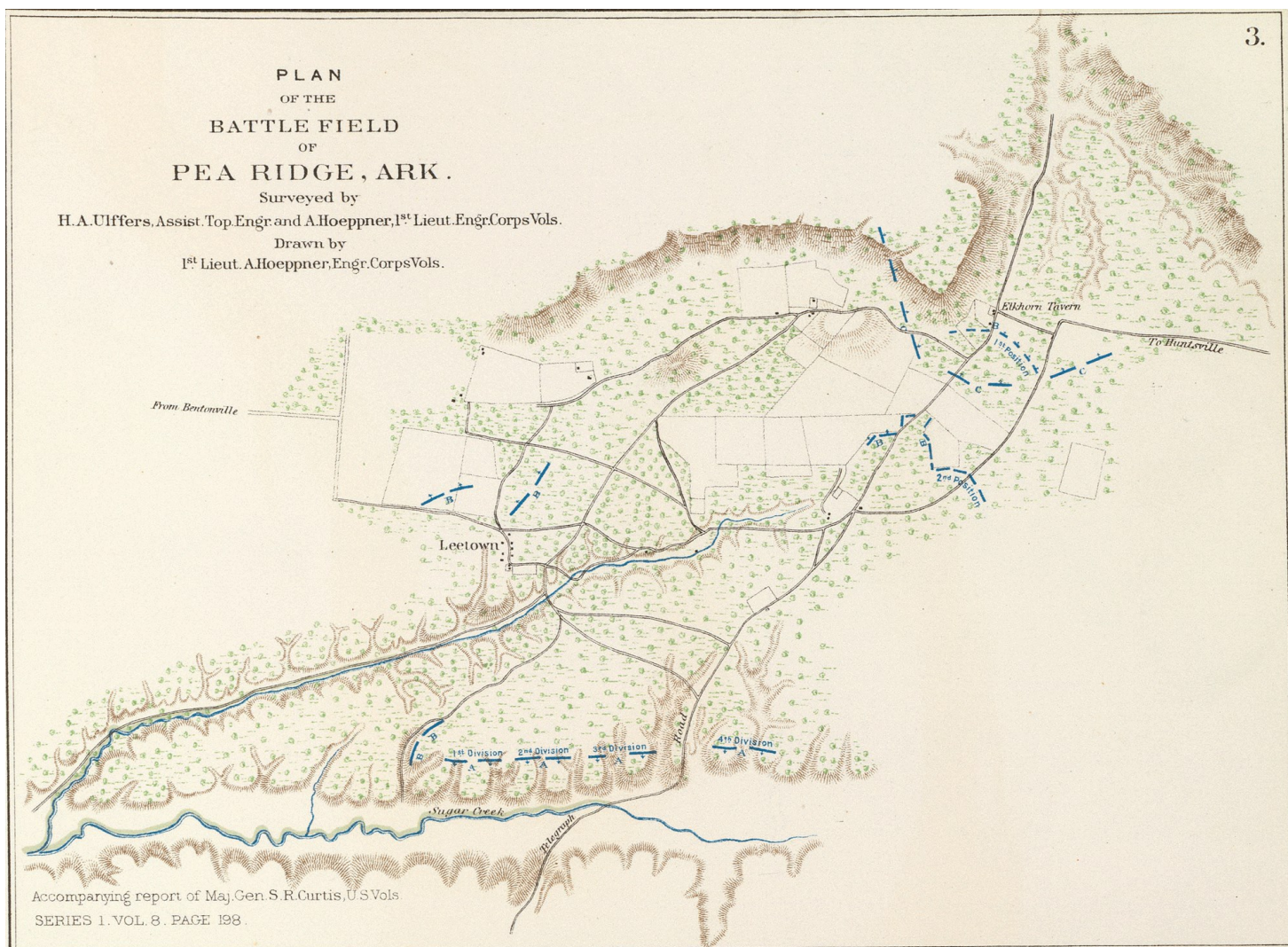


Hallowed Ground: Arkansas's Historic Places in the Civil War

Learning from Statewide Historic Places



Map of the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas



ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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Instructional Guidelines

Grade Level:

7-12

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson plan is to introduce students to how the American Civil War impacted individuals and communities in Arkansas economically and socially by an examination of primary sources related to Civil War battles or skirmishes in the state.

Curriculum Frameworks

Arkansas History Grade 7

H.7.AH.7-8.3 Analyze the historical significance of selected Civil War battles, events, and people on various regions of Arkansas .

Arkansas History Grades 9-12

Era3.3.AH.9-12.2 Research social, economic, and political effects of the Civil War on citizens in various regions from multiple perspectives (e.g., cause and effect of resource scarcity, civil unrest, changes in Southern way of life, lack of government, shifts in leadership and power, dual governments) .

American History 1800-1900

Era5.2.8.2 Explain ways economic decisions affected individuals, businesses and society during the course of the Civil War and over time.

Objectives

- Students will learn about how major battles in Arkansas impacted individuals economically and socially, utilizing perspectives from both sides of the conflict.
- Students will read and analyze primary sources related to major Civil War battles in Arkansas.

Civil War Resources

1. Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Website

<https://www.arkansascivilwar150.com/>

This website offers a timeline of the war in Arkansas, activities for kids, links to other Arkansas Civil War lesson plans, podcasts, photographs, and many other resources teachers can use in the classroom.

2. Documenting the American South: The Southern Homefront

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/index.html>

This website offers several primary sources related to the southern experience during the Civil War, including letters and diaries.

3. The National Archives

<http://docsteach.org/home/civilwar>

The National Archives includes lesson plans and original documents that can help enhance Civil War learning in your classroom.

4. The Library of Congress Lesson Plans on the Civil War

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/civil-war/lessonplans.html>

Includes a number of lesson plans related to the Civil War.

5. PBS Documentary Ken Burns's *The Civil War*

<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war/classroom/overview/>

This site includes links to the award-winning documentary miniseries *The Civil War* directed by Ken Burns, as well as related lesson plans.

6. Teaching with Historic Places by the National Park Service

https://www.nps.gov/subjects/teachingwithhistoricplaces/lessons-by-period.htm#Mid_19th_Century

This website offers lesson plans about a variety of historic battlefield sites around the United States, including the battle of Prairie Grove in Arkansas.

7. The Civil War Trust Curriculum

<http://www.civilwar.org/education/teachers/curriculum/>

The Civil War Trust offers curriculums for all grade levels and for gifted and talented students.

8. A Nation Divided: Arkansas and the Civil War

<https://www.butlercenter.org/civilwararkansas/educational-resources.html>

The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies offers a variety of lesson plans related to the Civil War in Arkansas.

Lesson Plan Procedures

1. Ask students to read “A Short Summary of the Civil War in Arkansas.”
2. As individuals or in groups, have students fill out the “Arkansas Civil War Summary Timeline Activity.”
3. Have students read “The Battle of Prairie Grove and Prairie Grove Battlefield.”
4. Have students examine the photographs that go along with “The Battle of Prairie Grove and Prairie Grove Battlefield”
5. Have students read “Caldonia Borden Brandenburg Remembers Prairie Grove.”
6. Ask students to fill out “Analyzing Caldonia Borden’s Experience of the Battle of Prairie Grove” and discuss the results.
7. Ask students to read the short introduction to the “Battle of Helena.”
8. Ask students to review the photographs that go along with the “Battle of Helena” reading.
9. Ask students to read the “A Union Soldier Writes Home From Arkansas.”
10. Ask students to fill out “Analyzing A Union Soldier Writes Home From Arkansas” and discuss the results.
11. Ask students to read “Action at Dardanelle” and to review the photograph of the steamship used to transport Union soldiers to the battle.
12. Ask students to read “A Slave Talks about Soldiers Freeing the Slaves in Yell County, Arkansas.”
13. Ask students to fill out “Analyzing A Slave Talks about Soldiers Freeing the Slave in Yell County, Arkansas” and discuss the results.

A Short Summary of the Civil War in Arkansas *

The Civil War caused massive devastation in the rural, frontier state of Arkansas. It is estimated that over 7,000 Arkansas Confederate soldiers, 1,700 white Arkansas Union soldiers, hundreds of Arkansas African-American soldiers, and thousands of Arkansas citizens died during this crisis. What caused this war, and what role did Arkansas play in this greatest crisis in American history?

One of the immediate causes of the Civil War was the conflict over whether or not America's new Western territories, including New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, and parts of California, would become slave states or free states. The Southern slave states wanted slavery to expand. The Northern free states did not want slavery to expand, in part because they did not want to compete with unpaid labor.

Another conflict that led to the Civil War was Southern resentment of taxes they had to pay on Northern-produced goods such as paper and buttons. Southern states also resented paying taxes to the federal government for improvements such as roads and canals, which were needed more in the industrial North than in the rural South.

When Abraham Lincoln, whose political party was against slavery, was elected President of the United States in 1860, seven Southern states seceded. They left the United States of America and formed their own country: the Confederate States of America. Arkansas was asked to become part of the Confederate nation. Arkansas was not sure whether or not to join the Confederacy. At first, Arkansas lawmakers voted not to secede. However, after the Civil War began in 1861 at Ft. Sumter, South Carolina, the lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to leave the United States and join the Confederacy.

Thousands of young Arkansas men joined the Confederate army and left home wearing homemade clothes and carrying hunting rifles and shotguns. These volunteer soldiers marched to Little Rock or other larger cities, where they were placed into regiments. Because Arkansas had a small population and was located on the Western edge of the Confederacy, Confederate leaders did not think much fighting would occur in Arkansas. The Confederate government considered Arkansas valuable mainly as a source of soldiers to send East to fight. Some Arkansas soldiers were sent as far away as Virginia for battle.

However, fighting did begin in Arkansas almost immediately. The first battles in Arkansas occurred after Confederate generals attacked Missouri to try and bring it into the Confederacy. Union General Samuel Curtis pushed Confederate troops out of Missouri and into northern Arkansas to Pea Ridge. Confederate General Earl van Dorn led his troops, including 800 Cherokee soldiers, to attack the Union soldiers at Pea Ridge on March 7-8, 1862. The battle of Pea Ridge was fierce: about 1,400 Union and 2,000 Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded.

After the Battle of Pea Ridge, the largest battle in Arkansas, most of the Confederate soldiers left Arkansas and went to Mississippi to join other Rebel troops. Union General Curtis then marched his men into Helena and occupied the city, liberating thousands of slaves along the way.

With thousands of Union soldiers and freed slaves crowded into the small town of Helena, disease and hunger became very common. Union troops got food and supplies by stealing from homes, fields, smokehouses and root cellars in the countryside. Some soldiers began calling Helena "Hell-in-Arkansas" because of the terrible conditions. Throughout the war, disease was common due to unsanitary conditions wherever large numbers of soldiers camped.

In fall of 1862 Confederate General Thomas Hindman was sent to command Arkansas. Hindman started conscripting soldiers: forcing young men to join the army. Many men were scared of conscription and began running away to hide. Hindman decided to attack Springfield, Missouri, in another attempt to bring Missouri into the Confederacy. Even though some of his men didn't have shoes or guns, Hindman started marching his army to Missouri. Union troops met the Confederates at Prairie Grove on December 7, and a violent battle was fought. The Union won the Battle of Prairie Grove at a great human cost: 1,261 Union and 1,317 Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded. In December, Hindman decided to move from the area and left behind 4,000 sick and wounded soldiers. The starving, exhausted men slowly walked to Little Rock through freezing rain and snow.

Near the end of 1862, the Union decided to overtake the Confederate river town of Vicksburg, Mississippi, which would give the Union control of the Mississippi River. If the Union could control the Mississippi River, they would be able to move boats and men straight through the Confederacy. Union General John McClernand decided to attack the Confederate troops at the Arkansas Post before attacking Vicksburg. Arkansas Post was attacked on January 10-11, 1863. Only 140 Confederates were killed or wounded, but 4,800 were captured and sent to prisoner of war camps. Union casualties totaled 1,100. After Vicksburg fell to the Union on July 4, Arkansas was cut off from the rest of the Confederacy and food and supplies became even more scarce.

The Union victories at Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove and Arkansas Post ensured that Missouri would remain in the Union throughout the war. These defeats had another important impact: they plunged northern Arkansas into chaos. Many Confederate and Union soldiers began deserting their armies. If a deserter was caught, he could be executed for treason. Deserters had to stay in hiding and live by stealing food and supplies. Sheriffs and judges left their posts. Schools, courts, and jails stopped functioning. Many citizens took advantage of the unstable situation and began to commit crimes against their own neighbors. Women and children whose men were off fighting were at the mercy of thieves and murderers. Thousands of citizens fled the countryside out of fear, or banded together to protect themselves from guerilla attacks.

About a year after the Union occupied Helena, Confederate General Theophilus Holmes tried to recapture the city. His troops attacked Helena on July 4, 1863. Because the Union troops were behind fortifications, they only lost 239 men. However, 1,636 Confederates died, were captured or wounded at the Battle of Helena. The Union victory at Helena led to the Union invasion of Little Rock.

General Frederick Steele led 12,000 Union soldiers in a march from Helena to Little Rock. On September 10, 1863, the Union troops captured Little Rock. The Confederate leaders fled Little Rock and set up their government in Washington, Arkansas. Little Rock was the fourth of eleven Confederate capitals to fall to the Union. During the struggle over Little Rock, 137 Union and about 60 Confederate soldiers died. Many other Confederate soldiers became disheartened watching their capital fall and deserted. The Union also captured Pine Bluff and Fort Smith with minor casualties on both sides. Fayetteville was a Union outpost for most of the war.

The last major campaign in Arkansas was when General Steele marched South from Little Rock to participate in a planned invasion of Texas. Steele's campaign was called the "Camden Expedition" and was part of the larger "Red River Campaign," which lasted from March 23 to May 2, 1864. Confederate troops clashed with the Union troops in several places: Marks' Mills, Prairie D'Ane, Jenkins' Ferry, Elkins' Ferry and Poison Spring. The battle of Poison Spring is significant because almost 200 African-American soldiers of the First Kansas Colored Infantry were killed or wounded. After the Confederates won the battle they took the remaining white Union soldiers prisoner, but killed many of the black soldiers. Steele's campaign was not successful, and he marched his men back to Little Rock. Although this campaign had no effect on the war as a whole, at least 260 Union and 904 Confederate soldiers died on these battlefields.

Throughout the war, support for the Union steadily grew in Arkansas. Thousands of white Arkansans from northern Arkansas joined the Union army or went to live in Union-occupied towns. Many people from mountainous north Arkansas did not want to fight in support of slavery, because there weren't many slaves in that part of the state. Thousands of black Arkansans also joined the Union army in "colored" regiments. In 1864 a Unionist state government was established in Little Rock. By the end of the Civil War about one-third of Arkansas soldiers were fighting for the Union.

The war was over for Arkansas in June of 1865, when General Edmund Kirby Smith surrendered all Confederate forces west of the Mississippi River. The Civil War bankrupted Arkansas and caused the death of approximately one-eighth of the adult male population. Another one-eighth of the population was permanently disabled. Thousands of civilians died from starvation or were killed by the roving bands of guerillas. Someone described the scene in southwestern Arkansas after the war: "Desolation met our gaze; abandoned and burned homes, uncultivated land overgrown with bushes, half starved women and children; gaunt, ragged men, stumbling along the road, just mustered out of the army, trying to find their families and friends, and wondering if they had a home left." The Civil War was the greatest disaster in Arkansas history.

VOCABULARY

Conscription: Forced enrollment into the armed services by the government; “the draft.”

Deserter: A soldier who leaves the armed services without permission. If caught, deserters would face severe punishment, even death.

Fortifications: Something that is built to defend soldiers from the enemy. Civil War fortifications often consisted of piled-up earth.

Guerilla soldier: A member of a small, irregular military force that operates “outside” of the regular army. Civil War guerillas would usually travel in small bands that could move quickly. Guerilla soldiers fought off the battlefield, attacking civilians and enemy troops on roadsides and in towns. Guerilla warfare was very common in Arkansas during the Civil War.

Industrial: An industrial community is one that depends on the commercial production of goods in factories. The factories provided jobs, and the produced goods were sold for profit. The Union was much more industrial than the Confederacy.

Liberate: To free. Slaves were liberated during and after the Civil War.

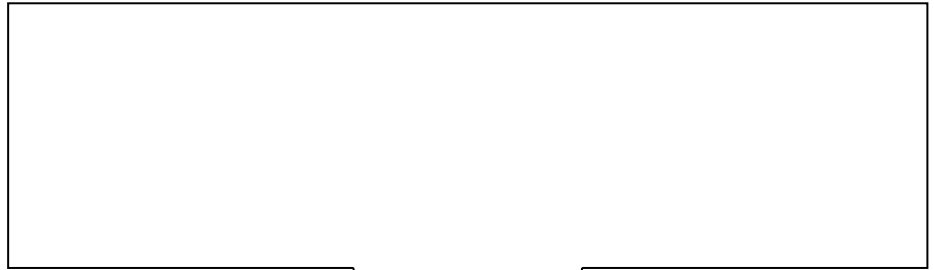
Rural: A rural community depends on agriculture (farming) for jobs and money. The Confederacy was much more rural than the north. The Southern agricultural economy depended on slavery.

Secede: To withdraw from an organization. The Southern states who joined the Confederacy seceded from the United States of America to form their own country.

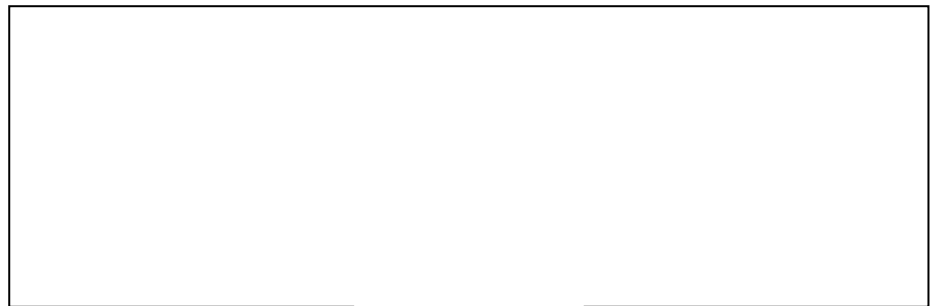
Arkansas Civil War Summary Timeline Activity

Directions: Read "A Short Summary of the Civil War in Arkansas" and then fill in the events that happened on the dates mentioned in the texts that are listed on the side of the boxes below.

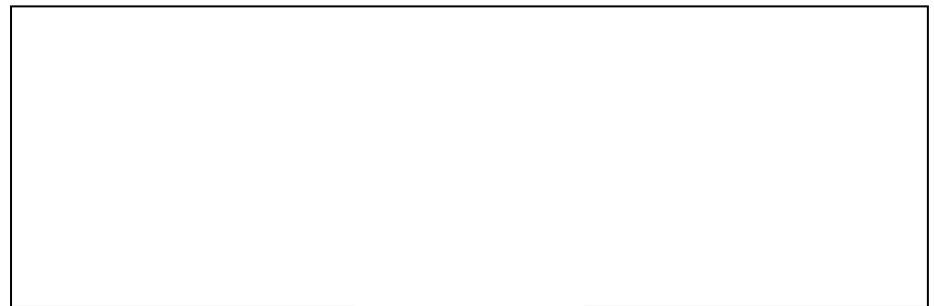
1861



March 7– 8
1862



Fall
1862

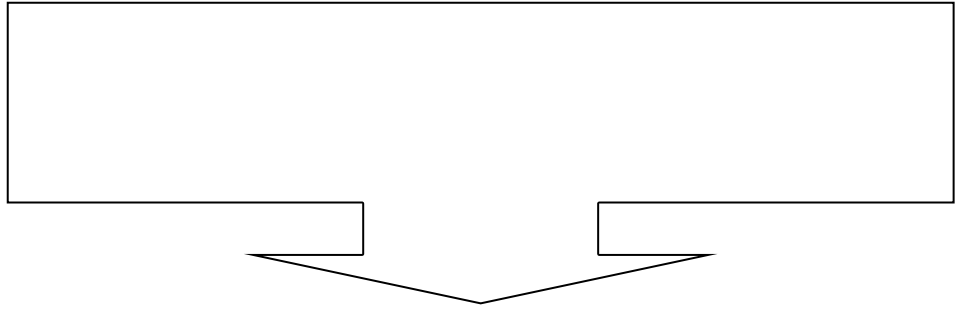


December 7
1862

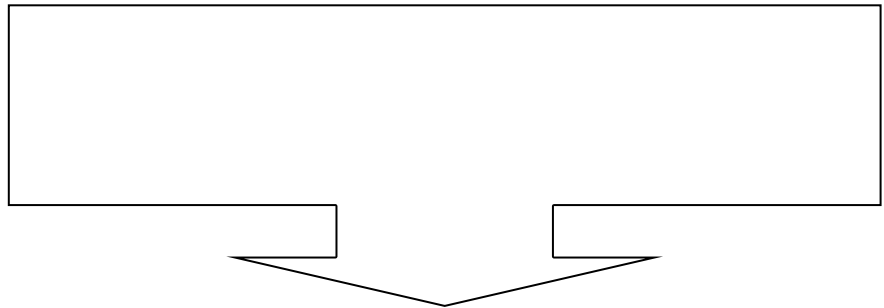


Arkansas Civil War Summary Timeline Activity Contin-

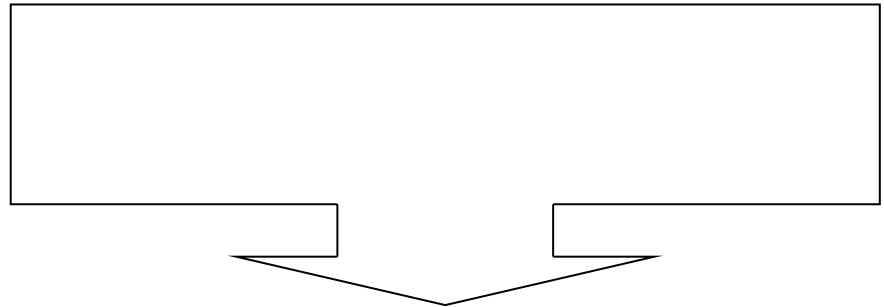
January 10-11
1863



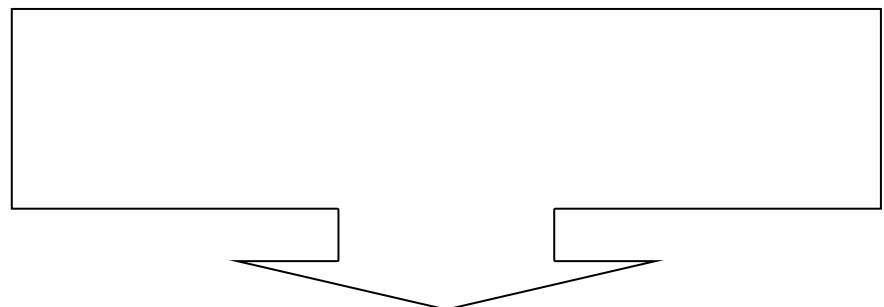
July 4
1863



September
10



March 23-
May 2

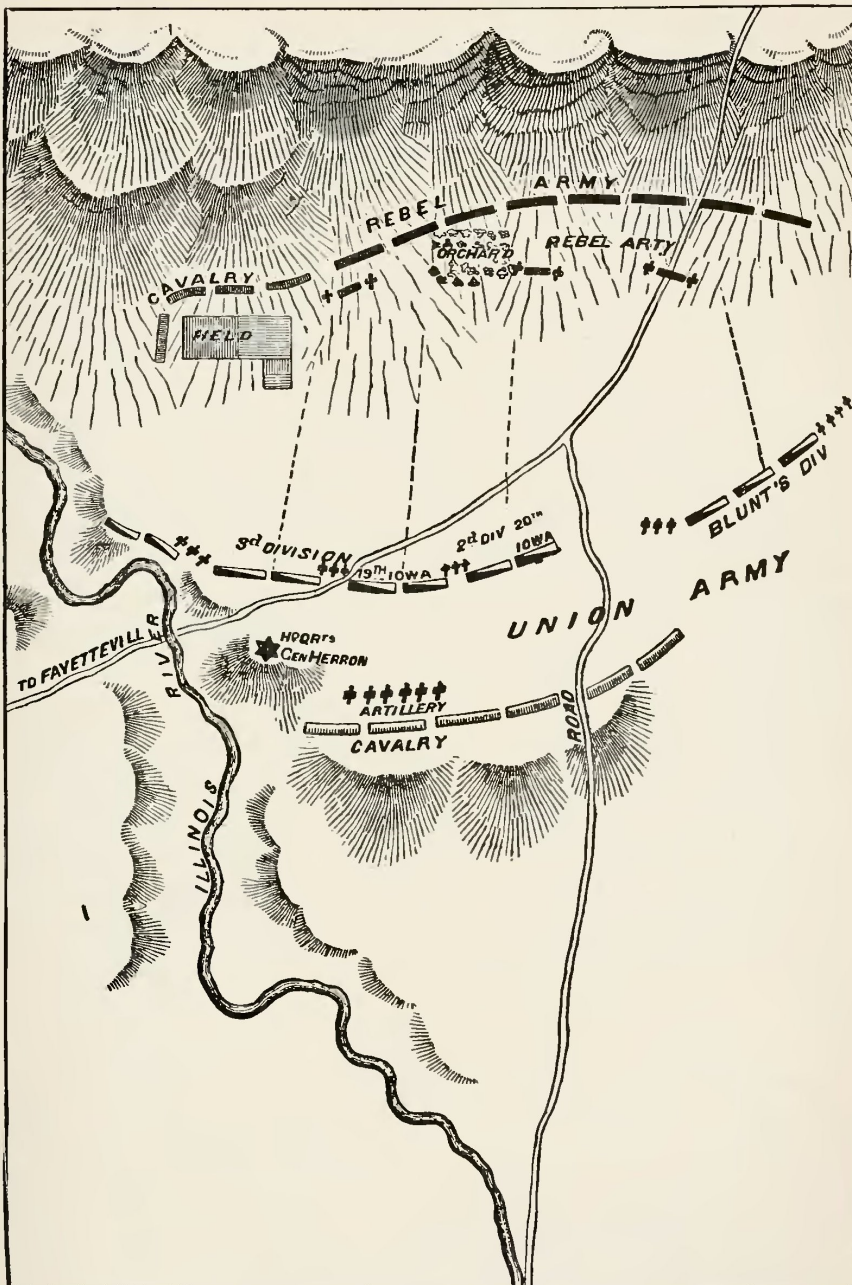


The Battle of Prairie Grove and Prairie Grove Battlefield (Washington County)

The Battle of Prairie Grove was a major Civil War battle that took place in Northwest Arkansas on December 7, 1862. General Thomas C. Hindman organized a Confederate army hoping to seize Missouri and defend Arkansas from the Union. Hindman's troops and the troops of Union Generals Francis J. Herron and James G. Blunt met on a ridge near Prairie Grove. Fighting took place on the ridge and near the family home of the Bordens.

Union soldiers were better equipped than the Confederates with guns, ammunition, and food; so after a day of fighting, General Hindman ordered his troops to retreat during the night. The Battle of Prairie Grove was a Union victory, but casualties were about equal on both sides with over 2,700 total men killed, wounded, or missing.

The Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park preserves this important site for future generations to learn about the battle. It is considered one of the most intact battlefields in the United States.



The map to the left shows the battlefield from above. The battle happened along a ridge line that overlooked several fields owned by local farmers. This ridge line was also home to the Borden family, who were forced to escape to the Morton family house nearby. Images of the Morton House and cellar where the Borden family and their neighbors hid out during the battle are on the next page.



The Borden House at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park, Courtesy Arkansas State Parks



The Morton House, where the Borden Family and their neighbors waited out the Battle of Prairie Grove in the cellar. Courtesy Arkansas State Parks.



The Morton House Cellar, Courtesy Arkansas State Parks

Caldonia Borden Brandenburg Remembers Prairie Grove *

This reading was excerpted from an oral history of Caldonia Ann Borden Brandenburg compiled in 1982 by Eve Brandenburg Acuff from notes and conversations from 1937 until Caldonia's death on November 29, 1943.

On the sixth of December [1862], the first Yankee was in our home. Then two more came and started to tear things up. They turned up the foot of the bed and found Pa's saddle bags which had two handles. Ma got hold of one and the Yankee the other. He dragged her all over the room and the baby got scared and screamed so loud that Ma had to turn loose.

One early morning [December 7, 1862] Pa told us to move out as there was to be a battle very soon on our hill. We went to a neighbor's a mile away, taking what we could carry and some food. The battle started on the hill where our house was. We could hear the cannons and see their heads rise up to fire. We hadn't had any breakfast, we were too excited to be hungry. About one o'clock in the afternoon the noise got louder and closer. It occurred to Pa that we were in danger so he rushed us to the cellar just before the shooting started around the [Morton] house, where we were. In the cellar there were barrels of kraut, cider and cider vinegar, apples and potatoes, four men, seven women, and eight children.

After dark, it got quiet and we came out of the cellar. There was a dead man across the cellar door, wounded and dying men all around. I can still hear them calling "help-help-help." The men worked through the night helping the wounded. Yankees and Rebels all got the same care. Four died that night. One soldier's leg was just hanging by the skin and the doctor cut it off and threw it outside. It sure was scary and pitiful. Some of us got sick.

Pa sneaked back up the hill and found that our beautiful two-story house that was painted light yellow with green trim, the home that we all loved so much, had been burned to the ground after the Yankees plundered the inside... We never got a thing out of our home, not even a change of clothes. They killed and ate our cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens and used what we had stored in our cellar... They took everything they could use, then set the house on fire. We had 60 bushels of wheat stored upstairs and it slowly burned for three weeks in the rubble.

All of the kinfolks and neighbors gave us food, clothing and bedding and household goods that they could spare, to help us get started again... As soon as it was safe for us kids to go on the battle fields, we went and picked up clothes, canteens, blankets and anything we found to use. We had to put everything in boiling water to kill the "grey backs" [body lice]...

When the Yankees burned our house, they burned Uncle Ed's and Uncle Will's houses the same evening. The officers took Grandma's house for headquarter so it was saved... We had the Yankees in the winter and the bushwackers in the summer... We had to hide out everything we could and then sometimes the Yankees found it. We had to live on bran bread sometimes because they took our flour and meat and other foods, so we had poor pickins then. We buried things—some people buried things in the cemetery. They shaped the dirt on top like a grave but the Yankees... or Bushwackers got on to that after awhile and began to dig in the fresh graves, and once they found a barrel of whiskey...

Well, in March of 1864 one day the Yankees ran onto two of the Southern boys and the only thing the boys could do was to run as they weren't armed. We were watching and we saw the boys fall. We went closer to see who they were and they were half dead. We knew them, they were our neighbors and it was a half a mile to their house, so an old man and a woman helped four of us kids move the bodies. Brother Will and I each took a hand, Tom and Reynold each took a foot and the old man carried the head and the woman put a board under the hips and shoulders and we carried them one by one to their folks. That was some time, too. A lot I can't tell... it shakes me up so... All we thought of during the war was to save ourselves. We didn't have time to pray and when we had time we were too tired, but God took care of us... Well, we lived over it but I don't have any love for a Yankee.

* Courtesy of Prairie Grove State Park and the National Park Services' Teaching With Historic Places lesson plan on The Battle of Prairie Grove: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/teachingwithhistoricplaces/index.htm>

Vocabulary for “Caldonia Borden Brandenburg Remembers Prairie Grove”

Yankee: A Union soldier during the Civil War.

Saddle bag: Each of a pair of bags attached behind the saddle on a horse.

Cellar: A room below ground level in a house, typically one used for storing food stuffs that need cool to keep for long periods of time.

Kraut: Sauerkraut, a dish made by preserving cabbage with salt water or brine.

Bushwhacker: A guerrilla fighter (originally in the American Civil War).

Discussion Questions for “Caldonia Borden Brandenburg Remembers Prairie Grove”

1. What do you think the “Yankees” were looking for in Mr. Borden’s saddlebags?
2. Where did the Borden family go during the battle? Why?
3. What did Caldonia see after emerging from the cellar after the battle?
4. What is a bushwhacker? How did the Bordens try to hide their possessions? Why do you think it was easy for bushwhackers to steal from citizens during this time?
5. Based on the language the Caldonia Borden Brandenburg uses in her story, what were the political sympathies of the Borden family? Were they Unionists or Confederates? How do you know?
6. How did the battle of Prairie Grove impact the Borden family economically? Use examples from the essay to back up your ideas.

Analyzing Caldonia Borden's Experience of the Battle of Prairie Grove

Directions: After reading Caldonia Borden Brandenburg's memoir of the battle of Prairie Grove, underline keywords that you think are connected to the following concerns her family faced: Economic concerns, Social concerns, Political concerns, or Personal concerns. Then, write your words in the boxes below. Once you have created your list, explain why you think the keywords you have chosen fit under these headings in the space below.

Economic Concerns	Social Concerns
Political Concerns	Personal Concerns

Economic Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
Social Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
Political Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
Personal Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?

The Battle of Helena

The battle of Helena took place on July 4, 1863. For a year prior to the battle, Helena has been a logistical base for the Union Army. Many historians describe the presence of the Union army in Helena as a “thorn in the side of the Confederates” because it meant that the Union controlled much of the Mississippi River, an important supply line. However, the Union army had much to deal with in Helena. On their march from Northwest Arkansas after the Battle of Pea Ridge in 1862, hundreds of slaves began to follow the army as they marched toward Philips County. Once in the city, there was not enough food and housing for the Union army and the former slaves (called “Contraband” by Union soldiers). The Union army set up “Contraband Camps” to try to help the former slaves, many of whom literally had nothing but the clothes on their backs. Over time, many of these former slaves joined the Union Army or worked in support roles for the army.

The Battle of Helena was a last-ditch effort by the Confederates to regain control over the Mississippi River. When the Confederate army commanded by Lt. Gen. Theophilus H. Holmes arrived in Helena, they found a city much more fortified than they had previously imagined. Much of the battle itself took place within the city limits of Helena. The American Battlefield Protection Program describes the battle this way:

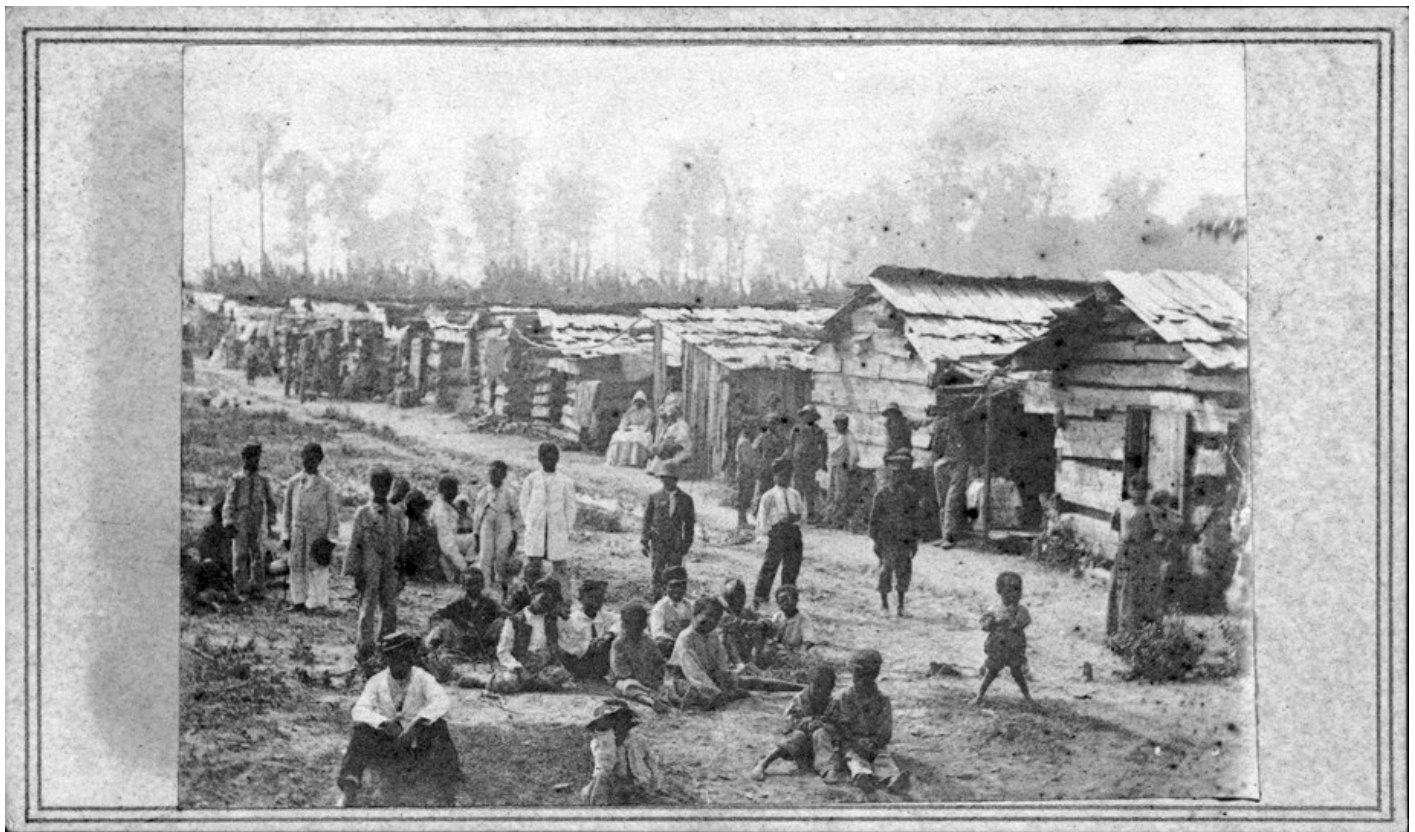
“Lt. Gen. Theophilus Holmes’s troops attacked Helena in an attempt to relieve pressure on Vicksburg. Although the Rebels had more troops and did initially capture some of the fortifications, the Union forces repelled them. Thus, Helena continued as an important Union enclave in the Trans-Mississippi theater and served as a base for the expedition that captured Little Rock.”

The final casualties for the battle were 1,636 Confederates and 206 Unionists.

Today, there are several sites in Helena that commemorate the battle and the lives of the “contraband” former slaves who lived there during the war. Freedom Park is the site of one Contraband Camp in Helena. Fort Curtis has been preserved by the Department of Arkansas Heritage and is overseen by the Delta Cultural Center.



Arrival of a former slave family at a contraband camp. Courtesy the Library of Congress.



"Contraband" Camp in Helena, around 1862. Courtesy the Nebraska State Historical Society.



"Contraband" Camp in Helena, around 1862. Courtesy the Nebraska State Historical Society.

A Union Soldier Writes Home From Arkansas *

This letter was written by 21-year old Newton Scott, a private in Company A, 36th Infantry, Iowa Volunteers. The letter is to his friend Hannah Cone, who lived in their hometown of Albia, Iowa. Hannah and Newton married after the war and raised nine children. Newton Scott died at the age of 83. You can read more of Newton Scott's letters to Hannah and his parents at www.CivilWarLetters.com

Helena Arks
July the 23rd, 1863
Miss Hannah M. Cone

Dear Friend,

I will inform you with pleasure that I am well at the present & I hope that when this reaches you that it may find you well. I received your letter of the 27th...I was glad to hear from you again. I will tell you that we was out 18 miles in the country & found plenty of apples & peaches & berrys.

We see no armed rebs. We had a general good time. We got back yesterday evening without losseing a man. I received the pictures that you & Manda sent me & I was glad to see the second choice. Again I think the pictures verry Good ones & I also received the butter & berries that mother sent me. Your brother is well. He is gone after his cans that you sent to him By Dr Ivens.

The boys are generally well, that is what is left of Company A. I am sorrow to inform you that Will Holmes died on the 15th. It looks as if our Company will soon all be gone. But I hope not. I am sorrow to inform you that we received the news here a few days ago that Oliver Boardman was killed in the late fight with Johnston in the rear of Vicksburg & several more of that Co. wounded.

I will tell you that since I wrote to you last I have returned to Co A. My reasons was this: I did not wish to be sworn in to the service for five years & then I was sick all the time that I was with the Darkies...Being of the opinion that the war would end in 12 or 15 months I thought best in doing as I have done.

You spoke of your sabbath school & off haveing good times in general. I would love to be at home & share the pleasures & libertys of home, but as it is I will content myself & hope for better times in the future.

I am verry much over joyed over our late victories at Vicksburg, Helena & Port Hudson & other Places. I suppose that you have heard the particulars of our fight at Helena. While you all was haveing such good times up at Albia on the 4th, we was shooting rebels & the bullets came whistling around our heads thick as hail. But by the good will of Providence we repulsed the Rebels with great slaughter. I was over apart of the battle ground the next morn & see the dead Rebels scatterd over the ground.

At one place where the Rebs charged & took one of our batterys I Stood & counted 35 dead Rebs in about 15 Paces of ground square. Our loss in killed, wounded & prisners was less than 200 & the Rebels loss was over 2500. We gave them one of the most signal trashings that they ever got from the Yankees.

Well Hannah. I believe that I have writen all for the present. Please write soon & write all news & particulars. Give my love to all & Reserve a share for your self.

In Friendship, love, & Truth
I am as ever
Respectfully yours,

Newton Scott

* www.CivilWarLetters.com (Punctuation, abbreviations, and some spelling have been edited)

Vocabulary

Rebs: Soldiers in the Confederate Army.

Darkies: An archaic term for African-Americans, in this case referring to former slaves also called “contraband” or “freedmen.” This term is now considered offensive.

Discussion Questions

1. What items did Newton’s family send him from home?
2. What do you think Newton thinks about being a soldier?
3. How do you think Newton felt about the Union victory at Helena?
4. Why do you think the letter is full of what we would call spelling and grammar “errors”? Why do you think the creator of this lesson plan included these errors rather than editing them out?
5. Is there anything about Newton’s letter that reminds you of e-mails or text messages you may send now? Why or why not?

Analyzing A Union Soldier's Letter from Arkansas

Directions: After reading Union soldier Newton Scott's letter home after the Battle of Helena, underline keywords that you think are connected to the following concerns he faced: Economic concerns, Social concerns, Political concerns, or Personal concerns. Then, write your words in the boxes below. Once you have created your list, explain why you think the keywords you have chosen fit under these headings in the space below.

Economic Concerns	Social Concerns
Political Concerns	Personal Concerns

Economic Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
Social Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
Political Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
Personal Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?

Action at Dardanelle

In January of 1865, the Union Army controlled the majority of the northern part of Arkansas. There were Union encampments up and down the Arkansas River from Fort Smith to Little Rock. Starting on January 14, 1865 Confederate troops made one last push against Union soldiers along the Arkansas River. That day, Colonel William Brooks led 1,500 Confederate troops to find out about Union presence on the Arkansas River. The same day, a group of about 276 Union soldiers came up the river in boats and took over the earthworks at Dardanelle (now immediately across the Arkansas River from Russellville in Pope County). The resulting clash between these groups resulted in a Union victory, with 17 Union soldiers lost at Dardanelle and 81 Confederates lost.

Skirmishes like this one seem less important when compared to larger civil war battles like those at Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove or Gettysburg. However, for slaves like Mathilda Hatchett, the arrival of the Union soldiers meant freedom. As her story printed on the next page shows, that notion was often confusing and fraught with danger at the “beginning” of the end of the Civil War.

A Slave Talks about Soldiers Freeing the Slaves in Yell County, Arkansas*

Matilda Hatchett was born a slave in Yell County, Arkansas before the Civil War. She was owned by the George family. In this excerpt, taken from a 1930s interview done as part of the slave narratives project conducted by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression, she discusses what happened when Union soldiers appeared on the farm where she lived near Dardanelle, Arkansas.

Soldiers

I saw the soldiers when they come through our place. The first start of us noticin' them was this. I was always up to the white folks' house. Thad was goin' back to the Rebel army. Ole master tole my dad to go git 'im a hat. He'd got 'im one and was ridin' back with Thad's hat on top of his'n. Before he could git back, here come a man jus' a ridin'.

Thad was eatin'. He look out, and then he throwed his head back and said, 'Them's the Federals.'

Thad finished his breakfast and then he ran on out and got with the Federals. He didn't Join 'em. He Jus' fooled 'em. The bridge was half a mile from our house and the Yankee army hadn't near finished crossing it when the head of it reached us.

While they were at the house, pa came ridin' up with the two hats on his head. They took the hats and throwed pa's on the ground and tried Thad's on. They took the mare but they give it back.

Them folks stood 'round there all day. Killed hogs and cooked them. Killed cows and cooked them. Took all kinds of sugar and preserves and things like that. Tore all the feathers out of the mattress looking for money. Then they put ole miss (Nealie Haney) and her daughter (Louisa Haney) in the kitchen to cookin'.

Ma got scairt and went to bed. Dreckly the lieutenant come on down there and said, 'Auntie, get up from there. We ain't a goin' to do you no hurt. We're after helpin' you. We are freein' you. Aunt Dinah, you can do as you please now. You're free.'

She was free!

They stayed 'round there all night cooking and eatin' and carryin' on. They sent some of the meat in there to us colored folks.

Next mornin' they all dropped off goin' down to take Dardanelles. You could hear the cannons roarin' next day. They was all night gettin' away. They went on and took Dardanelles. Had all them white folks runnin' and hidin'.

The Secesh wouldn't go far. They would just hide. One night there'd be a gang of Secesh, and the next one, there'd come along a gang of Yankees. Pa was 'fraid of both of 'em. Secesh said they'd kill 'im if he left his white folks. Yankees said they'd kill 'im if he didn't leave 'em. He would hide out in the cotton patch and keep we children out there with him. Ole mis' made him carry us.

We was freed and went to a place that was full of people. We had to stay in a church with about twenty other people and two of the babies died there on account of the exposure. Two of my aunts died, too, on account of exposure then.

The soldiers didn't take anything that night but food. They left all the horses, What they took was what they could eat. But they couldn't catch the turkeys. The lieutenant stayed around all the time to make the soldiers behave themselves, The meals he made my ole mis' and her daughter cook was for the officers.

Yes Lawd! I have been here so long I ain't forgot nothin'. I can remember things way back. I can remember things happening when I was four years old. Things that happen now I can't remember so well. Bit I can remember things that happened way back yonder.

*Courtesy The New Deal Network: <http://newdeal.feri.org/asn/asn18.htm#28>

Vocabulary

Secesh: A slang term for secessionist, or Confederate.

Dreckly: A version of the word “directly.” Often used in southern American dialect to indicate “soon” either in the past-tense or in the future tense. As in “Your mother will be here directly,” or “Directly, your mother came down from the store.”

Federals: A term for Union soldiers.

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of concerns does Matilda’s father have about soldiers of both sides of the conflict?
2. What do you think were the immediate worries of Matilda’s family immediately after they were freed?
3. What was Matilda’s opinion of Confederate soldiers? What was her opinion of the “Federals”?
4. Why do you think the interviewer tried to recreate the speaker’s dialect rather than edit it for clarity or spelling?
5. Why do you think Matilda made a point of explaining what the Federal troops took when they came to the farm where she was enslaved?

Analyzing A Slave Talks about Freeing the Slaves in Yell County

Directions: After reading Matilda Hatchett's account of soldiers just before the Action at Dardanelle, underline keywords that you think are connected to the following concerns Matilda and her family faced: Economic concerns, Social concerns, Political concerns, or Personal concerns. Then, write your words in the boxes below. Once you have created your list, explain why you think the keywords you have chosen fit under these headings in the space below.

Economic Concerns	Social Concerns
Political Concerns	Personal Concerns

Economic Concerns: Why did you use these keywords for this box?
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