Cartography: The Impact of Map Making on the Civil War

Overview: This lesson shows how cartography is not just dependent upon the location, but also upon the intended purpose of the map being created. Students will have the opportunity to look critically at maps with different purposes and will focus specifically on maps created during the United States Civil War. Students will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a map, as it pertained to battle. Students will finish with a greater understanding of the role that map making played in the outcomes of specific battles in the Civil War.

Connection to National Geography Standards:
Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information.

Connection to Oregon Geography Standards:
Standard HS.15: Analyze and illustrate geographic issues by synthesizing data derived from geographic representations

Objectives:
In completing this exercise, students should be able to:

- Analyze different types of maps
- Identify the purpose or uses of different types of maps
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of particular maps – specifically as it pertains to preparing for battle.
- Identify the essential elements on maps (scale, direction, landmarks, legends and labels, etc.)

Grade Levels: 10  Time: One class period (60 minutes).

Materials:
- Notebook Paper and Writing Utensils
- Different types of maps
  - Suggested: National Park Maps, Road Atlases, World Map, Hiking Map, Field Map from Civil War

Background:
This activity is designed for students who already have basic skill working with and analyzing maps. Designed as a cooperative activity, this lesson allows for the discovery of the importance of mapping in the Civil War, and how these maps played into the battle strategies used. This lesson fits well within a unit on the Civil War where in depth discussion of a particular battle will take place. As students gain a deeper understanding for the role that maps play in battle (specifically for the Civil War), they will be able to apply that to their discussion of the battle techniques used in at least one specific battle.

Procedures:
1. Split groups up into small (2-4) groups of students.
2. Distribute a set of maps to each group of students.
3. Explain that their task will be to look at each map within the set, and determine:
   a. What is the intended use of each map?
b. What are clues as to the intended use of each map?
c. What are items that may not be present on each map? Why?
d. What are essential elements on each map? (i.e. things in common between all of the maps in the set)
4. Discuss as a class the answer to these questions.
5. Have groups brainstorm – what would be important when designing/creating a map as you are preparing for battle? Have students use the questions above as a guide as they brainstorm.
6. Distribute a field map of a battle-field, or a region of the Civil War.
7. Have students compare that map, with their brainstorm: Did it have the elements that they expected? Were there elements that seemed to be missing? Were the elements that they had not brainstormed?
   a. It is important to recognize that not all of the battle maps had the elements that you would expect to find on a map. While many of them did, some were missing important information such as scale, direction, or even important landmarks. Be sure that students discuss why these elements might have been missing, as well as the impact that this missing information could have had on the battles.
8. As a class discuss how might this specific map impact the way that battles were planned?
9. Propose to groups: Based upon this map, how would you fight this battle? Allow students time to develop a battle strategy based upon the information that they had from these maps.

Assessment:
Students respond to the following question as an “exit-ticket,” or closure activity.
   - How might cartography (map-making) have been an asset during the Civil War?
   - Based upon where most battles took place, which side likely had the advantage when it came to creating accurate maps of where battles would occur?
   - What impact might this have had on individual battles, as well as the Civil War as a whole?

Extensions:
Have students use their “battle-strategies” created earlier to compare with the actual battles fought. This can be done using many of the battle maps or animated battle maps found online.
Have students assume the role of a cartographer preparing for battle, and have them map out an area that they are familiar with (maybe a local park, neighborhood, the school, etc.), being sure to include the elements discussed above.

Resources:
If one is need of maps to use for this activity here are links to many. For the purpose of this activity it might be necessary to remove the title of these maps.

- Hiking Map - [http://gorgefriends.org/img/maps/Trail_Image_Bell-Creek-Loop](http://gorgefriends.org/img/maps/Trail_Image_Bell-Creek-Loop)
Civil War field-maps:
- Antietam Region - http://www.loc.gov/item/2005625261/
- Antietam near toll gate - http://www.loc.gov/item/2005625028/
- Antietam (post battle) - http://www.loc.gov/item/2005625026/
- Chancellorsville - http://www.loc.gov/item/2005625048/
- Chancellorsville - http://www.loc.gov/item/2005625044/
- Fortifications Surrounding Richmond - http://www.loc.gov/item/99439218
- Fort Henry - http://www.loc.gov/item/77696125
- Stone River - http://www.loc.gov/item/001-ocm53315870/
- Many Maps by Jedediah Hotchkiss -
  http://www.loc.gov/search/?fa=contributor%3Ahotchkiss%2C+jedediah

Jedediah Hotchkiss was an important cartographer for the South. He is credited with much of the success of Jackson’s army because of the detail that was in his maps. He was a skilled cartographer that served as a huge advantage to the South. More information about Jedediah Hotchkiss can be found below:
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