

The Wornall House: The War Comes Home

In these activities using primary and secondary sources, students will examine the use of the Wornall House as a Civil War field hospital and the impact of the war on the home front.

National History Standards

United States Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

- Standard 2B: The student understands the social experience of the war on the battlefield and home front
 - Compare women's home front and battlefront roles in the Union and the Confederacy.
 - Compare the human and material costs of the war in the North and South and assess the degree to which the war reunited the nation.

C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards

- Civics
 - D2.Civ.4.6-8 Examine the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.
- Geography
 - Use paper based and electronic mapping and graphing techniques to represent and analyze spatial patterns of different environmental and cultural characteristics.
 - Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- History
 - D2.His.1.6-8 Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
 - D2.His.3.6-8 Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.
 - D2.His.6.6-8 Analyze how people's perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.
 - D2.His.13.6-8 Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

Objectives

- To understand the significance of the location of the Wornall House in its role in the border wars and Civil War
- To analyze the cause and effect of national events on the Wornall household
- To analyze the various perspectives of people surrounding the Wornall household and connected events, such as bushwhackers v. jayhawkers; children v. adults; military v. civilian

Setting the Stage

The following information is excerpted from the Wornall House webpage and can be found in its entirety at <http://www.wornallmajors.org/>

The land on which the Wornall House stands was purchased by John Wornall's father, Richard, in 1843. Richard Wornall had moved west from Kentucky, where John had been born, and returned to Kentucky after the death of his wife, leaving the farmstead to John. John Wornall was one of the more prosperous farmers in Jackson County, Missouri, and a leading citizen in church, political, and professional organizations. He built his home as a showcase, meant to be seen and to impress those traveling on the main road from Westport and headed towards the Santa Fe Trail.

Although some people in western Missouri in 1853 opposed slavery, they were a quiet minority. Jackson Countians found their loyalties split. Many pioneers enjoyed prosperous life based on slavery and had strong ties to southern states. The later settlers from Germany, Ireland, and eastern states felt a stronger bond with the Union cause. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska in 1854 fueled the disagreement. The Act allowed settlers in the new territories to decide the status of slavery in their state constitutions. Kansas was able to vote and determine whether or not to be a free state. In 1854 pro-slavery forces dominated and a pro-slavery government was formed. Groups wanting to abolish slavery swarmed to Kansas. In 1855, they held their own elections and formed a second government. The fear and distrust on both sides erupted into a battle for dominance and revenge with raids, horse stealing, thievery, and often murder. Local authorities could not maintain the peace and citizens formed vigilance committees.

The principal warring parties in the pre-Civil War's guerrilla conflict, became known as Jayhawkers and Bushwhackers. Jayhawker referred to Union sympathizers. The name was widely accepted in Kansas by the late 1850s, when anti-slavery advocates, intent on defending Kansas Territory against pro-slavery "border ruffians" from Missouri, adopted it. Bushwhackers were a type of illegitimate Confederate guerrilla.

John Wornall, a slaveholder with family ties to the south, tried to maintain neutrality, but more than once was a subject of violence. Southern sympathizers in Westport, like John Wornall, formed the Westport Minute Men. This patrol tried to ease tensions by imposing further restrictions on blacks and enforcing curfews.

By March 1861, seven states had seceded from the Union, and the border warfare formally became the Civil War. Missouri officially sent one hundred thousand men to the Union army and about thirty thousand to the Confederate forces. But unofficially many men joined in the small, mounted bushwhacker groups that swept down on unsuspecting towns to punish those that disagreed with their views.

Locating the Site

Essential Question: How does a map reflect the dynamic relationships between people, places, and the environment?

- The Battle of Westport Self-Guided Auto Tour map was created to follow a 32-mile route that visits 25 historical markers that describe the action of the Battle of Westport. The Wornall House is Stop #10 on the tour. A booklet on the Battle of Westport provides further details about each stop on the tour, including this entry about the Wornall House. Have students discuss the significance of the location of the Wornall House in terms of its involvement in events during the border wars and the Civil War.

Use the National Archives map analysis worksheet online at http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/map_analysis_worksheet.pdf to analyze the map.

Readings

1. [General Order No. 11](#) – This encyclopedia article from the online *Border War Encyclopedia*, a part of the Civil War on the Western Border website, describes the causes and effects of General Order No. 11, which ordered thousands of people living in western Missouri to leave their homes. <http://www.civilwaronthewesternborder.org/content/general-order-no-11>
2. [Battle of Westport](#) – This encyclopedia article from the online *Border War Encyclopedia*, a part of the Civil War on the Western Border website, describes the largest battle fought west of the Mississippi. <http://www.civilwaronthewesternborder.org/content/battle-westport-o>
3. The Museum of Civil War Medicine – This article tells about the Pry House and its role as a field hospital during the Civil War. Although its use was far more extensive than the Wornall House as a field hospital, this article helps explain how the house was transformed and used as a hospital during battle. There is a 7-minute video on this page that describes the Letterman Plan featured in the next item. <http://www.civilwarmed.org/pry-house-field-hospital-museum/about-the-pry-house/>
4. [The Letterman Plan](#) is a system for treating and evacuating casualties from the battlefield, developed during the Civil War. This online article from the Museum of Civil War Medicine describes the Letterman Plan. <http://www.civilwarmed.org/letterman-award/the-letterman-plan/>

Primary Source Evidence

1. General Order #11 – This document is the actual text of General Order #11.
2. Martial Law – painting by George Caleb Bingham depicting the effects of General Order #11 on those living on the Missouri side of the border - also available online at <http://digital.shsmo.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/art/id/333/rec/2>
3. Destruction of Lawrence – This illustration appeared in the September 5, 1863 edition of *Harper's Weekly* and is from the collection of the Kansas Historical Society.
4. Frank's Memoirs – This is an excerpted transcription of the memoirs of Frank Wornall, son of John Wornall, who was a boy at the time of the Battle of Westport. It focuses on his recollections about the border wars and the impact of the Civil War on the Wornall household. It was written/completed by Frank Wornall in July, 1943.
5. A Voice From the Past – This is a transcription of a radio interview with Mariska Pugsley on January 27, 1944. (Mr. Wornall was 88 years old at the time of the interview.)
6. Bingham paintings of John Wornall and Roma Wornall. Have students analyze the paintings. How do the paintings and the photographs of the Wornall family depict their economic status?
7. Photograph of the Wornall family

Putting it All Together

Activity 1: Memory as History

In *Frank's Memoirs* and in *A Voice from the Past*, Frank Wornall talks about how the home was used as a field hospital during the Battle of Westport. Using the readings on the Pry House and the Letterman Plan from the Museum of Civil War webpage, compare and contrast Frank's versions of medical treatment he observed to what was prescribed by the Letterman Plan. Have students discuss the following:

- Based on Frank's descriptions, what evidence is there that a plan similar to the Letterman Plan was implemented at the Wornall House during the Battle of Westport?
- Does the fact that the evidence comes from an adult's memories of events long ago observed as a child make a difference in how those events are perceived?
- What impact does a radio interview with specific questions to answer versus a self-written document have on the information remembered and provided?

Have students rewrite the memoir or radio interview from the perspective of somebody else that was present at the Wornall House during the Battle of Westport (Frank's mother Eliza, a wounded soldier, etc.)

Activity 2: Conversations about Art

George Caleb Bingham and John Wornall were friends. In fact, Bingham even painted portraits of Wornall and his wife, Roma. While Bingham supported the Union, he painted *Martial Law* to depict the harshness associated with General Order #11, an order which impacted the Wornall family as related in Frank's memoirs. In this activity, students will compare a *Harper's Weekly* illustration of Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, Kansas, to Bingham's *Martial Law*. First, have students analyze the *Destruction of Lawrence*. Have students use the [Thinking About](#) Art matrix to discuss the artwork, first in small groups and then as a class. Have students discuss what their reactions to Quantrill's Raid would have been if they were living in Kansas at that time. What sort of protections would they have wanted? Next, have students read Order # 11. Have students use a value line to place themselves on a continuum as to whether they agreed strongly with or disagreed strongly with the issuance of Order # 11. Next have students use the [Thinking About](#) Art matrix to discuss *Martial Law*. Have students read Frank's descriptions of the impact of Order #11 on his life. Do Bingham's painting and Frank's memoirs change their perspective on Order #11 or not?

Extend this activity by having students choose a current issue that is important to them and have them create illustrations depicting opposing viewpoints on that issue.

Activity 3: Creating a map

The Battle of Westport Self-Guided Auto Tour map was created to assist tourists in locating and following the events of the Battle of Westport. Have students research an important event in their local community and identify locations significant to that event. Have them create their own self-guided tour map for that event along with a booklet similar to that for the Battle of Westport that provides short descriptions and illustrations or photographs of the locations on the tour.

Activity 4: How Have Things Changed?

Have students compare the original layout and architecture detail of the John Wornall House (found in the National Register nomination) and the current status of the house. Have students evaluate how the house has changed over time, and how it has been preserved.

General Order No. 11

Encyclopedia entry by

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Event Summary:

- Date Issued: August 25, 1863
- Locations Affected: Jackson, Cass, Bates, and northern Vernon counties, excluding non-rural areas
- Persons Affected: All citizens who could not prove their loyalty to the Union
- Issued by: Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing Jr., commander of the District of the Border
- Result: Much of northwestern Missouri emptied of its population; property confiscated; becomes known as the "Burnt District"

In a controversial attempt to quell guerrilla warfare along the Missouri-Kansas border, Union General Thomas Ewing issued General Order No. 11, exiling several thousand people from their homes in western Missouri. The August 25, 1863, orders required that "all persons" living in Jackson, Cass, Bates, and northern Vernon counties "remove from their present places of residence."

From Order No. 11:

"All persons living in Jackson, Cass, and Bates counties, Missouri, and in that part of Vernon included in this district, except those living within one mile of the limits of Independence, Hickman's Mills, Pleasant Hill, and Harrisonville, and except those in that part of Kaw Township, Jackson County, north of Brush Creek and west of Big Blue, are hereby ordered to remove from their present places of residence within fifteen days . . ."

This policy marked the culmination of the army's long struggle against guerrilla violence along the Missouri-Kansas border. Federal troops struggled to engage and defeat pro-Confederate guerrillas. These so-called "bushwhackers" enjoyed considerable support from Southern sympathizers, who provided them with food, clothing, horses, and shelter. Some Missouri women also assisted them as spies. By late summer, frustrated Union officers concluded that order could not be restored without removing the families who sustained the guerrilla resistance.

Exemptions to the policy were limited. Among those excepted were inhabitants of Kansas City, Westport, and Independence, where Union forces maintained greater control. The measure likewise spared those who could prove their Unionist loyalties to the satisfaction of local military commanders. The army required that such persons relocate to Kansas or within one mile of its posts at Independence, Hickman Mills, Harrisonville, and Pleasant Hill.

Order No. 11 was General Ewing's response to a recent escalation of tensions and violence in the area, for which he himself was not blameless. In early August, Ewing ordered the arrest, detention, and removal of female kinfolk of known guerrillas. A makeshift jail in Kansas City that held several of these women collapsed. Among the five women who died were sisters of the infamous guerrilla William "Bloody Bill" Anderson. Six days later, Anderson's fellow bushwhacker, William Clarke Quantrill, led a band of more than 400 guerrillas in a surprise attack on Lawrence, Kansas, which resulted in the murder of between 160 and 190 men and boys. Northern critics assailed Ewing for failing to stop **Quantrill's raid**. The general, fearing a reprisal attack against civilians in Missouri, then issued his depopulation order.

To prevent roaming guerrillas from foraging upon the countryside, the order empowered federal troops to seize displaced families' grain and hay crops. Soldiers and bandits plundered abandoned properties and set many farmsteads ablaze. The flames spread to the adjoining tallgrass prairies and quickly consumed much of the landscape. The resulting desolation moved observers to describe Cass and Bates County as the "Burnt District."

Contemporaries debated the effectiveness of Ewing's order well into the late 19th century. Many defenders noted that guerrilla violence did indeed drop sharply in the affected counties. Others claimed erroneously that the measure displaced few people. Critics charged that the policy brought undue hardships upon innocent women, children, and several Unionist households. One such critic, Missouri artist and Union officer George Caleb Bingham, immortalized the policy in his painting, *Martial Law* (or *Order No. 11*). Bingham's artwork, which underscored the order's brutal execution, helped fuel the notoriety that followed Ewing throughout his postwar political career.

Most of the families exiled by the order relocated temporarily to other points in Missouri. A large number of the dispossessed came back to the area after 1865. Many others never returned.

Retrieved online 12/15/2015 at <http://www.civilwaronthewesternborder.org/content/general-order-no-11>

Battle of Westport

Encyclopedia entry by

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Beckenbaugh, Terry. "Battle of Westport" *Civil War on the Western Border: The Missouri-Kansas Conflict, 1854-1865*. The Kansas City Public Library. Accessed Jun, 22, 2016 at <http://www.civilwaronthewesternborder.org/content/battle-westport-0>

As the war turned against the Confederacy in late 1864, Confederate Major General Sterling Price led his cavalry forces on an epic raid into Missouri, hoping to install secessionist Thomas Reynolds as state governor in Jefferson City and to establish the Confederate state government's legitimacy. Presumably, the loss of a border state would impede President Lincoln's chances for reelection the following month and give the Confederacy an opportunity to negotiate a peaceful settlement. At the Battle of Westport, however, Price's Raid came to an inglorious climax. It was the largest battle fought west of the Mississippi River, and the decisive defeat of Price's Army of Missouri at Westport (within the borders of modern Kansas City, Missouri) ended any Confederate hopes for a positive outcome from the campaign.

Up to the Battle of Westport, the Missouri Expedition resulted in a number of victories in individual battles, but it had not gone as planned. Price had to abandon his first target of St. Louis after a Pyrrhic victory at Fort Davidson, near Pilot Knob, Missouri. Price then continued toward St. Louis, but he found Union defenses too strong and turned west toward Missouri's capital, Jefferson City. The federals fortified the city, forcing Price to abandon the original purpose of the raid and instead continue westward toward the Union District of the Border headquarters at Kansas City and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

As Price's Army of Missouri proceeded toward Westport from the east, it faced a strategic dilemma. Union Major General Samuel Ryan Curtis's Army of the Border, to its west, had approximately 15,000 men, while to the east, Major General Alfred Pleasonton's Provisional Cavalry Division numbered over 5,500 in close pursuit of the rebels. By contrast, Price's army probably numbered between 8,000 to 10,000 men, many of whom were poorly equipped Missouri bushwhackers who joined Price's forces as his raid advanced. Nonetheless, many of Price's men had extensive experience in regular and irregular warfare, and his best chance to salvage the raid was to defeat the less-experienced Army of the Border, capture the vital supplies at Fort Leavenworth, and turn back on Pleasonton's men before the two federal forces combined. Doing that would require a well-trained and disciplined force that maneuvered quickly, yet the Confederate men had displayed little discipline during the raid and were slowed by a large wagon train of captured booty.

Price's Army of Missouri fought Curtis's Army of the Border to its west in a series of battles leading up to Westport. The Confederates won most of these fights and advanced westward, but none of them were decisive. The federals hoped to delay Price to allow Curtis time to gather and consolidate the rest of the Army of the Border, especially the Kansas State Militia, and give Pleasonton time to catch up with Price. Curtis decided to make a stand on the Big Blue River east of Westport, but Price moved south and outflanked the federals by fighting their way across the Big Blue River at Byram's Ford on October 22. This set the stage for the fighting at Westport as the Union forces under Curtis frantically re-oriented themselves to Price's crossing of the Big Blue.

Curtis placed Major General James G. Blunt in charge of constructing a new east-west line south of Westport, just south of Brush Creek across from today's Country Club Plaza, to stop Price's flanking movement. The Union forces were ready for any Confederate attack from the south. Early on the 23rd, the Federals at Brush Creek were attacked by the bulk of the Army of Missouri under Major Generals Joseph O. Shelby and James Fagan. The action seesawed back and forth as the Confederates gained an early advantage, only to have it nullified when they needed to pause to replenish their ammunition. The longer the fight went on at Brush Creek, the more Kansas Militia units joined the Army of the Border, making the situation even more difficult for the Confederates. But the battle had reached a stalemate as the federals could not force the rebels back, and the latter were unable to smash the federal line. Major General Curtis sought a way to get around the Confederates' flank to break the deadlock.

A local farmer named George Thoman, angry about Confederate thievery, showed Curtis a creek bed at Swan Creek that allowed the federals to get behind the Confederates around 11 a.m. Curtis grabbed his headquarters escort and the 9th Wisconsin Battery and immediately used the defile to outflank the rebels. The 9th Wisconsin's barrage from the southwest of the Confederate position, combined with another frontal attack from Blunt, steadily forced Shelby's men south to a position near the Wornall House (which served as a field hospital and still stands today). As the Confederates fought desperately to defeat the federals around Brush Creek, Price's worst nightmare was coming true over at Byram's Ford: Pleasonton had arrived from the east, leaving the Confederates surrounded from the west, north, and east.

Pleasonton's Provisional Cavalry Division attacked Confederate Major General John Marmaduke's pickets at Byram's Ford shortly after 8 a.m. on the same day and vigorously pursued them to the main Confederate position atop a hill beyond the ford. Several federal attacks were repulsed, but by 11 a.m. (around the same time that Thoman showed Curtis the way to the Confederate left and rear) the federals forced Marmaduke's men off the crest. If the two federal forces combined, there was a very good chance the Army of Missouri would be crushed in a vise.

With the Army of Missouri in a desperate position, Shelby demonstrated why he is considered one of the top generals for either side in the Trans-Mississippi. Shelby managed to delay both Curtis and Pleasonton, with his last line of defense around the Wornall House, allowing Confederate forces to pull out of the federal vise. Shelby's skillful delaying action could not lead to a victory, but it allowed the bulk of Army of Missouri to escape across the Big Blue River toward Little Santa Fe, where it reunited with the large wagon train.

With the decisive defeat of the Army of Missouri at Westport, any chance Price had of claiming success vanished. The Confederates were vigorously pursued by the federals and fought a series of running battles with them, most notably the Battle of Mine Creek, in Kansas, two days later, where Price lost over 600 men and two generals. By that point Price's main goal was simply survival, and he and what was left of his command retreated into Indian Territory and Texas before slipping back into Arkansas with just 6,000 men, half of his original force.

The Battle of Westport was the largest battle of the Civil War west of the Mississippi River, and one of its most significant. Casualties on both sides were around 1,500 each in killed, wounded, and missing. Numerous historians have called Westport the "Gettysburg of the West," but Westport actually proved to be more decisive than Gettysburg. At Gettysburg, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia suffered a sharp defeat, but it retreated in good order and escaped into Virginia as an intact army that continued to fight for almost two years. By contrast, Price's Army of Missouri virtually disintegrated after Westport. Furthermore, most of the large guerrilla bands in Missouri followed Price into Arkansas, so that Price's Raid actually ended bushwhacker and Confederate military activity in the state. Finally, in the 1864 elections, Price's defeat at Westport helped empower the Radical Republicans to electoral victories in both Missouri and Kansas.

The Letterman Plan – retrieved online at <http://www.civilwarmed.org/letterman-award/the-letterman-plan/> on 07/26/2016

The Letterman Plan is a system for treating and evacuating casualties from the battlefield, developed during the American Civil War. The plan was created by Dr. Jonathan Letterman while serving as Medical Director of the Union Army of the Potomac from July 1862 to the end of 1863. He presided over U.S. medical operations at some of the most famous battles of the war, including Antietam and Gettysburg.

When Letterman assumed command he found his department in great neglect and disorder. During his tenure, he not only strengthened medical operations, but entirely reconceived the task of caring for wounded soldiers. He created a comprehensive plan to handle mass casualties and synchronized all elements of medicine on the battlefield. The Letterman Plan is derived not from a single document, but from a series of reforms and programs instituted during his year and a half as Medical Director. Jonathan Letterman is remembered as the father of modern battlefield and emergency medicine. The Letterman Plan remains the foundation for elements of military medicine, as well as civilian emergency medicine and disaster relief.

An Outline of the Letterman Plan:

Creation of an Organized Ambulance Corps

- Apportions ambulances evenly throughout the army, assigning them to individual units
- Gives full control of army ambulance to officers of the ambulance corps
- Makes ambulance officers directly answerable to Medical Directors of the corps and army
- Staffs ambulances with trained and dedicated enlisted men to act as drivers and stretcher-bearers
- Forbids the use of ambulances to carry personal baggage or other non-medical uses
- Forbids the removal and transportation of wounded and sick by anyone not belonging to the ambulance corps

Prior to the Letterman Plan, little attention was paid to ambulances in armies. They were staffed with unreliable civilians or enlisted men on temporary detail. Ambulances were controlled by the Quartermaster Department, which was also responsible for the procurement, transportation and distribution of most other supplies and transportation for the army. Quartermasters had conflicting priorities and were often poorly informed of the Medical Department's needs. Often individual officers requisitioned ambulances to carry personal baggage or other equipment for their commands. Without a reliable system, evacuation of wounded often fell to musicians and other unqualified personnel, or to individual soldiers, who reduced fighting effectiveness by stepping out of line to remove wounded comrades.

The creation of an organized ambulance corps helped to rectify these problems. The distribution of ambulances ensured that they would be nearby when needed. As a semi-autonomous organization, the ambulance corps could better meet its unique needs and focus on the task of removing and transporting wounded. Ambulance officers had the authority to manage their own ambulance trains and prevent

their misappropriation by other officers. Staffing ambulances with well-trained and permanently assigned personnel meant that qualified and experienced people would be handling battlefield casualties. By granting the ambulance corps exclusive control over the handling of casualties, the Letterman Plan improved the efficiency of evacuation and reduced losses in combat effectiveness by eliminating the need for combat troops to leave action to assist wounded comrades.

Regulations for Organizing Surgical Field Hospitals

- Surgical field hospitals to be established for each division prior to anticipated engagements
- Sites for each division hospital to be selected by the Medical Director of each corps
- 1 surgeon to superintend each division hospital
- 1 assistant surgeon in each division hospital to manage supplies and physical needs
- 3 medical officers to conduct all surgical operations in each division hospital
- 3 medical officers to assist the operating surgeons in each division hospital
- Operating surgeons selected on the basis of skill and experience, regardless of military rank
- One of the assisting medical officers designated to perform all anesthesia
- Other medical officers detailed to assist in the division hospitals as available and necessary
- Surgeons admit and treat any soldier brought to their hospital regardless of his home unit

A system of organized operating hospitals moving with the army was made famous by the Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH units) in the Korean War, but the basic concept began much earlier in the wake of the Battle of Antietam. Prior to the fall of 1862, no system existed for implementing field hospitals and the medical response to battle. Surgeons operated independently and improvised medical care amidst the chaos and aftermath of battle. Little coordination existed among medical directors, supply officers, ambulances, and field hospitals that had been set up haphazardly across the field. Some hospitals were entirely neglected because officers were unaware of their existence and ambulances could not find them. Hospitals were understaffed and lacked procedures for operation, including triage, supply problems, and medical records. Often surgeons refused to treat wounded men not from their own regiments or brigades.

The Letterman Plan addressed these problems and more. It gave specific instructions for the management of surgical field hospitals, consolidated medical efforts in each infantry division, and ensured that each hospital was pre-determined and coordinated with other medical personnel. While hospitals were designed to care for casualties in their respective divisions, they would not turn away any wounded, even the enemy. The new organization rejected the traditional importance of military rank by requiring that operating surgeons were selected by skill and qualification. The selection of one designated officer to administer anesthesia was also unprecedented in a time before medical professionals specialized in the field of anesthesiology.

Advent of Forward First Aid

- At least one surgeon or assistant surgeon detailed to each regiment
- In battle, regimental surgeons establish temporary medical stations in the rear of action
- Medical personnel provide immediate care to wounded soldiers
- These stations serve as focal points of evacuation by ambulance

These locations, which Jonathan Letterman termed “temporary depots” are the beginning of modern aid stations on the battlefield. While it took time to bring casualties to established field hospitals, forward medical officers could provide immediate care to stop bleeding and stabilize wounded soldiers. The organization of these forward stations helped to shelter wounded from immediate danger and provided a central location for ambulances to find and remove wounded to hospitals. At the Battle of Antietam only two aid stations are documented on the battlefield, but by the Battle of Gettysburg less than a year later, the majority of casualties were processed through aid stations before being removed to more substantial field hospitals.

Introduction of Triage

- Wounded are treated and evacuated in order of priority
- Use of a 3 – tier system of priority

Most serious but survivable wounds are first priority

Less serious wounds are second priority

Likely fatal wounds (head, abdomen, etc.) are last priority

- “Dressers” in field hospitals prioritize and prepare wounded for surgery

Early battlefield medicine operated on a system of first come, first served. This was replaced during the Civil War by the universal application of triage as part of the Letterman Plan. American surgeons did not invent triage – it was already being used sporadically by surgeons in Europe and Russia – but the Union Army was the first to apply it formally and uniformly in the field. This began in field hospitals where medical officers were assigned to act as “dressers,” preparing patients for surgery and organizing them in order of urgency. Cases considered hopeless were made comfortable and treated last. As the war progressed, this system of prioritizing the wounded was extended to forward “aid stations” and the order of evacuation from the battlefield.

Long-Term Recovery Hospitals on the Battlefield

- Patients too severe to be transported to hospital centers are cared for near the battlefield
- Large tent hospitals are constructed to house patients for up to several months

Severely wounded soldiers had always been left on or near the battlefield, too unstable to move with the army or to long-term hospitals. Traditionally, these men were left the care of local civilians, or worse yet, with no provisions for their care. The Battle of Antietam was the first time that the Army established recovery hospitals at the battlefield to provide organized long-term care to wounded soldiers by military surgeons. This improved the quality of care for patients and reduced the burden placed on the local community. Care of many wounded still fell to private residences, but was supervised by military medical officers.

Staged Evacuation and Treatment System

- Frontline medical officers gather and stabilize casualties, creating temporary stations
- Ambulances carry wounded from the battlefield
- Field hospitals treat wounded and deliver surgical operations
- Wounded are moved from field hospitals to long-term care
- In many cases, wounded are moved by rail on special hospital cars or by water aboard hospital steamers to large general hospitals in major cities.

Prior to the Letterman Plan, no comprehensive system existed for the care of wounded in major battles. Different elements of the medical system operated independently, some under the authority of non-medical officers. The Letterman Plan unified all medical activities into a comprehensive system, joining separate commands into a cohesive organization with the singular objective of saving lives. It established a continuous chain of care to take casualties from the moment of injury to recovery in long-term hospitals. Explicit instructions for the transfer of wounded from one level of care to the next helped to alleviate the chaos caused by uncertainty, ill-defined responsibilities, and poor communication. Modern military and civilian emergency medicine mirror this staged evacuation and treatment system, though often on a larger scale.

ENGAGE LOOK closely	EXPLORE THINK about what you observed	EXPLAIN USE what you know (background information)	ELABORATE INVESTIGATE (What more would you like to know?)	EXTEND APPLY this to you and your life today.
What did you see?	Why do you think it was created?	What time and place is reflected in this work?	Who or what influenced the kind of art made in this time and place?	In what ways do you think this work of art is relevant today?
What was your response to what you saw?	Who do you think would have seen this at the time it was made?	What was life like for the people at the time this was made?	What was happening in other regions of the world at this time? How did that influence the art being created?	As an artist today, what subject would you choose to express? What would it tell the viewer about life today?
What details did you observe?	How might this look different in the museum than it would have in its original environment?	How was life at that time reflected in the art work?	What previous historic and/or artistic influences might have led to the creation of this art?	What was most important to you when you looked at this work of art?
What art elements and principles did the artist use?	What did you notice first about this art? How did the artist direct your eye to look at various areas?	What signs and symbols can you identify and interpret?	Do we know who the artist was? Have they created other works? How do these works compare?	Could this be recreated in the same manner today? If it were up to you, would you change it? How?
What materials and processes were used to create this?	What might have been some of the challenges the artist faced in creating this? How might he/she have overcome them?	What innovations and/or technologies did the artist use in the creation of this work?	What restrictions might the artist have had to deal with at this time?	What do you think makes this work worthy to be in an art museum?