

Teaching with Primary Sources Journal
Learning Activity – Elementary Level

Civil War Map Activity: Battle of Nashville



Nashville—Tenn. and vicinity 1863 / G.H. Blakeslee, Topo. Eng.
Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3964n.cw0429400>

OVERVIEW

Students work in pairs to analyze an 1863 map of the Battle of Nashville, created by the Union army, for clues about its purpose. They form a hypothesis about why someone needed this map, support their hypothesis with detailed observations, and develop their own questions about the map. Finally, each student writes a paragraph demonstrating how a soldier may have used a map like this one before or during battle.

Objectives

After completing this learning activity, students will be able to:

- Observe a map's details to identify basic elements
- Analyze a map to determine its purpose
- Form hypotheses based on observations
- Develop questions stemming from primary source analysis

Time Required

Two 45-minute class periods

Recommended Grade Range

3-5

Topic/s

Maps

Subject/s

Geography

Standards

McREL 4th Edition Standards & Benchmarks

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

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OVERVIEW (CONT'D)

Geography

Standard 1. Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies

Standard 17. Understands how geography is used to interpret the past

Credits

Adapted from “Battle of Nashville: Map Activity,” created by the TPS program at Middle Tennessee State University

PREPARATION

Materials

Have the materials listed below ready before the activity:

- Prepare to display or pass around a copy of any current map with basic map elements (title, legend, cardinal directions, scale, grid, etc.).
- Print one copy per student and prepare to display digital versions, if possible, of the following:

Primary Source Analysis Tool

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>

Battle of Nashville: Union Troops Broke Through the Confederate Line, December 16, 1864
(see attachment)

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/index.php>, select December 16, then “Go”

- Print one map per student pair:
[Note: available to print as either a single-page map or in sections on four pages taped together.]

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(see attachments)

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3964n.cw0429400>

Resources

Before guiding students through this activity, teachers should review the following:

Teacher’s Guide to Analyzing Maps

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>

Today in History: December 16: The Battle of Nashville

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/archive.html>, select December 16, then “Go”

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PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the idea that people create and use maps for different purposes by connecting to students' prior knowledge. Possible questions include:
 - When have you or someone you know used a map?
 - Why did you need a map? For what purpose?
2. Display or pass around copies of a current map to review the basic elements of a map. Ask students to identify the map's title, legend, cardinal directions, scale, etc., and review map reading skills, as needed.
3. Explain that students will work in pairs as historians to look closely at a mystery map for clues about its purpose: why did someone need this map?
4. Display and distribute the Primary Source Analysis Tool. Describe what to write under each column (Observe: what do you see? Reflect: what do you think? Question: what do you want to know?).
5. Divide students into pairs. Distribute a copy of the Battle of Nashville map to each pair. Select questions from the Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Maps to assist pairs as needed in analyzing the map and recording their observations, reflections and questions on the Primary Source Analysis Tool. Possible questions include:
 - What did you see on this map? What else?
 - What other details did you notice?
 - What did you not see that you have seen on other maps?
6. When students have completed the Primary Source Analysis Tool, instruct each pair to form a hypothesis to explain why someone needed this map. Have students complete this sentence stem on the back of the Primary Source Analysis Tool: *I think that... because I see... on the map.*
7. When ready, ask each pair to read aloud their hypothesis about the map's purpose and supporting observations. Emphasize the importance of connecting ideas to evidence from the map.
8. Ask the class to share any questions they have about the map, and encourage further speculation by looking closely again at the map together. Possible prompts include:
 - Who...? What...? Where...? When...? Why...? How...?
9. Reveal to the class that the Union army created this map of Nashville, Tennessee, because they needed the information to fight a battle against the Confederate army during the Civil War. Distribute copies of Jump Back in Time: December 16 and read the handout aloud together for background about the Battle of Nashville.

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PROCEDURE (CONT'D)

10. With this new information, encourage students to speculate further about the map by discussing the following:

- Notice this map has lots of lines and labels, and no legend. How can you tell which lines are the rivers, streams, railroads, and roads? What do all of these features have in common? Why are transportation routes important, especially in wartime?
- Locate the key at the top left corner of the map. Use this key to try to find some of the forts that are labeled by name or number. Where are these forts located and why?
- Notice the circles that look like small holes, the red dashed line and the red bracketed line. The circles are actually hills. The red dashed line represents a picket line—the outermost position of Union soldiers, closest to the Confederate soldiers. The red bracketed line represents the fortified line—the forts and breastworks (quickly constructed fortifications, typically breast-high) for defense. Look at the positions of both lines. Why do these lines seem to follow the line of hills?
- Locate the scale on the right side of the map. Measure how long the fortified line extended. [Note: the scale measures two miles, with the first mile divided into fourths.] What was this line protecting?

11. Conclude by having students write a paragraph demonstrating how a soldier might have used a map like this one before or during a Civil War battle.

ACTIVITY EXTENSION

--Have students browse and select another Civil War-era map from one of the Library of Congress online collections (see below). Thinking like a historian, students can compare this map to the Battle of Nashville map to observe similarities and differences, and use these observations to form a hypothesis about the second map's purpose.

- Civil War Maps
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/civil_war_maps/index.html

EVALUATION

--Active, thoughtful participation in class discussions, resulting in thorough completion of the *Primary Source Analysis Tool*

--Active engagement with a partner to analyze a map, resulting in a written hypothesis with supporting evidence from the map that demonstrates critical thinking

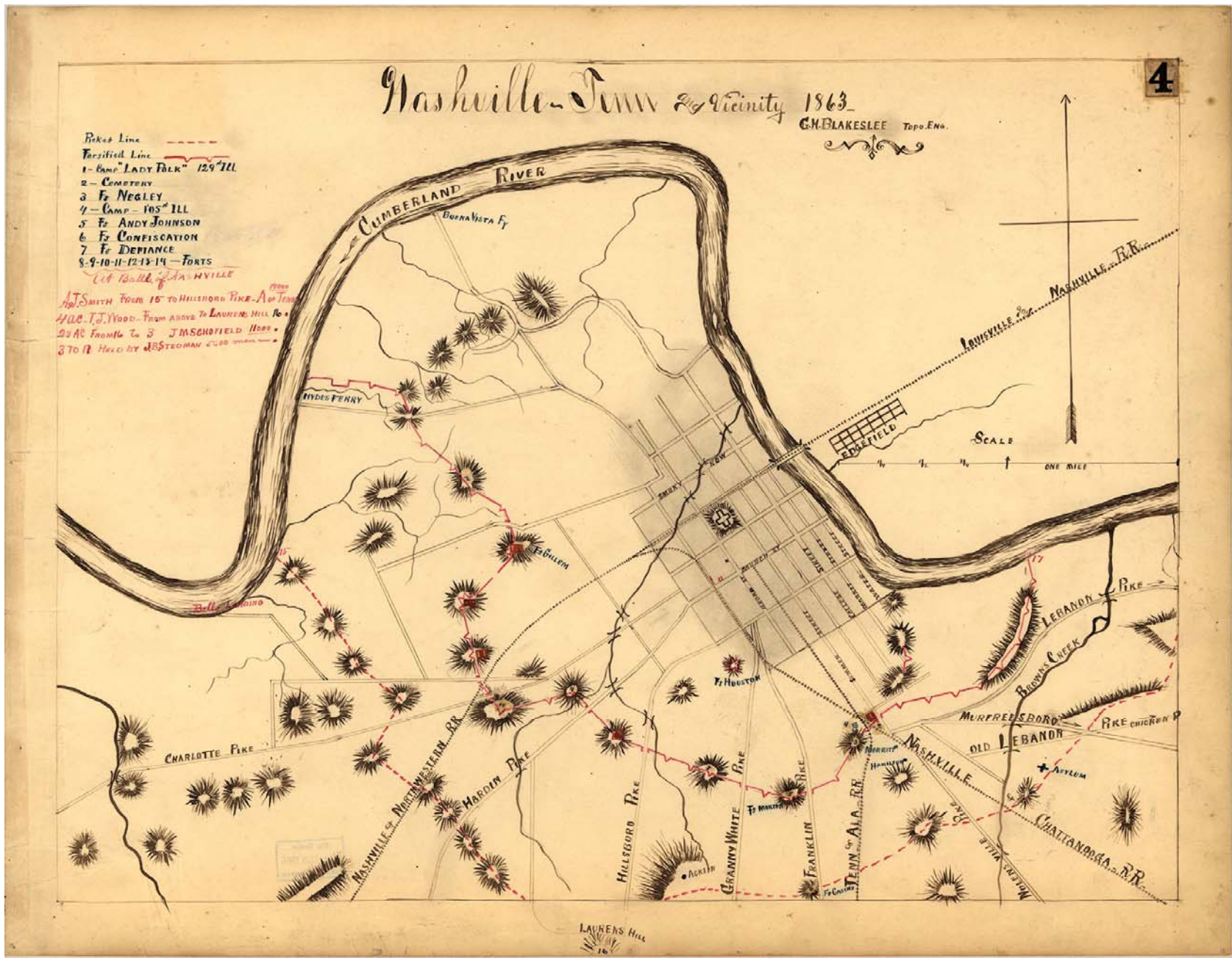
--Focused individual work to apply new understanding, resulting in a written paragraph

Battle of Nashville: Union Troops Broke Through the Confederate Line December 16, 1864

Long before Nashville became the music capital it is today, it was the scene of a devastating Civil War battle. On the afternoon of December 16, 1864, in the heart of a cold, icy winter, Union troops, led by General George H. Thomas, crushed Confederate forces at Nashville, Tennessee. The battle had begun the day before, when Thomas initiated an attack. Finally, after two weeks of waiting, he had received the troop reinforcements and favorable weather he needed to begin. Why did the Battle of Nashville take place?

In November, Confederate General John B. Hood had led the Army of Tennessee out of Alabama toward Nashville in an effort to cut off Union General William T. Sherman's supply line. But conditions were hard: the ground was frozen, rations almost completely gone. Soldiers marching from Atlanta to Nashville described the long walk: "Our shoes were worn out and our feet were torn and bleeding . . . the snow was on the ground and there was no food." But they made the journey. Unfortunately for these weary Confederate soldiers, the Union army had arrived in Nashville first.

The Union built fortifications, gathered up troops, and planned Hood's demise. But for almost two weeks, both sides waited. Ice from freezing rain delayed the inevitable clash. As soon as the weather cleared, fighting began. Within less than 48 hours, Hood's troops were in retreat. Union troops trailed the Confederates for almost 10 days. By the time the Southerners had recrossed the Tennessee River, the Army of Tennessee had disintegrated, as men were dying from cold or famine or taking off for shelter in different directions. This disarray ensured that the weakened Southern forces could not invade the North. A few weeks later, Hood resigned his command.



<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3964n.cw0429400>

Library of Congress

www.loc.gov/teachers

Nashville - Tenn

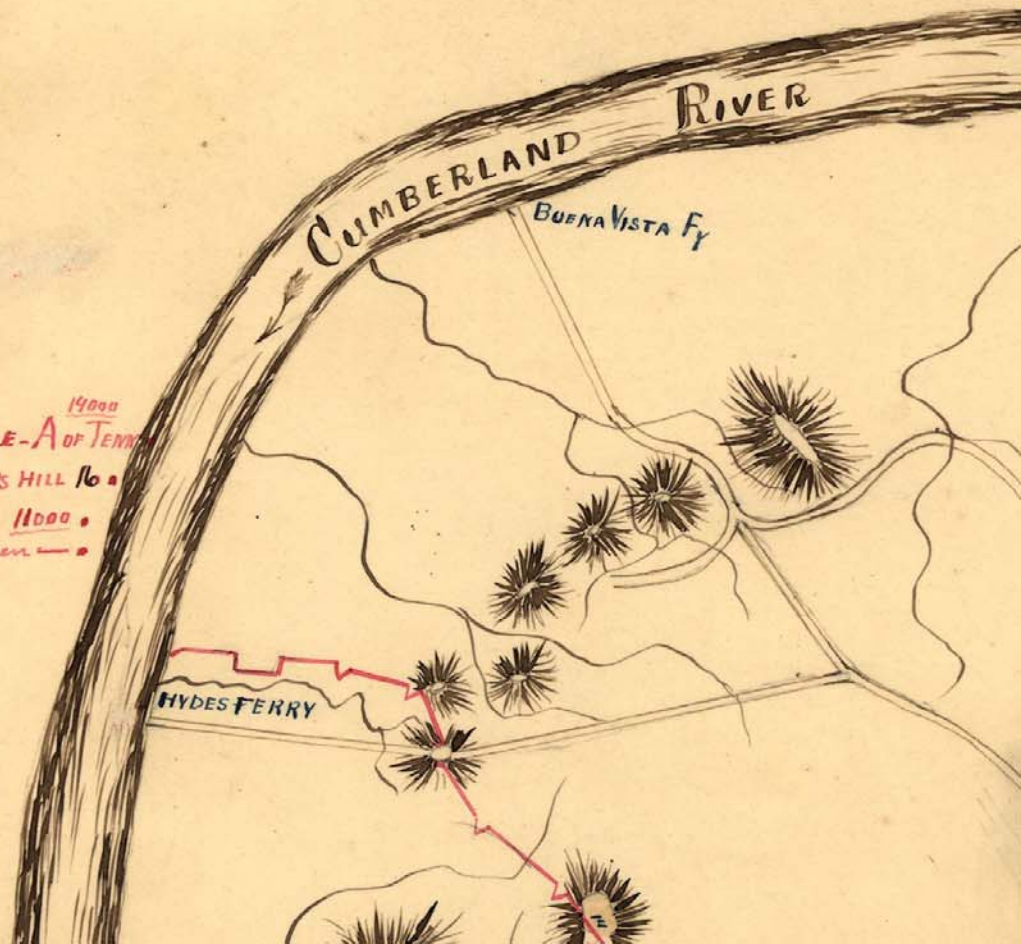
Picket Line -----

Fortified Line

- 1 - Camp "LADY POLK" 129th ILL
- 2 - CEMETERY
- 3 Ft NEGLEY
- 4 - Camp - 105th ILL
- 5 Ft ANDY JOHNSON
- 6 Ft CONFISCATION
- 7 Ft DEFIANCE
- 8-9-10-11-12-13-14 - FORTS

at Battle of NASHVILLE

AJ SMITH FROM 15 TO HILLSBORO PIKE - A OF TENN ¹⁴⁰⁰⁰
400 T.J. WOOD - FROM ABOVE TO LAURENS HILL 1600
23 AC FROM 16 TO 3 JMSCHOFIELD 11000
3 TO 12 HELD BY JBSTEDMAN 5000 men

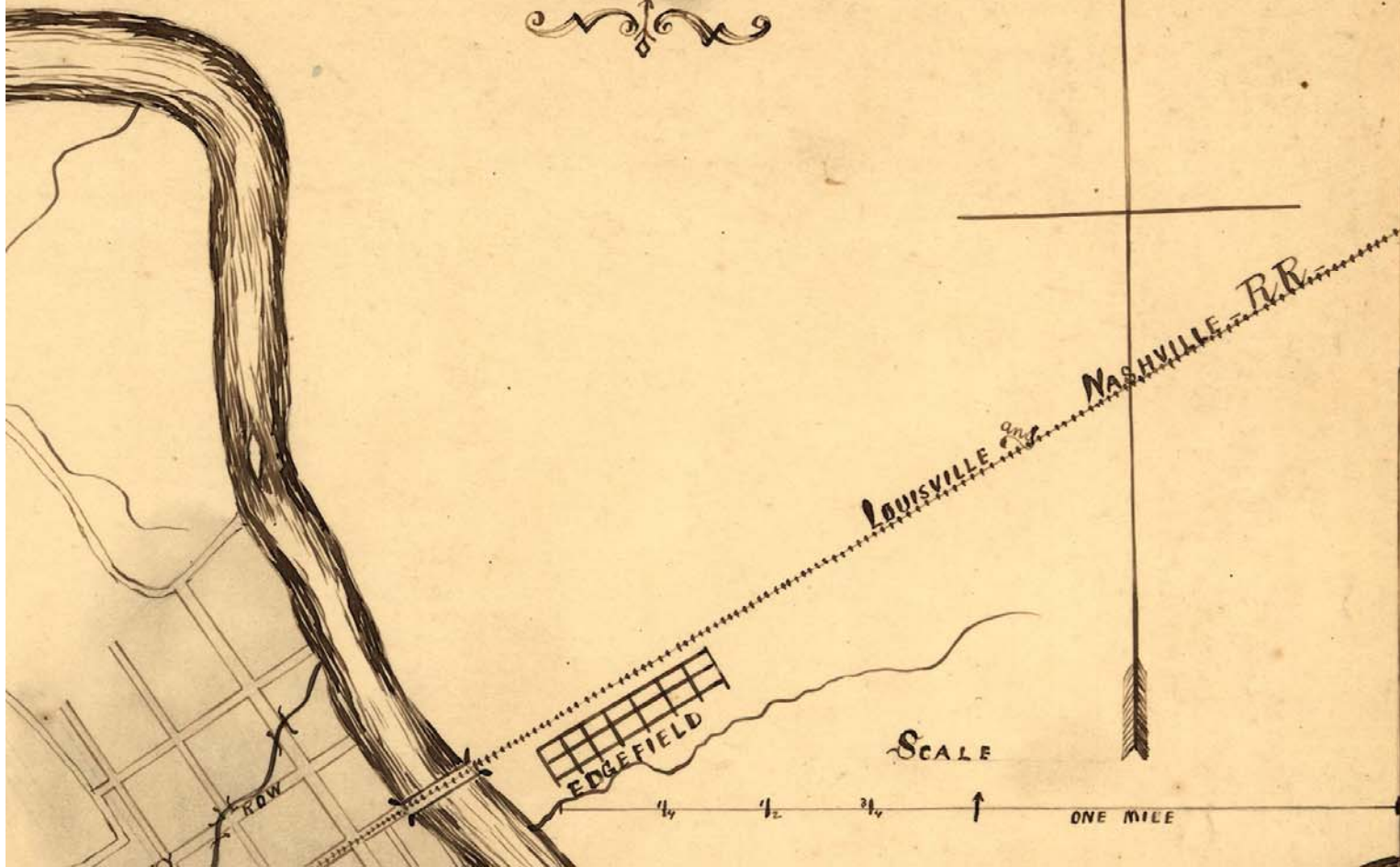


WV *and Vicinity* 1863

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