

Study Guide prepared by  
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Barter Playwright-in-Residence

## ***Civil War Voices***

Written by James R. Harris

Original musical arrangements by Mark Hayes

\*Especially for Grades 5-12

**Barter Theatre Stage II, Spring 2011**



**(NOTE: standards below are included for completing the study guide.)**

### **Virginia SOLs**

History and Social Science – VS.7, USI.9

Music – 5.12, MS.7, MS.8, HS.8

Theatre Arts – M.8, M.9, M.13, M.14, TI.8, TI.11, TI.13 TII.12, TII.14, TII.15, TIII.12

### **Tennessee TCAPS**

Theatre Arts – Level III

Theatre 6th-8th Grades – 6.0, 7.0, 8.0

Theatre 9th-12th Grades – 5.0, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0

General Music 5th Grade – 8.1, 9.1

General Music 6th-8th Grades – 8.1, 9.1, 9.2

General Music 9th-12th Grades – 8.1, 9.1

Social Studies – 5.1.03, 5.3.01, 5.5.01, 8.4.04, 8.4.06, 8.5.08, 8.5.15, 8.5.18, 8.5.19

### **North Carolina SCOS**

Music 3-5 – 7.03, 9.01, 9.05

Music 6-8 – 7.04, 9.03, 9.04

Vocal Music I, II, III – 7.06, 9.01, 9.04

Theatre Arts – 5.7.07, 5.8.04, 6.7.01, 6.7.03, 6.7.07, 7.7.01, 7.7.03, 7.7.05, 8.7.01, 8.7.06

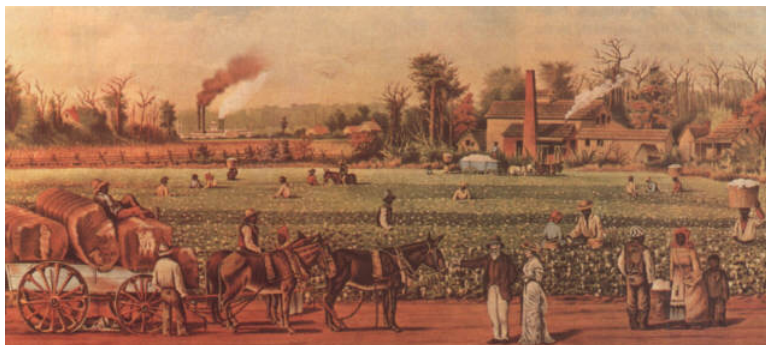
Theatre Arts I – 5.03, 8.01 Theatre Arts II – 5.01, 8.03

Theatre Arts III – 5.02, 7.02, 8.01 Theatre Arts IV – 5.01

Social Studies – 5.4.02, 5.4.03, 5.4.05, 5.4.06, 8.4.01, 8.4.02, 8.4.03, 8.4.04, 11.2.04, 11.3.01, 11.3.02, 11.3.03

### **Setting**

Various locations in the North and South during the American Civil War, 1861-1865



## Characters

*Narrator* – a voice from the present

*Joseph Henry Harris* – Narrator’s great, great uncle; a cotton planter from Alabama

*Cornelia Harris* – Joseph’s wife, a Southern lady

*Theo Perry* – a soldier for the Confederate army

*Harriet Perry* – Theo’s wife

*Elizabeth Keckley*– a freed slave

*Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain*– professor-turned-soldier; an officer in the Union army

*Abraham Lincoln* – President of the United States

*Mary Todd Lincoln* –Abraham Lincoln’s wife

*Slavemaster* – a slave owner in Virginia

*Cook* – a male slave on a plantation in Virginia

*Various other Ensemble roles*

## Note: Doubling of Actors

In this production of *Civil War Voices* some actors will be playing more than one role.

## Synopsis

Inspired from actual letters and music of the period, *Civil War Voices* follows the story of America’s most devastating conflict through the eyes of various participants: Joseph Harris, a cotton planter from Alabama who fears war is not the answer; Elizabeth Keckley, a slave who buys her freedom and ends up working as a seamstress in Abraham Lincoln’s White House; a Texan named Theo Perry who enlists in the Confederate army and exchanges loving letters with his wife; and Joshua Chamberlain, a college professor from Maine who becomes a Union war hero at Gettysburg. Together they recollect the War’s most chilling episodes and as we go on this journey with them, through war and death and victory and defeat, we are reminded through word and song of the test this Nation endured and the price that was paid for its Union.



## Vocabulary Words

calamity

fettered

secede

stoical

transaction

clientele

suffice

oppressive

fluently

sabbatical

abolitionist

commission

adage

infantry

charlatan

overseer

militia

vagaries

entrenched

assault

pontoons

discern

artillery

futile

havoc

conglomerate

inarticulate

jubilant

destiny

tactical

crucial

melancholy

solace

quirky

poignant

vitriol

carnage

sublime

amputated

shamble

eulogy

condescension

presentiment

## Biography of the Playwright

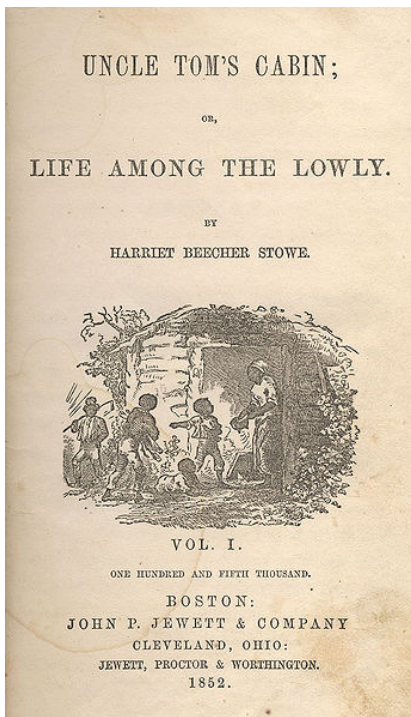
Jim Harris is a trial lawyer by profession, but his avocation and great love is musical theater. Inspired by his mother, who attended Juilliard and received a Masters degree in music from Columbia University, Jim has performed in some 50 musical productions, and is also an accomplished singer.

Several years ago, Jim discovered a diary that was kept by his great-great uncle during the Civil War. He began giving talks about the diary, ending with the final entry—a plea for reconciliation, healing and forgiveness. After giving the talk several times, he added music from the Civil War as he read the diary entry. Hearing noises in the audience, he looked up to see several members of the audience were in tears. The thought then struck Jim of combining a few true stories of the Civil War with original, unique arrangements of the beautiful songs of the period. Thus, the idea for a new musical, *Civil War Voices*, was born. Jim is the winner of the Mayor’s Award for Artistic Achievement in Lincoln, Nebraska for his work on the show.



## Did You Know...?

***Over 3 million slaves lived in the South just prior to the Civil War.***



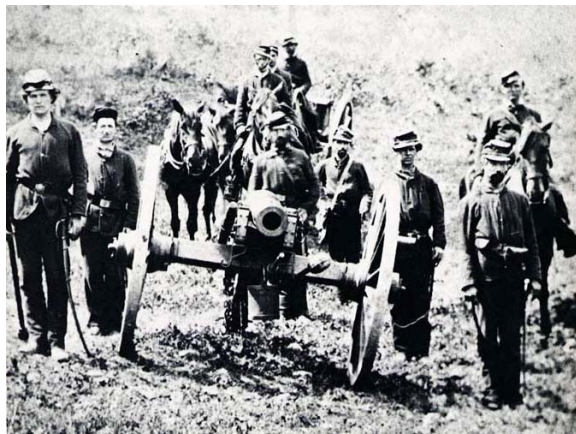
When Harriet Beecher Stowe published her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852, it caused a huge controversy. Its detailed account of the horrors of slavery provoked the North to moral outrage and increased anti-slavery sentiment. The South's reaction was one of fury; some called the book utterly false while others labeled it “criminal” and “slandrous.” *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is credited with exacerbating the already-growing tensions between North and South that led to the outbreak of war in 1861.

Upon meeting Stowe in 1862, President Lincoln is said to have exclaimed “So you are the little woman who started this great war!”

# What's in a Name...?

## Rebellion or Aggression?

The American Civil War was known by several different names including “**The War of Rebellion**” and “**The War of Northern Aggression.**” Given the phrasing, which name do you think was used by the North? The South? How much influence does “point-of-view” have in the telling of history? How would you feel if the Union army invaded your home, freed your slaves and burned your crops? How would you feel if you were one of the slaves freed? Discuss.



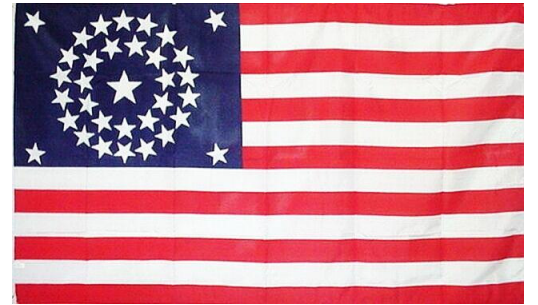
## Slavery or State's Rights?

Historians have long debated the cause of the American Civil War. Some claim it was **slavery**, some claim it was **state's rights**. What is “state's rights”? Would state's rights have been an issue worth fighting over if the South's economy had not depended on slavery? Did the North fight the battle to free the slaves? What was Abraham Lincoln's view on slavery? Examine the wording of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Did this document end slavery everywhere in the United States? Discuss.



## She's a Grand Old Flag...

“**Stars and Stripes,**” “**Old Glory,**” and “**The Star Spangled Banner**” are the three names used to reference the American Flag.



Research the American Flag. Who designed the first flag? What do the stripes represent? The stars on the blue field? How does the American flag used during the Civil War differ from the American flag today? Present your findings to the class.

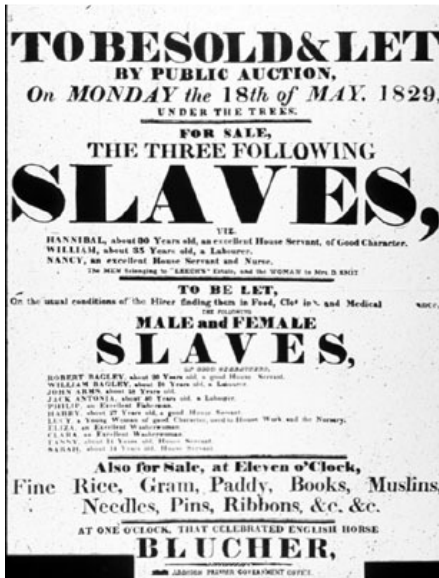
## Oh, I Wish I Was in Dixie...

The Confederacy used several flags during the Civil War but the most famous is the one known as “**The Confederate Flag**” or “**The Rebel Flag.**”



Research the history of the Confederate flag. Who designed it? What do the stars signify? The red field? How does this flag differ from the “**Stars and Bars**”? Why was this flag chosen over “**The Bonnie Blue Flag**”? Present your findings to the class.

# Slavery in the United States



Research the history of slavery in this country. When did the first slaves arrive? How did they get here? Where was their original home? In what parts of the country were they forced to labor?

Research the following and present your findings to the class:

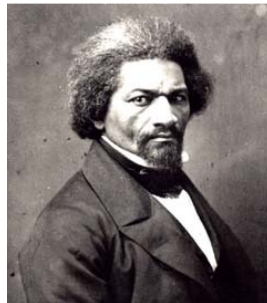
- 1) **The Fugitive Slave Law (1793)**
- 2) **The Missouri Compromise (1820)**
- 3) **The Wilmot Proviso (1846)**
- 4) **The Compromise of 1850**
- 5) **The Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)**
- 6) **The Dred Scott Decision (1857)**

## Famous Americans

Research the life of each American pictured below. How did they contribute to the American dream of freedom for all? Present your findings to the class.



**Harriet Tubman**



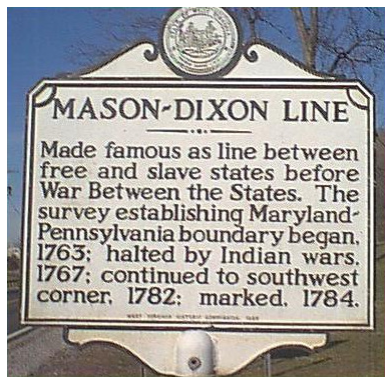
**Frederick Douglass**



**Sojourner Truth**

# Map It!

Historically, the line dividing North and South in this country has been referred to as the **Mason-Dixon Line**. What is the Mason-Dixon Line? Where is it located? Is it an actual line on the ground? How did it get its name? Using the Internet, research the Mason-Dixon Line and present your findings to the class.



Several cities and battlefields are mentioned in this play including: **Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Washington, D.C.** and **Appomattox**. Locate them on a map of the United States. In which state is Fredericksburg located? Vicksburg? Gettysburg? Appomattox? Determine the distances between each of these cities. If a Confederate soldier was to march from Fredericksburg to Gettysburg, how would he get there? (Remember, highways and interstates did not exist.) How many miles would he have to march? If he marched 20 miles a day, how long would it take?

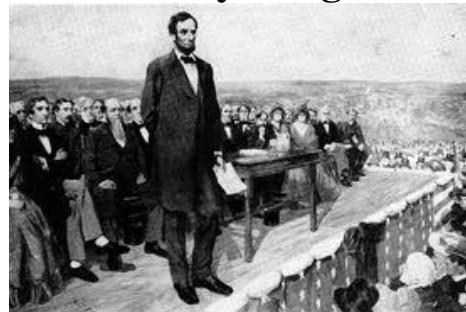


## Vicksburg



Vicksburg sits on the Mississippi River. Why was this town so important to both North and South? Which side eventually gained control of it and how?

## Gettysburg



The Battle of Gettysburg lasted three days and is often referred to as the turning point of the American Civil War. Why? What happened there? What is the Gettysburg Address? Research the Battle of Gettysburg and present your findings to the class.

# Meet the Songwriters!

## Amazing Grace

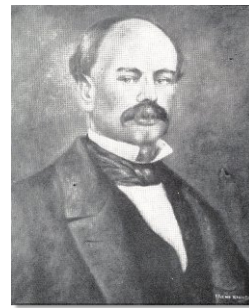
*Amazing Grace* was written by John Newton, a former slave-trader turned minister. Newton converted to Christianity at the age of 23 after surviving a close brush with death at sea; however, his new found religion didn't prevent him from dealing in human cargo. It wasn't until many years later that his convictions changed on that subject. At the age of 39, he was ordained a minister and 8 years later he wrote *Amazing Grace*. He didn't speak out against slavery until 1780, when he was 55 years old.



**John Newton**

## Dixie

Daniel Decatur Emmett, an Ohio native, was living in New York City when he wrote this popular tune in 1859. Originally written for a minstrel troupe, *Dixie* was adopted as a Southern anthem in 1861 at the onset of the Civil War.



**Daniel Decatur Emmett**

## Aura Lee

Published in 1861, this Civil War song was written by W.W. Fosdick (lyrics) and George R. Poulton (music). An extremely popular ballad that became even more popular when re-released in 1956 (with new lyrics) by Elvis Presley as *Love Me Tender*.



**Elvis Presley**

## The Bonnie Blue Flag

In 1861, the state of Mississippi adopted the lone white star on a field of blue as its secession flag and flew it proudly over the capitol building in Jackson. Harry McCarthy, an Ulster immigrant and entertainer, was so stirred by the sight that he wrote *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, a song that rivaled *Dixie* in popularity.



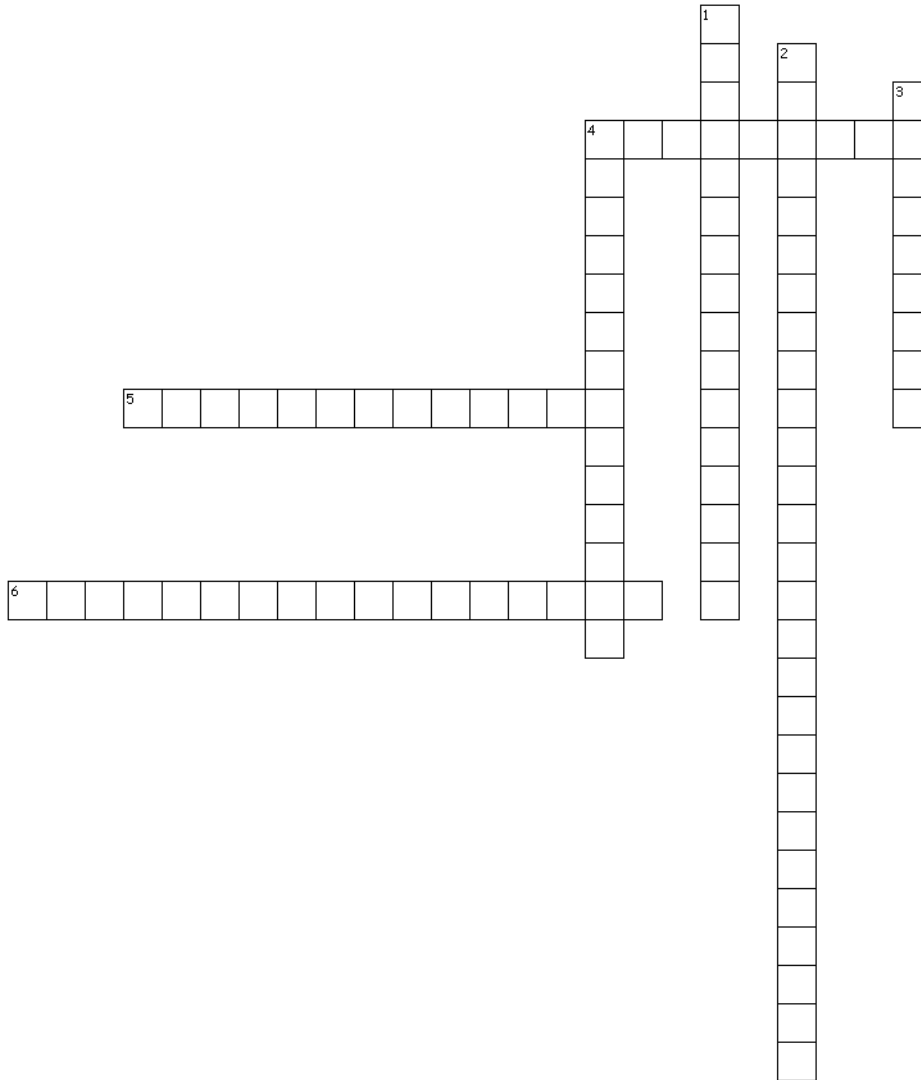
**Harry McCarthy**

## If Elvis can do it, you can too!

**ACTIVITY:** Using a melody from one of the songs listed above, write new lyrics and create a brand new song!

# The Songs of Stephen Foster

Stephen Foster was a popular 19th century American songwriter. His songs include: *Oh Susanna*, *Beautiful Dreamer*, *Camptown Races*, *Hard Times*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*, and *Old Folks at Home*.



Using the clues below, complete the puzzle using the song titles above.

## Across

4. A banjo on my knee
5. Doo-dah! Doo-dah!
6. The sun shines bright on it

## Down

1. Wake unto me
2. I dream of her
3. Come again no more
4. You'll find them down upon the Swanee River

# WORD SEARCH

Find the following words below: **Civil War, secession, Gettysburg, soldier, battle, Amazing Grace, Chamberlain, bayonet, Yankee, Dixie, Theo Perry, goats, flag, Abraham Lincoln, Vicksburg, Fredericksburg, Lizzie Keckley, Joseph Harris, assassination, seamstress, Sugar Lumpy, Confederacy, goober peas, bonnie blue**

G Y T N G R U B S K C I V A A  
R E H I C G T E N O Y A B A S  
U L E A I R N O O M Q R M Q I  
B K O L V U P N I H A A K F R  
S C P R I B Y L T H Z S L S R  
Y E E E L S R A A I N A S B A  
T K R B W K U M N O G E U O H  
T E R M A C L G I K R P G N H  
E I Y A R I G S S T E R A N P  
G Z K H N R S E S E I E R I E  
M Z R C A E T M A I D B L E S  
C I O C C D A G S X L O U B O  
Z L E E C E O C S I O O M L J  
N S S S S R G Z A D S G P U R  
K R C O N F E D E R A C Y E K

## True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. \_\_\_\_ The American Civil War was fought from 1861-1865.
2. \_\_\_\_ Joshua Chamberlain was a college professor from Maine.
3. \_\_\_\_ The Bonnie Blue Flag was a battle flag for the Union Army.
4. \_\_\_\_ Jefferson Davis was Abraham Lincoln's vice president.
5. \_\_\_\_ Alabama was the first state to secede from the Union.
6. \_\_\_\_ The Confederate Army won the Battle of Gettysburg.
7. \_\_\_\_ Abraham Lincoln's son Willie died in the White House.
8. \_\_\_\_ General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox.
9. \_\_\_\_ At Gettysburg, Chamberlain was ordered to hold a ridge known as *Devil's Den*.
10. \_\_\_\_ General Sherman marched from Atlanta to the sea.
11. \_\_\_\_ Slavery was against the law in the Antebellum South.
12. \_\_\_\_ The Union Army was defeated at Fredericksburg.
13. \_\_\_\_ Vicksburg is located on the Mississippi River.
14. \_\_\_\_ Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Barter Theatre.
15. \_\_\_\_ Bayonets were no longer used in the American Civil War.

## Matching

Match the person/place in the 1st column with the corresponding description in the 2nd.

- |                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Mary Todd Lincoln     | a. lost the Battle of Fredericksburg |
| 2. Joshua Chamberlain    | b. a peanut                          |
| 3. Ambrose Burnside      | c. The First Lady                    |
| 4. Appomattox Courthouse | d. song written by Stephen Foster    |
| 5. Dixie                 | e. a Confederate wife                |
| 6. goober pea            | f. defended Little Round Top         |
| 7. Mrs. Jefferson Davis  | g. a village in Virginia             |

## Suggested Further Reading

For more information on the characters and events introduced in *Civil War Voices*, read the following books below:

*Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* by Elizabeth Keckley

*Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Keckley: The Remarkable Story of the Friendship Between a First Lady and a Former Slave* by Jennifer Fleischner

*“Bayonet! Forward”*: *My Civil War Reminiscences* by Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

*Joshua Chamberlain: A Hero’s Life and Legacy* by John J. Pullen

*The Killer Angels: A Novel of the Civil War* by Michael Shaara

*The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock* by Francis Augustín O’Reilly

*Abraham Lincoln* by James M. McPherson