

10th Grade Lesson Plan for *Journey to the Wilderness* Documentary

Learning Objective: Students will learn that memories we hold about American wars are culturally, politically, and socially created.

Key Terms: Memory, Culture, Civil War, Civil Rights, Social Constructionism, War Between the States, Lost Cause, War Commemoration, Honor, Gallantry.

Procedure:

Day One:

- Discuss broadly the American Civil War of the 1860s and the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Outline key historical events for each.
- Define Social Constructionism using terms “Civil War,” “War-Between-the-States,” and “lost cause” as examples of how cultures construct understanding through social interaction and public negotiation.
- Discuss Civil War Commemoration: Honorable? Gallant? Horror?
 - Why are experiences of war for those fighting it so different from how we think about war?
 - Describe some of the terms we have as a society for the Civil War.
 - Describe how we in our society think about the causes of the Civil War.
 - What memories do you and your families hold about the Civil War or about the Civil Rights Movement? How are those memories reinforced and commemorated by your family or your community?

Day Two: Show the film, *Journey to the Wilderness*.

After Film Discussion Questions:

- How do Frye Gaillard’s memories of the Civil War and Civil Rights change from the beginning of the film to the end of the film? What events in Frye’s life caused that change to occur?
- Do the Gaillard family letters and Gaillard family stories told by Frye Gaillard affect how you think about the Civil War today?
- What did you learn from the film that is different from what you thought about the Civil War or the Civil Rights Movement before you saw the film, if anything?
- Near the beginning of the book that Frye Gaillard wrote that became the basis for the film, he said he had been bothered by a historical question: “Why did my hundred-year-old grandfather, who had lived through the end of it (the Civil War) as a child, hold a view more dismal than that of my father ... Why did this much older man seem so somber, perhaps even bitter, about what had happened in the South, while so many others gloried in the past?” In other words, why would someone touched by the reality of the war view it more horrifically, perhaps even bitterly, while later generations not directly touched by the war would view the Confederate war experience as steeped in gallantry, heroism, and pride?

Exercises:

- Visit Fort Morgan outside Gulf Shores or Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island and list five things you learn about the experience of the Civil War for the soldiers and sailors who fought it. (If you cannot arrange to visit one of the forts in person, look them up online or in books about them at the library to find out what you can discover about what fighting in the Civil War was like for the soldiers and sailors at the forts).
- Working in teams, draw a battle map of the Battle of Mobile Bay for the ships that sailed for both the Confederates and the Union, or of one of the battles as the Union forces attacked one of the forts before, during, or after the Battle of Mobile Bay.
- Interview veterans of recent wars, such as the Iraq or Afghanistan wars about what they remember about the conflicts and then interview children or others in a later generation about what memories they have of the wars.