

## Flags of the Civil War

**Note to teachers:** This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the Michigan Time Traveler page. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

### MASTERY QUESTIONS

*(SOC 1.1. Time and Chronology; SOC. 1.2. Comprehending the Past; SOC 1.3. Analyzing and Interpreting the Past)*

- **Michigan's Flags:** Why were Civil War flags important to soldiers during and after the war? Why did Governor Henry H. Crapo ask soldiers to return their flags to the people of Michigan?
- **The Captured Flags:** Why did Governor Van Wagoner return the Confederate battle flags to the southern states?
- **A Mystery Flag:** What did Milton Devinney and his mother donate to the State Archives of Michigan? Why was it unusual for a flag bearer to survive the war? What characteristics describe Milton Devinney?
- **Returning a Confederate Civilian Flag—2003:** What did curators, state historians, Milton Devinney and other Seage descendants decide to do with the Seage Flag? Why?

### ACTIVITY ONE: The Importance of Symbols

*(SOC III.2. Ideals of Democracy; SOC III.3. Democracy in Action; SOC VI..2 Group Discussion; ELA 6. Voice; ELA 9. Depth of Understanding)*

**Discuss:** A symbol is an object that represents an idea, a feeling, a memory. It can mean many different things to many people. Symbols can trigger memories for people of an experience they have had, of people they know or knew. People often become emotionally attached to symbols because they remind them of issues that have lasting importance to them. Symbols can have different meanings for different people.

Flags are a piece of cloth with colors, designs and/or symbols used to represent a country or state. The Stars and Bars flag was used as the official flag of the Confederacy from March 1861 to May of 1863. While Civil War researchers do not know what the bars stood for, they do know that the stars stood for the seven original Confederate States. Ask students if any of them know which were the seven original Confederate States. (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas.) Then, ask students how they think Confederate soldiers, northerners and Henry Seage might have felt about the Stars and Bars flag. How do they feel about it today?

**Directions:** Ask students to bring in an object that symbolizes something very important to them—an event, an idea, an organization or someone who has been special in their lives. Ask them to prepare a brief presentation about the symbolic object. They should tell the class what the object is, describe it and explain what it symbolizes to them. Encourage the class to ask the presenters questions.

## **ACTIVITY TWO: Returning Objects to Their Rightful Owners**

*(SOC 1.2. Comprehending the Past; SOC 1.3. Analyzing and Interpreting the Past; SOC 1.4. Judging Decisions from the Past; SOC II.1. Diversity of People, Places, and Cultures; SOC III..2 Ideals of American Democracy; III..3 Democracy in Action SOC VI. Public Discourse and Decision Making: SOC VII. Discussion; SOC VII.1. Responsible Personal Conduct; ELA 3. Meaning and Communication in Context)*

**Discuss:** People often destroy or take enemy objects during wartime. In 2001, the Taliban Muslims in Afghanistan destroyed pre-Islamic Buddah statues from the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Currently, the Greek government is trying to have the marble carving that Lord Elgin of Great Britain took from Athens' Parthenon 200 years ago returned to Greece. During World War II, Nazi Germans often stole rather than destroy art.

Repatriation of artifacts—the concept of returning three-dimensional objects to their rightful owners in their respective countries—is an important topic for museums.

Nearly fifty years ago, with the help of the U.S. State Department, the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) returned a painting, *The Seine at Asnieres* by Claude Monet, to the French government. In 1948 the DIA had bought the painting not knowing Nazis had stolen it. The DIA was the only American art museum to return a Nazi-looted painting until 1999. That year the Seattle Art Museum made news when it returned a painting by Henri Matisse to a Jewish family who lost it to the Nazis.

If an institution—such as a museum—acquires an object and the museum curator later learns that the donor or a previous owner actually stole the object, the ethics require the museum to return the object to its rightful owners. Ask students to discuss this issue. To whom do they think the Monet or Matisse painting belongs? Have them explain their reasoning. Ask them what they think about the return of the Seage flag to Fredericksburg, Virginia.

### **Directions**

#### **Option One:**

Ask students to look at these Web sites or find others to learn more about repatriation and/or destruction of artifacts. Have them research one issue—and write an essay about the specific artifacts in question: What artifacts are in question? Who created them? When were the artifacts created? Who claims them? Why do they want them?

- National Archives: [http://www.archives.gov/research\\_room/holocaust\\_era\\_assets/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/holocaust_era_assets/index.html)
- Discussion of the Elgin marble carvings: <http://www.museum-security.org/elginmarbles.html>
- Taliban destroy Buddahs: [http://hss.fullerton.edu/comparative/over\\_world\\_protests.htm](http://hss.fullerton.edu/comparative/over_world_protests.htm)
- World Heritage (UNESCO): <http://whc.unesco.org/nwhc/pages/home/pages/homepage.htm>
- International Committee of the Blue Shield: <http://www.ifla.org/blueshield.htm>
- ICOMOS (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property): <http://www.icomos.org/>

#### **Option Two:**

Ask students to write about an experience they have had when someone returned something to them or they returned an object to someone else? Ask them to explain what happened. What was the object? Why did they or the other person return it? How did they feel receiving or returning the object? How do they think the other person felt?

### **ACTIVITY THREE: Design a Flag**

*(SOC VI. Group Discussion; Arts 2. Creating)*

Have students each design a flag that represents their class. First have a discussion about what they would like their flag to mean. Have them think about shapes, colors and symbols that could convey their meaning. Copy and pass out page four with the outline of a flag on it.

After they draw their flags, have them each of them present their flag and explain the symbols they chose to represent their class. Ask them how they made their choices and decisions.

### **ACTIVITY FOUR: Capture the Flag**

This game can be played on a field or in a gym. It is even more fun in woods!

- Choose an area outside with a lot of space.
- Draw a line dividing the area into two courts.
- Divide the class in two.
- Have one person be the captain of each team and give them each a flag—a towel – each should be a different color.
- Have each team decide where they are going to keep or hide their flag. It cannot be on a person's body.
- Each team should designate an individual as a flag guard.
- They should also designate a team member to be a prison guard.
- The object of the game is to capture the other team's flag.
- When the game starts, students should go to the opposite court and try to get the flag.
- If a member of the opposite team tags them, they have to go to prison on the opponents' side. Other team members may free their teammates by tagging them.
- When a member of one team has successfully "captured" their opponents' flag and brought it safely back to their court, they are declared the winner of the game.

### **Other Web Resources**

- Visit *The Civil War, 1861-1865*  
<http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/museum/explore/museums/hismus/prehist/civilwar/>.  
Then go to *Kids' Stuff* and *Teachers' Stuff*.
- Flag Etiquette: <http://www.usflag.org/flag.etiquette.html>
- Stars and Bars flag (U.S.): <http://fotw.vexillum.com/flags/us-csa1.html>

# MY FLAG

