Understand the strategic importance of New Bern to Union military operations in North Carolina.
- Learn to assess historical resources and draw relevant conclusions.

Teacher Planning

Provide the following materials either through web access to *The North Carolina Civil War Experience* or through downloaded handouts.

Site Narrative – New Bern in the Civil War

Lesson Plan Supplements -

Excerpts from *A Grandmother's Recollection of Dixie* by Mary Norcott Bryan

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/bryan/bryan.html>

Excerpts from *Recollections of My Slavery Days* by William Henry Singleton

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/singleton/singleton.html>

Article - *Reading Slave Narratives: The WPA Interviews* by David Walbert at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-eg/5355>.

Article - *Reading Primary Sources: An Introduction for Students* by Kathryn Walbert at

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/thinking-guide-slave-narrative/745>

Library of Congress (LOC) Teaching with Primary Sources: Analysis Tool

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf

Time Requirement

One to two class periods are required for completion of this lesson, depending on extent of outside reading.

Bell Ringer Activity

1. Ask students to imagine themselves in a situation where their city was being invaded by an enemy army. What kinds of emotions would they feel? On a flip chart or chalkboard, write down the responses.
2. Next ask students to imagine themselves in the same situation, but that they are hostages and the army entering the city is coming to rescue them. What kinds of emotions would they feel? Add these to the list in a separate column.

Teacher Input

1. Explain to the students that they will be examining two historical resources that offer opposing viewpoints on the same event. The first was written by Mary Norcott Bryan, a 21-year-old white woman of the planter class at the time of New Bern's invasion by Union troops. The second account was written by William Henry Singleton, a 27-year old enslaved black man.
2. Teachers should explain that the idiomatic language, dialect, and, in some cases, racist language that can be found in these narratives needs to be read in historical context. Two articles that may be helpful are *Reading Primary Sources: An Introduction for Students* by Kathryn Walbert <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/thinking-guide-slave-narrative/745> and the Library of Congress entry, *A Note on the language of WPA Slave Narratives* at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snlang.html>

Classroom Activities - Guided Practice

Set the background for the lesson by either reading aloud or allowing the students to read individually the site narrative, "New Bern in the Civil War." Emphasize the importance of New Bern as a staging base for Federal military operations in North Carolina.

Divide the class into small groups. Give half of the groups the Bryan excerpts provided in this lesson that relate to her reactions to Union troops entering New Bern. Give the other half of the class the Singleton excerpts that relate to his reactions to the same event. Have the students read the excerpts and discuss them within their group. Have them complete the Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool in order to record what they observe in this account, how it makes them feel, and what questions it raises.

1. Have the groups discuss and answer the following questions:
 - a. What did this narrative tell you about New Bern at the time of the Union occupation?
 - b. What did this narrative tell you about the individual who wrote it?
 - c. What events were described?
 - d. Did you believe everything that you read in your specific assignment? If so, why? If not, why not?
 - e. What emotions, if any, did this account evoke?

2. Ask one group that read the Bryan narrative to report to the class. One member should summarize the narrative for the entire class. Another member should go over their answers to the questions. Other groups that had the same narrative should contribute to the report with any answers or comments that differ from those of the first group. Repeat the process for the Singleton narrative.

Closure

1. Have the class as a whole discuss the major differences between these two accounts.
2. Review the list from the bell ringer activity. How many of the emotions listed for each scenario were evident in these two historical accounts of the same event?

Assessment

Have the students write a newspaper article clearly describing the invasion and occupation of New Bern and the subsequent events that followed. This should be written from the perspective of a reporter that follows the Union troops into New Bern and is writing for a Northern newspaper.

A Grandmother's Recollection of Dixie

by

Mary Norcott Bryan

(Notations in red are misspellings in the original or inserts to clarify sentences.)

In this excerpt, Mary Bryan describes New Bern on the day the Union forces arrived:

*The winter of '61 was a most anxious one, we did not know what would be the result of so much political agitation. In the meantime, work was continued at Woodlawn. Soon we heard news that Fort **Sumpter** had fallen, then people began to talk of war and went to raising companies and regiments. New Bern, being in an exposed position, it was thought best for as many women and children as could leave to do so. In March, '62 the battle of New Bern occurred and such a time of confusion and trouble! We had had extra dinners prepared, expecting to feed the Confederate soldiers. Instead of that, there was a perfect panic and stampede, women, children, nurses, and baggage getting to the depot any way they could. Our home and hundreds of others were left with the dinners cooking, doors open and everything to give our Northern friends a royal feast, which I understand they thoroughly enjoyed.*

*Our house was nicely furnished, a year's provisions in the smokehouse, in the pantry all sorts of Jellies, pickles, catsups, **cordials** and so on, and we panic stricken, running away with a few trunks of hastily packed clothing.*

Some sad and ludicrous scenes occurred. One lady from the West, whose son was a sick soldier, as a last resort, got the boy lifted in an ox-cart, and came driving up to the depot as the train pulled out, and finally pushed him on the rear platform.

I will remark here, that when we returned home at the close of the war, we found our beautiful and valued farm an abandoned plantation, even the cedar trees that divided the fields, had been cut down, the nice comfortable negro cabins had been dismantled, as also the barns and outhouses, the old Colonial brick dwelling, made of bricks from England, was razed to the ground. Houses, cattle, sheep, of course, gone, and an apple orchard of choice apples destroyed.

Bryan describes life as a refugee near Raleigh:

*The refugees, as a general thing, were not cordially received by the up-country people. We went to several places before finally settling, to Greensboro, Lexington, and lastly to a tiny farm four miles from Raleigh. The house was a log cabin, with a shed and low **upsairs** room, but we were very thankful to get to this place; it was a haven of rest.*

*My beautiful boy had left me ere this, succumbing to an attack of fever. He was buried with another baby boy in a corner of the cemetery at Greensboro. We have never been able to find his little body to this day. We soon collected comforts about us at this country place, had a nice garden, plenty of milk and butter. My Mother's room, under the roof, partook of her presence, the white table was covered with snow-white **dimity**, the four windowpanes had a muslin curtain, her wrapper and slippers were near, and on a stand by the bed, were her well-worn Bible and Hymnal. Many a pleasant hour I spent with her there, her sweet individuality pervading every space. She had nothing left but her prayers, which were offered to God three times a day, and always in the **gloaming**. We had constant communication with Raleigh, the news of terrible battles in which our nearest and dearest were either wounded or killed, kept us very unhappy. It was hard to get provisions, everything that could be spared was sent to the army. Both your Grandmothers were kept busy knitting socks for the soldiers, we cut up carpets for blankets, and sent blankets also, and used **comfortables** in their place; boxes went off every day **filled** with necessary things for our boys.*

Excerpts from Mary Norcott Bryan, *A Grandmother's Recollection of Dixie*, Owen G. Dunn, New Bern, pp. 25-27.

Visit <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/bryan/bryan.html> for the entire account.

Recollections of My Slavery Days

by

William Henry Singleton

(Notations in red are misspellings in the original or inserts to clarify sentences.)

In these excerpts, Singleton describes events and activities that take place shortly after the start of the Civil War and later, after Union forces occupy New Bern.

*This incident, as I say, must have happened a short time before the beginning of the war, because shortly afterwards Samuel Hymans, a young man from our community who was attending West Point, came home for a vacation, but when the vacation was over he did not return to West Point. Instead he commenced to organize a company of soldiers. I was very anxious to go with him as his servant and my master, at his request, let me do so. The reason why I was anxious to go with Hymans was because I wanted to learn how to drill. I did learn to drill. In fact I learned how to drill so well that after a while when he was busy with other matters he would tell me to drill the company for him. After Fort **Sumpter** was fired upon, Hyman's company went to form with other companies in Newbern, the First North Carolina Cavalry. This regiment was stationed at Newbern until the 14th of March, 1862, when Burnside and Foster captured Newbern and drove our regiment to Kinston.*

Singleton describes his escape from Confederate-held territory in Kinston back to New Bern after the Union forces arrive:

*At Kinston, I ran away from the regiment and made my way to Burnside's headquarters at Newbern. I secured employment as the servant of Col. Leggett, of the 10th Connecticut Regiment. I told the Colonel my story, but I found out later that my story was not believed and that they thought I had been sent by the rebels to secure information for them about the Union troops. I soon had an opportunity, however, to convince them of my honesty. A stranger was brought in to the camp and brought to headquarters as a suspicious person. He would give no information about himself and no one, of course, knew anything about him. Finally I was sent for and asked if I knew the man. I replied that I did, that he was Major Richardson of the First North Carolina Cavalry. After giving this information I was sent out of the room and later the **adjutant** on General Foster's staff came to me and told me I must not be too positive about this man because he was a Union man. My reply was, "If I am not correct, you can cut my throat." He told the guard to keep a watch over me, that they had not got through with me. So I was held until they could secure further information. They secured information the next day that I was a slave and had been a servant for one of the officers in the First North Carolina Cavalry and that it was a fact that I had run away from there. This*

information was *secured* from Colonel Leggett, for it was by his *sentries* that I was picked up when I came into the Union lines. Then I was taken to General Burnside's headquarters and asked the best way to reach the rebels at *Wives (Wise or Wyse's)* Forks, before you could get into Kinston. I laid the route out for them the best I knew how, but said that if I were going to command the expedition I would give them a flank movement by the way of the Trent river, which was five miles farther from *Wives Forks* than the Neuse river. But they did not accept my proposition and attacked directly, with the result that they were repulsed.

Singleton petitions for the right to fight for his freedom:

I took part in that attack as a guide and had a horse shot from under me. A few days later I told Colonel Leggett that I would not fight any more unless I was prepared to defend myself. He said, "We never will take niggers in the army to fight. The war will be over before your people ever get in." I replied, "The war will not be over until I have had a chance to spill my blood. If that is your feeling toward me, pay me what you owe me and I will take it and go." He owed me five dollars and he paid me. I took that five dollars and hired the A. M. E. Zion church at Newbern and commenced to recruit a regiment of colored men. I secured the thousand men and they appointed me as their colonel and I drilled them with cornstalks for guns. We had no way, of course, of getting guns and equipment. We drilled once a week. I supported myself by whatever I could get to do and my men did likewise.

Later in his narrative, Singleton discusses the formation of a regiment of United States Colored Troops:

*On January 1, 1863, he (*Lincoln*) signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which made me and all the rest of my race free. We could not be bought and sold any more or whipped or made to work without pay. We were not to be treated as things without souls any more, but as human beings. Of course I do not remember that I thought it all out in this way when I learned what President Lincoln had done. I am sure I did not. And the men in my regiment did not. I had gone back to Newbern then. The thing we expected was that we would be taken into the federal service at once. It was not until May 28, 1863, however, that the thing we had hoped for so long came to pass, when Colonel James C. Beecher, a brother of Henry Ward Beecher, that great champion of our race, came and took command of the regiment. I was appointed Sergeant of Company G, being the first colored man to be accepted into the federal service and the only colored man that furnished the government a thousand men in the Civil War. The regiment was at first called the First North Carolina Colored Regiment. It later became known as the 35th Regiment, United States Colored troops. Soon afterwards we were armed and equipped and shipped to South Carolina and stationed at Charleston Harbor. From that time until June, 1866, when we were mustered out at Charleston, South Carolina, I was in active service, ranking as First Sergeant, Company G, 35th U. S. Colored Infantry. J. C. White was the Captain of that company and Colonel James C. Beecher was the commander of the*

regiment. We saw active service in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia. I was wounded in the right leg at the battle of Alusta, Florida. After the war ended we were stationed for a time in South Carolina doing guard duty and were finally mustered out of the service on June 1, 1866. My honorable discharge from the service dated on that day, although it is worn and not very legible now, as you can see, is one of my most prized possessions. Some years ago a man from the government service in Washington made out for me in a detailed form a record of my war service. It is in much more complete form than I have set it down here, but I think such details are of more interest to one's family than to the general public.

Excerpt from *Recollections of My Slavery Days*, William Henry Singleton, 1922, pages 7-9. Visit <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/singleton/singleton.html> for the entire account.