

# *Battle For Broxton Bridge*

## Reenactment 2011 - History Day

### STATION CURRICULUM

#### **Station 1 Indian Life**

In Colonial days the area now covered by the State of South Carolina was the home of at least 28 separate tribes of Indians, many of whom spoke different tongues. The culture of these people was primarily based on production of food crops until they were introduced to the settlers and they began hunting and fishing to augment farming.

Communal plantations and individual gardens were cultivated, a wide range of foods was prepared, some textiles were made, and there was some feather weaving, although dressed deer skins furnished material for most Indian garments. Government for the tribe was by the old man of the clan. A few tribes were so much under the sway of their chiefs as to be virtually under dictatorships.

Along the coast from the Savannah River to Charleston dwelt a feeble group of minor tribes know collectively as the Cusabo. This confederacy included the St. Helena Indians, the Winabee, Combahee, Ashepoo, Bohicket, Stono, Wando, Etiwan and Kiawah. The Cusabo and all the other Low Country Indians lived in constant terror of the Westo, a restless tribe of newcomers who had settled near the middle of the Savannah River area and were widely known as man-eaters. South Carolina, A Guide to the Palmetto State; Compiled by workers of the writers' program of the work projects administration of South Carolina

#### **Station 2 Revolutionary War History**

When the Seven Years' War broke out in 1736, the British were determined to not only win the battle of supremacy in Europe but to win control of North America as well. Despite protests by the colonists, the English maintained a permanent military force in the colonies to enforce their system of taxes and duties. War was inevitable. The British were victorious at Savannah in 1779 and at Charleston and Camden in 1780. British General Cornwallis hoped to secure the entire south, but General Lafayette and Washington trapped his forces at Yorktown in 1781. The experiment that is the United States had begun. The road ahead might not be easy but there would be no turning back. Those who opposed independence either moved back to Britain with the retreating forces or migrated to British Columbia. Less than 40 years after independence, America was a power to be reckoned with. The Illustrated Confederate Reader, Rod Gragg

#### **Station 3 Weaponry Demo/Musket**

In the early days of the war, Rebel soldiers were armed with antiquated flintlock smoothbore muskets like the D. Nippes Model 1840. However, later, the 400,000 British Enfield rifle muskets, smuggled past Federal blockades, were well regarded by Confederate soldiers. The .577 caliber Enfield weighed more than 9 pounds and measured 55 inches. It was reasonably accurate up to 1,000 yards. The 39th Georgia infantry were issued these weapons in 1862. The rebel soldier carried a cap pouch with percussion caps, a knapsack, and ammunition pouch, socket bayonet with scabbard, a wooden canteen and his bowie knife. Great Battles of the Civil War, Edited by Neil Kagan, Harris J. Andrews and Paula York-Soderland

### **Station 4 Hunley Exhibit**

During the fall and winter of 1863-64, a small iron submarine prowled the waters outside Charleston Harbor. Operating at night with only a single candle to illuminate its crude depth gauge and compass, it was not uncommon for this hand-cranked submarine to venture six or seven miles out to sea in search of an enemy warship. On several occasions the tiny underwater vessel surfaced for air so close to blockading enemy ships her crew could hear singing through the sub's open hatch.

On the night of February 17, 1864, the Confederate torpedo boat H. L. Hunley became the first submarine in history to sink an enemy ship. A torpedo was attached to the hull of the United States sloop-of-war Housatonic and detonated. Although the agreed signal, a lighted shore beacon to guide the submarine back to dock, was answered after the attack, the Hunley and her crew were never heard from again. The Hunley, Mark K. Ragan

### **Station 5 Confederate General**

The War Between the States produced a remarkable handful of great southern Generals. Extraordinary achievements or dramatic, colorful personalities caused them to rise above the ordinary. Most were native Southerners, although some were not. A few were products of the Southern aristocracy, but most came from more ordinary backgrounds. While battling for Southern independence, each acquired a larger-than-life reputation. After the war they were viewed by generations of Southerners—and others—as figures of almost mythical stature. They were legends in gray. For example, marching through the Pennsylvania countryside on the invasion that would end at Gettysburg, General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia passed the front terrace of a handsome mansion, where a party of well-dressed Northern women had gathered to watch the passing of the Confederate troops. One of the party, an attractive young woman, defiantly waved a small United States flag at the dust-covered grey columns. The troops passed silently, offering no rebuke, and the flag-waver brandished the banner even more boldly.

Then General Robert E. Lee appeared, moving slowly on horseback alongside his troops. When in front of the young woman, Lee paused momentarily and looked calmly into her face, saying nothing. The young woman slowly dropped the flag to her side. Lee then rode on, and the young woman turned back to her friends, exclaiming, "Oh! I wish he was ours!" *Great Battles of the Civil War*, Edited by Neil Kagan, Harris J. Andrews and Paula York-Soderland

### **Station 6 Union Camp Life**

Most of the three million men who joined the Federal and Confederate armies to fight the civil war saw themselves not as professional soldiers but as civilians temporarily serving their country. Men on both sides quickly learned that the time spent in battle was only a brief, but exhilarating and terrifying part of the soldier's life. Soldiers faced an unaccustomed and monotonous diet and many young men faced the task of cooking for themselves. In fact the soldiers had to carry out all of the tasks of maintaining themselves ranging from laundry to building their own shelter.

Between battles soldiers spent their time drilling, cleaning equipment, standing guard, mending clothing, writing to loved ones at home. Volunteers quickly learned that life in camp was rough, dirty and filled with hardships. "I have not shaved since I left home and I am almost burned black" Lt James Edmonson of the 27th Virginia wrote his wife.

Most soldiers carried pocket-sized sewing kits called "housewives" and many became adept at patching their tattered uniforms. No diversions occupied as much time as letter writing. Postage was relatively inexpensive—about three cents—and surprisingly efficient postal systems allowed soldiers to maintain contact to home. *Great Battles of the Civil War*, Edited by Neil Kagan, Harris J. Andrews and Paula York-Soderland

## **Station 7 Confederate Soldiers' Manual of Arms**

### **Station 8 Hospital**

“I was wounded Saturday p.m.” Private Richard Ackerman wrote his parents after taking a ball through the thigh....”I laid on the battlefield for 48 hours and then rode a government wagon for 48 hours more. Last night at one o'clock my wound was dressed for the first time”. Ackerman's ordeal was not unusual. When the Civil War began, neither side had an efficient system for dealing with casualties. The first ambulances were bouncy two-wheeled carts known as “hop, step and jumps”. In spite of the enormous effort made to improve hospital facilities during the war, many men who survived the trip to the rear later succumbed to their wounds, dying of blood poisoning or other infections. Private Ackerman wrote his parents, “Don't think it hard I had to be wounded, for I consider it a merciful dispensation of Providence I wasn't killed. Four months after Ackerman wrote those words he died of complications in a hospital in Alexandria, Virginia.

Field surgeons carried their medicine bottles and jars in leather kits. Bandages, scissors, thread and other equipment were stored in the top of the kit, beneath the divider listing the contents.

A surgeon could remove a mangled limb in 15 minutes using specially designed surgical tools. Unfortunately the importance of sterilization was not widely known. By not washing their hands or instruments before proceeding to finger-probe bullet holes or before operating on the next patient, unwittingly spread infection. In fact infection was expected, and festering—laudable pus, as it was called—was considered part of the healing process. Most battlefield surgeries were amputations, as experience had taught that when bones are splintered, “amputation was the only way to saving a life”.

The Union enjoyed an enormous advantage over the agrarian Confederacy. All the pharmaceutical companies were located in the Union. The South, however, had only a few government run laboratories and lacked the chemicals and raw materials. Doctors were given a list of 410 native wild plants with therapeutic value and urged to search for them in the fields and forests. The drug substitutes were generally better than nothing, although many such as bugleweed proved worthless. A particular favorite with the soldiers was a quinine substitute dubbed “old indigenous”. It consisted of dried dogwood, poplar and willow bark and a healthy dose of whiskey. *Great Battles of the Civil War*, Edited by Neil Kagan, Harris J. Andrews and Paula York-Soderland

### **Station 9 Artillery**

During the civil War artillery attained a lethal effectiveness that did much to make the conflict one of the deadliest in history. In support of infantry attacks, the guns hurtled solid shot and explosive shells into the enemy's formations and fieldworks. On defense, artillery could be even more destructive, firing shotgun like blasts of canister at close range into oncoming infantry. And rival gunners tried to eliminate each other with counter battery fire, using shot and shell to wreck guns and blow up caissons full of ammunition.

When the war started, the opposing armies were mainly equipped with antiquated bronze-barreled smooth bore cannon. Most were of two types, guns firing 6 pound ammunition on a relatively low trajectory and howitzers able to loft twelve pound projectiles on an arching trajectory. Soon the ordinance departments on both sides began producing more effective weapons, including accurate rifled pieces such as the 10 pounder Parrott and the more powerful 12 pounder smooth bores called Napoleons.

Some of the tools of the trade were the lanyard with friction primer, a haversack to carry rounds, the gunner's pouch and belt, boxes of friction primers, a sponge and rammer, worm-and-brush to clean the barrel, a water bucket for sponge and a pendulum hausse. *Great Battles of the Civil War*, Edited by Neil Kagan, Harris J. Andrews and Paula York-Soderland

### **Station 10 Cavalry Exhibition**

Armed with carbine, saber and one or two pistols, the Civil War horse soldier took more than 20 pounds of equipment into battle. He wore the gear on his person so that the weapon would be handy if he had to dismount and fight on foot. Most Federal Cavalry units used breech-loading carbines of various sorts; more than 17 different types were issued during the war. Confederate troopers usually had to make do with muzzle-loading smooth bore carbines—or even shotguns. Most horsemen on both sides continued to carry sabers, although firearms proved more effective in combat.

Both the Federal troopers and the Confederate horsemen wore full equipment over short-shell jackets, which were common to enlisted cavalymen. The short jackets were far more convenient for riding than the longer, skirted frock coats.

The cavalry trooper was quick to learn that his ability to fight—perhaps even to survive—depended on his horse. Each man acted as his own groom and veterinarian and maintained his own tack. He kept the horse well fed. In the Confederate army, where rations were often scarce, horses ate even when their riders did not. Great Battles of the Civil War, Edited by Neil Kagan, Harris J. Andrews and Paula York-Soderland

### **Station 11 Fry Bread Exhibition**

### **Station 12 Blacksmith Demonstration**