West Virginia History

Mrs. Riddle

9th period

Complete a written document analysis form for each of the documents provided to you.

Analyze a Written Document

Meet the document.

Type (check all that apply):

- ❑ Letter
- ❑ Chart
- ❑ Report
- ❑ Congressional document
- ❑ Speech
- ❑ Newspaper
- ❑ Email
- ❑ Patent
- ❑ Advertisement
- ❑ Identification document
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Telegram
- ❑ Press Release
- ❑ Court document
- ❑ Memorandum
- ❑ Presidential document

Describe it as if you were explaining to someone who can't see it.

Think about: Is it handwritten or typed? Is it all by the same person? Are there stamps or other marks? What else do you see on it?

Observe its parts.

Who wrote it?

Who read/received it?

When is it from?

Where is it from?

Try to make sense of it.

What is it talking about?

Write one sentence summarizing this document.

Why did the author write it?

Quote evidence from the document that tells you this.

What was happening at the time in history this document was created?

Use it as historical evidence.

What did you find out from this document that you might not learn anywhere else?

What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?

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Bread Riot in Richmond, 1863

The Confederate Home Front

By 1863, the combination of the Northern blockade of Southern ports, the diversion of Southern food supplies from the home front to the war front and the escalating inflation of its currency began to negatively affect the Confederacy's civilian population. Tensions boiled to the surface on April 2, 1863 when a group of hungry and desperate women descended upon the Confederate capitol in Richmond demanding relief. Rebuffed by the Governor, the mob took their complaints to the streets and sparked a spontaneous protest by a crowd estimated in the thousands. Shouting "Bread, Bread, Bread!" the mob vented its frustrations by smashing store windows and looted their contents.

The chaos was curbed only when Confederate President Jefferson Davis called upon the crowd to disperse, backing up his entreaty with troops armed with fixed bayonets

"Something very sad has just happened in Richmond..."

A Richmond woman described the scene in a letter written to a friend on April 2, 1863:

"Something very sad has just happened in Richmond - something that makes me ashamed of all my jeremiads over the loss of the petty comforts and conveniences of life - hats, bonnets, gowns, stationery, books, magazines, dainty food.

Since the weather has been so pleasant, I have been in the habit of walking in the Capitol Square before breakfast every morning. . . Yesterday, upon arriving, I found within the gates a crowd of women and boys - several hundreds of them, standing quietly together.

I sat on a bench near, and one of the number left the rest and took the seat beside me. She was a pale, emaciated girl, not more than eighteen. . . As she raised her hand to remove her sunbonnet and use it for a fan, her loose calico sleeve slipped up and revealed the mere skeleton of an arm. She perceived my expression as I looked at it, and hastily pulled down her sleeve with a short laugh. 'This is all that's left of me!' she said. 'It seems real funny, don't it?. . .We are starving. As soon as enough of us get together, we are going to the bakeries and each of us will take a loaf of bread. That is little enough for the government to give us after it has taken all our men.'

. . . The crowd now rapidly increased, and numbered, I am sure, more than a thousand women and children. It grew and grew until it reached the dignity of a mob - a bread riot. They impressed all the light carts they met, and marched along silently and in order. They marched through Cary Street and Main, visiting the stores of the speculators and emptying them of their contents. Governor Letcher sent the mayor to read the Riot Act, and as this

had no effect on the crowd. The city battalion came up. The women fell back with frightened eyes, but did not obey the order to disperse.

The President [Jefferson Davis] then appeared ascended a dray, and addressed them. It is, said he was received at first with hisses from the boys, but after he had spoken some little time with great kindness and sympathy, the women moved quietly on, taking their food with them. General Elze and General Winder wished to call troops from the camps to 'suppress the women,' but [Secretary of War James] Seddon, a wise man, declined to issue the order. While I write women and children are still standing in the streets, demanding food, and the government is issuing to them rations of rice."

References:

This eyewitness account appears in: Gallman, Matthew J., The Civil War Chronicle (2000)

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The First Shot of the Civil War
The Surrender of Fort Sumter, 1861

The election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860 provoked the secession of the Southern States from the Union. South Carolina was the first to leave. By the time of the convening of a constitutional convention to establish the Confederacy in February 1861, six other states had joined her. The majority of the Southern leaders who attended the convention expected a peaceful secession; they did not anticipate that their action would lead to bloody conflict. They were wrong. Fort Sumter, lying in the harbor off the city of Charleston, South Carolina, would prove the point.

After her secession from the Union, South Carolina perceived herself as a sovereign state - the presence of Union forces in an armed fortress whose guns commanded her principal harbor was intolerable as it belied her independence. For President Lincoln the voluntary abandonment of this fortress was equally intolerable as it would be a tacit acknowledgment of South Carolina's independent status.

Lincoln learned that the garrison at Fort Sumter was in trouble on the day he took office in March 1861. The garrison was running out of food and supplies and had no way of obtaining these on shore. The President ordered a relief expedition to sail immediately and informed the Governor of South Carolina of his decision. Alerted, General P.G.T Beauregard, commander of the Confederate military forces, realized he had to quickly force the evacuation of the fort before the relief expedition's arrival. He would try threats first, and if these failed he would bombard the fort into submission.

Fort Sumter returned the Confederate fire. The artillery duel continued throughout April 12 and into the following day. Slowly, the fort was being destroyed. Fire broke out and threatened to explode the gunpowder stored in the fort's magazine. At mid-day on April 13 a white flag of surrender was raised and the garrison evacuated the fort on the 14th. The next day, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to help put down the rebellion.

Amazingly, there were no deaths on either side during the battle.

"...that shot was a sound of alarm that brought every soldier in the harbor to his feet."

On the afternoon of April 11, waving a white flag, two members of General Beauregard's staff were rowed across Charleston's harbor to Fort Sumter carrying a written demand for surrender. One of the emissaries - Stephen D. Lee - wrote of the experience after the war:

"This demand was delivered to Major Anderson at 3:45 P.M., by two aides of General Beauregard, James Chesnut, Jr., and myself. At 4:30 P.M. he handed us his reply, refusing to accede to the demand; but added, 'Gentlemen, if you do not batter the fort to pieces about us, we shall be starved out in a few days.' The reply of Major Anderson was put in General Beauregard's hands at 5:15 P.M., and he was also told of this informal remark. Anderson's reply and remark were communicated to the Confederate authorities at Montgomery. The Secretary of War, L.P. Walker, replied to Beauregard as follows:"

> 'Do not desire needlessly to bombard Fort Sumter. If Major Anderson will state the time at which, as indicated by him, he will evacuate, and agree that in the meantime he will not

> use his guns against us, unless ours should be employed against Fort Sumter, you are authorized thus to avoid the effusion of blood. If this, or its equivalent, be refused, reduce the fort as your judgment decides to be most practicable.'

" The same aides bore a second communication to Major Anderson, based on the above instructions, which was placed in, his hands at 12:45 A.M., April 12th. His reply indicated that he would evacuate the fort on the 15th, provided he did not in the meantime receive contradictory instructions from his Government, or additional supplies, but he declined to agree not to open his guns upon the Confederate troops, in the event of any hostile demonstration on their part against his flag. Major Anderson made every possible effort to retain the aides till daylight, making one excuse and then another for not replying. Finally, at 3:15 A.M., he delivered his reply. In accordance with their instructions, the aides read it and, finding it unsatisfactory, gave Major Anderson this notification:"

> 'FORT SUMTER, S.C., April 12, 1861, 3:20 A.M. - SIR: By authority of Brigadier-General Beauregard, commanding the Provisional Forces of the Confederate States, we have the honor to notify you that he will open the fire of his batteries on Fort Sumter in one hour from this time. We have the honor to be very respectfully, Your obedient servants, JAMES CHESNUT JR., Aide-de-camp. STEPHEN D. LEE, Captain C. S. Army, Aide-de-camp.'

"The above note was written in one of the casemates of the fort, and in the presence of Major Anderson and several of his officers. On receiving it, he was much affected. He seemed to realize the full import of the consequences, and the great responsibility of his position. Escorting us to the boat at the wharf, he cordially pressed our hands in farewell, remarking, 'If we never meet in this world again, God grant that we may meet in the next.'

It was then 4 A.M. Captain James at once aroused his command, and arranged to carry out the order. He was a great admirer of Roger A. Pryor, and said to him, 'You are the only man to whom I would give up the honor of firing the first gun of the war'; and he offered to allow him to fire it. Pryor, on receiving the offer, was very much agitated. With a husky voice he said, 'I could not fire the first gun of the war.' His manner was almost similar to that of Major Anderson as we left him a few moments before on the wharf at Fort Sumter. Captain James would allow no one else but himself to fire the gun.

The boat with the aides of General Beauregard left Fort Johnson before arrangements were complete for the firing of the gun, and laid on its oars, about one-third the distance between the fort and Sumter, there to witness the firing of 'the first gun of the war' between the States. It was fired from a ten-inch mortar at 4:30 A.M., April 12th, 1861. Captain James was a skillful officer, and the firing of the shell was a success. It burst immediately over the fort, apparently about one hundred feet above.

The firing of the mortar woke the echoes from every nook and corner of the harbor, and in this the dead hour of the night, before dawn, that shot was a

sound of alarm that brought every soldier in the harbor to his feet, and every man, woman and child in the city of Charleston from their beds. A thrill went through the whole city. It was felt that the Rubicon was passed. No one thought of going home; unused as their ears were to the appalling sounds, or the vivid flashes from the batteries, they stood for hours fascinated with horror."

References:

Stephen Lee's account appears in: Buel, Clarence, and Robert U. Johnson, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. I (1888, reprinted. 1982); McPherson, James M. Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (1988); Niven, John, The Coming of the Civil War 1837-1861 (1990).

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John Brown's Raid, 1859

Just after sundown on the evening of Sunday October 16, 1859 John Brown led a group of 21 men (16 white and 5 black) across the Potomac River from Maryland to Virginia. Their immediate objective was the capture of the cache of weapons stored at the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Brown's ultimate goal was to destroy the slave system of the South. The arms captured by the raid would allow Brown and his followers to establish a stronghold in the near-by mountains from which they could attack slaveholders and draw liberated slaves into their ranks.

Brown's raid attained initial success. Slashing the telegraph wires to cut off the town from the outside world, the raiders captured the local armory, arsenal and rifle manufacturing plant. They then rounded up 60 townspeople as hostages. Unfortunately, the raiders were unsuccessful in their attempt to isolate the town. A B&O Railroad train was detained as it passed through, but allowed to continue on its journey to Baltimore. Once it reached its destination, the alarm was raised and federal troops sent to the rescue. In the meantime, the local militia surrounded the town preventing the raiders' escape. Realizing his predicament, John Brown led his men, along with nine hostages, to the small fire engine house adjacent to the armory.

Federal forces arrived on Monday evening and successfully stormed the stronghold the following day, seriously wounding Brown. He was tried and convicted of treason against the Commonwealth of Virginia. Just before his hanging on December 2, 1859, Brown uttered a prophetic forewarning of the coming Civil War: "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood."

John Brown's raid and subsequent trial inflamed the dispute between the country's abolitionist and pro-slavery factions hardening the lines that separated the North and the South.

"I determined to summon the insurgents to surrender. I did not expect it would be accepted."

The federal forces that rushed to rescue Harper's Ferry were led by Colonel Robert E. Lee - soon to become commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Lee described the action at Harpers Ferry in a report to his superiors:

"...on arriving here on the night of the 17th instant,I learned that a party of insurgents, about 11pm on the 16th, had seized the watchmen stationed at the armory, arsenal, rifle factory, and bridge across the Potomac, and taken possession of those points.

They then dispatched six men, under one of their party, called Captain Aaron C.V. Stevens, to arrest the principal citizens in the neighborhood and incite the Negroes to join in the insurrection. The party took Colonel L. W. Washington (the great-grand-nephew of George Washington) from his bed about 1 1/2 am on the 17th, and brought him, with four of his servants, to this place. Mr. J. H. Allstadt and six of his servants were in the same manner seized about 3 am, and arms placed in the hands of the Negroes.

Upon their return here, John E. Cook, one of the party sent to Mr. Washington's, was dispatched to Maryland, with Mr. Washington's wagon, two of his servants, and three of Mr. Allstadt's, for arms and ammunition, &c. As day advanced, and the citizens of Harper's Ferry commenced their usual avocations, they were separately captured, to the number of forty, as well as I could learn, and confined in one room of the fire-engine house of the armory, which seems early to have been selected as a point of defense... These companies forced the insurgents to abandon their positions at the bridge and in the village, and to withdraw within the armory enclosure, where they fortified themselves in the fire-engine house, and carried ten of their prisoners for the purpose of insuring their safety and facilitating their escape, whom they termed hostages...

I determined to summon the insurgents to surrender. As soon after daylight as the arrangements were made Lieutenant J. E. B. Stewart, 1st cavalry, who had accompanied me from Washington as staff officer, was dispatched, under a flag, with a written summons... Knowing the character of the leader of the insurgents, I did not expect it would be accepted. I had therefore directed that the volunteer troops, under their respective commanders, should be paraded on the lines assigned them outside the armory, and had prepared a storming party of twelve marines, under their commander, Lieutenant Green, and had placed them close to the engine house, and secure from its fire. Three marines were furnished with sledge-hammers to break in the doors, and the men were instructed how to distinguish our citizens from the insurgents; to attack with the bayonet and not to injure the blacks detained in custody unless they resisted."

The Attack on the Engine House

Lieutenant Stewart was also directed not to receive from the insurgents any counter propositions. If they accepted the terms offered, they must immediately deliver up their arms and release their prisoners. If they did not, he must, on leaving the engine-house, give me the signal. My object was, with a view of saving our citizens, to have as short an interval as possible between the summons and attack. The summons, as I had anticipated, was rejected. At the concerted signal the storming party moved quickly to the door and commenced the attack. The fire engines within the house had been placed by the besieged close to the doors. The doors were fastened by ropes, the spring of which prevented their being broken by the blows of the hammers. The men were therefore ordered to drop the hammers, and, with a portion of the

reserve, to use as a battering-ram a heavy ladder, with which they dashed in a part of the door and gave admittance to the storming party.

The fire of the insurgents up to this time had been harmless. At the threshold one marine fell mortally wounded. The rest, led by Lieutenant Green and Major Russell, quickly ended the contest. The insurgents that resisted were bayoneted. Their leader, John Brown, was cut down by the sword of Lieutenant Green, and our citizens were protected by both officers and men. The whole was over in a few minutes. . . .

From the information derived from the papers found upon the persons and among the baggage of the insurgents, and the statement of those now in custody, it appears that the party consisted of nineteen men - fourteen white and five black. That they were headed by John Brown, of some notoriety in Kansas, who in June last located himself in Maryland, at the Kennedy farm, where he has been engaged in preparing to capture the United States works at Harper's Ferry.

He avows that his object was the liberation of the slaves of Virginia, and of the whole South; and acknowledges that he has been disappointed in his expectations of aid from the black as well as white population, both in the Southern and Northern States. The blacks whom he forced from their homes in this neighborhood, as far as I could learn, gave him no voluntary assistance. The result proves that the plan was the attempt of a fanatic or madman, which could only end in failure; and its temporary success was owing to the panic and confusion he succeeded in creating by magnifying his numbers."

References:

Robert E. Lee's account appears in: Hart, Albert B., American History Told by Contemporaries vol.4 (1928); Furnas, J.C. The Road to Harper's Ferry (1961); Nelson, Truman John, The Old Man: John Brown at Harper's Ferry (1973).

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President Lincoln Signs the Emancipation Proclamation, 1863

"If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." This is what Abraham Lincoln stated in a letter to a constituent in 1864. He had always been against slavery but believed that his presidential powers as defined by the Constitution did not give him the authority to abolish it. In early 1862, Lincoln tried and failed to develop an alternative approach: an effort to free the salves of the Border States by buying out their masters.

Stymied, Lincoln came up with a unique solution; if he could not eliminate slavery in the Union, he would do it in the Confederacy. He would abolish slavery in the Southern States based on his military powers as commander-in-chief of the Union's war effort. His decision was prompted by the realization that slave labor provided the foundation of the South's ability to wage war. On the battle front, slaves dug the trenches, built the battlements, cooked the meals and drove the wagons. On the home front, they tilled the fields, ginned the cotton, and performed many other duties that underpinned the South's economy. Slave labor freed the Confederate soldiers for combat. Without their slaves, the South's military power would be seriously diminished. Thus, his proclamation to end slavery in the South would be a military action intended to further the Union's war effort for, as Lincoln declared: "civilized belligerents do all in their power to help themselves or hurt the enemy."

He revealed his plan and a first draft of the proclamation to his Cabinet on July 22, 1862. He made it clear that he was not seeking their approval, as he had made up his mind to issue the proclamation. He did, however, ask for their comments. Secretary of State Seward questioned the timing of the announcement. The war was not going well for the North. A year earlier it had been soundly defeated at the First Battle of Bull Run and subsequent attempts to attack the South had sputtered. Seward felt that announcing the proclamation at this time would appear to be a desperate attempt of a broken government to rally opinion at home and abroad to its cause. Better to wait for a victory on the battlefield. Lincoln agreed.

The Union's victory came in September when it repulsed Lee's invasion of the North at the Battle of Antietam (see Carnage at Antietam, 1862). Lincoln issued a preliminary draft of the proclamation on September 22 that warned the Confederate States that if they did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863, he would issue a second proclamation declaring the slaves of those states "forever free". His warning was ignored. The general reaction in the North was supportive, but many had doubts as to whether Lincoln would actually follow through with his plan.

Slavery was eliminated in the Union with the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1868.

"...the act itself was only the simplest and briefest formality."

John Nicolay and John Hay were Lincoln's private secretaries and were there on that New Years' Day when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation:

"Mr. Lincoln took the various manuscript notes and memoranda which his Cabinet advisers brought him on the 31st of December and during that afternoon and the following morning with his own hand carefully rewrote the entire body of the draft of the proclamation...

It is a custom in the Executive Mansion to hold on New Year's Day an official and public reception, beginning at eleven o'clock in the morning, which keeps the President at his post in the Blue Room until two in the afternoon. The hour for this reception came before Mr. Lincoln had entirely finished revising the engrossed copy of the proclamation, and he was compelled to hurry away from his office to friendly handshaking and festal greeting with the rapidly arriving official and diplomatic guests.

The rigid laws of etiquette held him to this duty for the space of three hours. Had actual necessity required it, he could of course have left such mere social occupation at any moment; but the President saw no occasion for precipitancy. On the other hand, he probably deemed it wise that the completion of this momentous executive act should be attended by every circumstance of deliberation.

Vast as were its consequences, the act itself was only the simplest and briefest formality. It could in no wise be made sensational or dramatic. Those characteristics attached, if at all, only to the long-past decisions and announcements of July 22 and September 22 of the previous year. Those dates had witnessed the mental conflict and the moral victory.

No ceremony was made or attempted of this final official signing. The afternoon was well advanced when Mr. Lincoln went back from his New Year's greetings, with his right hand so fatigued that it was an effort to hold the pen. There was no special convocation of the Cabinet or of prominent officials. Those who were in the house came to the executive office merely from the personal impulse of curiosity joined to momentary convenience.

His signature was attached to one of the greatest and most beneficent military decrees of history in the presence of less than a dozen persons; after which it was carried to the Department of State to be attested by the great seal and deposited among the archives of the Government."

References:

This eyewitness account appears in: Nicolay. John G. and John Hay, Abraham Lincoln, a History vol. 6 (1890); Goodwin, Doris Kearns, Team of Rivals (2005).

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