

Source #1

Dear Brother

With much anxiety -- I assume the present appearance to write to you that you may know that I am well and my family also.

We live here in a land of distress and war. There is now an Army stationed in this County and a battle expected at Cumberland Gap. My oldest son is in the union Army and will be in the battle when it comes Oh! what distress. A great many of our relations are also in the same regiment (7th Ky.)

I am very anxious to know what the times really are in your country. I cant rely on the papers for news. There seems to be great distress in your country. You must write to me and let me know all about the times there. Mother is very ill. she has been at the point of death for a long time. I believe she is stricken with palsy. She was perfectly useless in every respect -- but is now getting a little better so that she can talk a little, but the left side of her body is perfectly paralyzed. She will never get over it.

The rebels are pretty well cleaned out of Kentucky and I hope the game is about played out with them. There is a great deal of sickness in County now and a good many deaths also. Bill Dowis is dead. Several others also that you know. I lost my youngest son by accident. He volunteered in the service and by accident shot himself and died away from home. I have now but three children. Tell Sam Mitchell if he is at your house that his folks are all well & Bob is in the Army. Brother Speed is in the Army also. Be sure to write.

Your sister,
Nancy

War Time Letter from Nancy Steele Dowis to SJ Steele
9 Mar 1862 - Lynn Camp, Knox County, Kentucky

Source #2

“If the Union or Confederate soldier was not a horse-mounted cavalryman or officer, he was a foot soldier. Throughout the war, these men marched long and hard, sometimes up to 30 or 40 miles a day. As a result, shoes became sorely needed by both sides.

The Union, backed by its industrial strength and factories, had the benefit of the sewing machine, a newly perfected invention that enabled thousands of Northern shoemakers to leave their benches and become soldiers. But the Confederacy fared far worse; it was extremely low on shoes. Worse still, corruption existed in some Confederate commissaries, where quartermasters shorted the soldiers and profits were pocketed.

There are many accounts of Rebels marching for miles barefoot during the winter. Ill-fitting shoes were also a problem, and carefully guarded shoe shops, situated close to brigade headquarters, were established to repair footwear. Often, Rebel foot soldiers with no shoes or poorly fitted ones were organized into separate commands to march apart from the rest of the troops on the soft grassy roadsides.

The men preferred shoes with broad bottoms and big, flat heels, instead of boots, which were heavy, twisted the ankles, and were difficult to put on and remove especially when wet. Shoes and boots were so valuable that special missions were made to procure them. They were even pulled from the feet of dead men on the bloodstained battlefields and were used by prisoners to barter for supplies such as food or tobacco.”

Source #3

“On an ever memorable day, the 30th of November, we assembled at school as usual. Our teachers' faces looked unusually serious that morning. The Federal couriers were dashing hither and thither. The officers were gathering in squads...The bell called us in the chapel. We were told to take our books and go home, as there was every indication that we would be in the midst of a battle that day.

At four o'clock that afternoon I stood in our front door and heard musketry in the neighborhood 'of Col. Carter's on the Columbia pike. To this day I can recall the feeling of sickening dread that came over me. As the evening wore on, the firing became more frequent, and nearer and louder; then the cannon began to roar from the fort.

My father realizing that we were in range of the guns from both armies told us to run down into the cellar. We hastily threw a change of clothing into a bundle and obeyed at once. My mother, who never knew what fear meant in her life, was a little reluctant to go and leave the upper part of the house to the mercy of soldiers, but she finally joined us in the basement. A few minutes later there was a crash! and down came a deluge of dust and gravel. The usually placid face of our old black mammy, now thoroughly frightened, appeared on the scene. She said a cannon ball had torn a hole in the side of the meat house and broken her wash kettle to pieces. She left the supper on the stove and fled precipitately into the cellar.

After that, the only way we could get anything to eat was by sending a guard, who was in the yard, to the kitchen after it. The patter of the bullets on the blinds was anything but soothing... About four o'clock we heard the tramping of feet and the sound of voices. Our hearts jumped into our mouths, and what joy when we learned that our own soldiers were in possession of the town!...”

Name _____

Period _____

Life During the Civil War

- Source Guide -

Source # 1:

1.) Is this a primary or secondary source? _____

Why did you classify it as this source? _____

2.) What can you tell about the relationship between the author of this source and the recipient? _____

3.) Into what aspect of of the Civil War can this source help us learn about? _____

4.) Imagine you are a Civil War historian. What are three (3) details you can learn about the war from this source?

I: _____

II: _____

III: _____

Source # 2:

1.) Is this a primary or secondary source? _____

Why did you classify it as this source? _____

2.) What is the focus of this source? _____

3.) Into what aspect of of the Civil War can this source help us learn about? _____


4.) Imagine you are a Civil War historian. What are three (3) details you can learn about the war from this source?

I: _____

II: _____

III: _____

Source # 3:

1.) Is this a primary or secondary source?  _____

Why did you classify it as this source? _____

2.) What can you tell about the author of this source? _____

3.) Reread the underlined section of this source. Explain what this line means in your own words: _____

4.) Into what aspect of of the Civil War can this source help us learn about? _____

5.) Imagine you are a Civil War historian. What are three (3) details you can learn about the war from this source?

I: _____

II: _____

III: _____

