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## **Building Fluency through Reader's Theater: Expanding and Preserving the Union**

**This sample includes the following:**

**Teacher's Guide Cover** (1 page)

**Table of Contents** (1 page)

**What's Included in Each Lesson** (7 pages)

**Lesson Plan** (6 pages)

**Script** (18 pages)

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Building Fluency  
through

**Reader's  
Theater**

**Expanding &  
Preserving  
the Union**

**Teacher's Guide**



**Teacher Created Materials**

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# What's Included in Each Lesson

## Objectives

The objectives state the purpose of each lesson and communicate the desired outcome of the lesson related to fluency and the content area. The objectives are taken from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) compilation of content standards for K–12 curriculum. As stated on the McREL website (<http://www.mcrel.org>), the purpose of the standards compilation is “to address the major issues surrounding content standards, provide a model for their identification, and apply this model in order to identify standards and benchmarks in the subject areas.”

## Summary

Within each lesson there is a summary section that describes the script and provides information to share with students to prepare them for the reader's theater performance. To decide which scripts to complete with students, read the summaries to determine how each fits in with your teaching plans. As a convenience, the summaries for the scripts are also provided below.

In *Lewis and Clark*, the two captains of the Corps of Discovery, Lewis and Clark, are on a mission to find a water route to the Pacific Ocean. Sacagawea, a Shoshone Indian, serves as a guide on the mission. With her help, Lewis and Clark are able to locate a tribe of Shoshone Indians. They barter with the Shoshone and are able to secure horses to aid them in their journey over the Rocky Mountains.

In *Remember the Alamo*, Henry McArdle researches the Battle of the Alamo by meeting with exiled Mexican President Santa Anna and Mrs. Dickinson, the widow of a Texan officer slain in the battle. They vehemently disagree about what happened and take you back in time to the brutal clash to judge for yourself.

*Narcissa Whitman and the Westward Movement* tells the story of two missionaries who set up elaborate programs in the Oregon Territory to teach “white” Christian ways to the local Cayuse and Nez Perce tribes and to provide them with a medical outreach program. Diseases brought by the increasing number of white settlers kill many of the Cayuse Indians. As a result, there is violent tribal resistance to the work of the missionaries.

*Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce* explains that while America was expanding westward, some Nez Perce Indians signed a treaty with the United States that placed them on a reservation. Other tribe members resisted moving to a reservation. In this script, the U.S. cavalry pursues these resisting tribe members for months across several states in order to place them on the reservation.

# What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

## Summary *(cont.)*

*The Sojourner Truth Story* follows the life of slave Sojourner Truth and her family. Sojourner and her family face one difficult hardship after another at the hands of cruel slave masters. Despite numerous hardships, Sojourner, through her faith and determination, is able to win an important personal battle. Sojourner's victory inspires her to help others by becoming a public speaker.

In *Causes of the Civil War*, abolitionist John Brown raises a small army of men in the hopes of starting a slave revolt. He leads his men to Harper's Ferry to take over the United States arsenal. Colonel Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant Jeb Stuart are sent by President Buchanan to put down the uprising.

In *Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights*, Confederate and Union soldiers prepare for the Battle of Fredericksburg. When the battle begins, the Confederates have the advantage of being behind a large stone wall. The Union attacks fail and many soldiers are left to die in front of the wall. One brave Confederate soldier crosses the wall to provide help to the wounded and dying.

In *Reconstruction: After the Civil War*, Patsy Berry, a former slave, eagerly awaits the return of her husband, Hiram. The Civil War has ended, but the family soon learns that Hiram's military service has been extended. Patsy is determined to make her family succeed despite the absence of her husband. After an encounter with an unscrupulous carpetbagger, Patsy and her family learn the importance of education.

## Materials

The materials needed to complete a lesson are listed in this section to assist you in preparing for each lesson. In addition to these materials, each lesson has the following components:

- *PowerPoint*<sup>®</sup> slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
- overhead transparencies of the poem and song (Teacher Resource CD)
- Practice and Performance Tips (Performance CD [audio] and Teacher Resource CD [text])

## Introduce the Literature

Each script in this kit is based on real events. Some of the characters are real people and others are based on individuals who could have lived at that time in history. In addition, there are six pages of primary source material in each lesson that can be used to enrich students' understanding of the time period.

# **What's Included in Each Lesson** (cont.)

## **Differentiation Support**

Reader's theater can be used effectively in classrooms with all students, regardless of ability levels, to enhance proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The program can also be adapted to scaffold and model language usage to meet students' needs at multiple levels. Through this program's support activities and other various components of the lesson plans, students will become actively engaged in authentic language development activities. As a result, students' motivation to utilize the English language will increase.

The drama component of reader's theater helps students feel less inhibited in both speaking and reading the English language, and thus fluency in both areas will increase. In *Stage by Stage: A Handbook for Using Drama in the Second Language Classroom* by Ann F. Burke and Julie C. O'Sullivan (2002), the authors state that "Drama is simply a good way to get students' whole selves involved with language and it is fun" (p. xiii). The authors also emphasize that once students feel less inhibited, their fluency will increase, because within the context of reader's theater there is an inherent opportunity to do repeated readings and practice skills, such as pronunciation, in an authentic context.

Jennifer Catney McMaster (1998), in her review of research studies involving literacy and drama in the classroom, states the benefits of drama for emergent readers. Drama provides prior knowledge and rich literary experiences needed for future readers as well as a scaffold for literacy instruction. It helps students develop symbolic representation, new vocabulary, knowledge of word order, phrasing, and metacognition, and introduces them to various forms of discourse, all of which contribute to the construction of meaning from text.

Each script in this kit is accompanied by a musical piece as well as a corresponding poem. Both of these components have also been shown to facilitate students' language acquisition. Educator Tim Murphey (1992) analyzed the lyrics of pop songs and found several common language characteristics that would benefit language learners: the language is conversational; the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than dialogue; and there is a repetition of vocabulary and structures. Moriya (1988) found that music provided Asian learners a forum to practice pronunciation and learn the phonemic differences between Asian languages and English. Speakers of various languages can benefit from the language experience that the music selections will provide.

The poetry component to the program can be used in many creative ways to enhance students' language acquisition in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) assert that using poetry in a classroom of English language learners provides the opportunity to explore both the linguistic and conceptual facets of text without focusing on the mechanics of language. Choral reading of the poem builds fluency for below-grade-level readers and provides practice in pronunciation. Some of the vocabulary words used in the script are reinforced through the poem, providing the opportunity to see the words used in multiple contexts.

# ***What's Included in Each Lesson*** (cont.)

## **Differentiation Support** (cont.)

The accompanying poems can also serve as a model for students to write their own poems. Depending on the level of the English language learner, a framework or template can be developed for each poem to structure the writing process and provide students another opportunity to use the vocabulary and word order they have learned from the script and the poem. Additionally, the poem can also serve as a medium for discussion of the themes and concepts presented in each script. Moreover, students and teachers can create action sequences to facilitate visualization and comprehension of the text. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) emphasize that dramatizing poetry enables the learner to become intellectually, emotionally, and physically engaged in the target language; therefore, language is internalized and remembered.

Students' listening comprehension will also develop as a result of using reader's theater. According to Brown (2001), some characteristics of speech make listening difficult, such as clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction. Brown proposes methods for helping second-language learners overcome these challenges. Reader's theater utilizes authentic language and contexts, is intrinsically motivating, and supports both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques. Illustrations in the scripts, along with the possible inclusion of realia and gestures, will assist students in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic phrases.

In addition, the professional recording of the scripts on the Performance CD will provide another opportunity for students to enhance listening comprehension and reading ability. The voices on the CD are articulate and expressive, and they serve as models for accurate pronunciation and fluent reading. By listening to the CD, students will be able to practice visualizing text and speech. One Best Practice suggested by second-language teacher-training programs is for the students to hear an oral reading of the piece of literature prior to reading it aloud themselves. The CD can be used for this practice, as well.

Reader's theater provides a medium for below-grade-level students and English language learners to interact with other students in the classroom and will facilitate the development of a strong community of language learners. The experience will increase students' motivation and diminish their inhibitions to learn the new language. The components of the program will provide the necessary support and scaffolding that teachers need to provide effective instruction to English language learners, below-grade-level students, on-grade-level students, and above-grade-level students in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The program will engage students and serve as a model for fluency, pronunciation, and overall language usage.

# **What's Included in Each Lesson** *(cont.)*

## **Involving All Students**

Even though each script has only six roles, all students can be involved in each reader's theater performance. Students can be involved in a variety of ways. This section of each lesson suggests ways to include all students.

## **Reading the Script**

This section of each lesson explains how to introduce the reader's theater script to your students and offers suggestions for introducing unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding the characters. As you read each script with the students, you may try to use the following performance tips.

## **Performance Tips**

Reader's theater performance can be a frightening experience for some students. Assist them by reviewing the following suggestions.

- Relax! Breathe deeply and speak slowly to avoid a quivering or breathless voice.
- Stand with one foot in front of the other and with your weight balanced to avoid that feeling of shaking and trembling.
- Do not rush through your lines or speak too rapidly. Take your time and say each word distinctly.
- Movement is good for emphasis or to help you look relaxed, but do not move back and forth or develop nervous mannerisms. Avoid wringing hands, tugging at clothing, or twisting hair.
- Mistakes are a normal part of any learning experience. If you make one, correct it and go on.

Getting to know your character will make your performance more believable. Use these questions to get in character as you rehearse.

- How old do you think the character is?
- What kind of voice do you think the character should have? Is the voice soft, loud, high-pitched, or low-pitched?
- How does the character stand or use his or her hands when speaking?
- Does the character seem happy, proud, or excitable?
- Do you think this character is serious or silly?
- Is the character kind?
- Do you think people would like this character?
- What can you do to communicate this character's personality to others?



# What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

## Assigning Roles

Each script contains six character roles. Each of the roles is written for a different reading level. The chart below lists the reading levels for all the characters in the eight scripts.

Script Title	High 3rd Grade 3.5–4.0	Low 4th Grade 4.0–4.5	High 4th Grade 4.5–5.0
<i>Lewis and Clark</i>	Sacagawea Meriwether Lewis	Chief Cameahwait Scout	William Clark George Drouillard
<i>Remember the Alamo</i>	James Bowie Henry McArdle	William Travis Davy Crockett	Santa Anna Mrs. Dickinson
<i>Narcissa Whitman and the Westward Movement</i>	Catherine Pambrun Chief Tiloukaikt	Helen Mar Meek Marcus Whitman	Narcissa Whitman Pierre Pambrun
<i>Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce</i>	Eelahwehmah Yellow Bull	Chief Joseph Lieutenant Wood	General Howard Colonel Miles
<i>The Sojourner Truth Story</i>	Peter Mrs. Dumont	Olive Gilbert Mr. Van Wagenen	Sojourner Truth John Dumont
<i>Causes of the Civil War</i>	James Redpath Jeb Stuart	John Brown Robert E. Lee	Watson Brown John Henry Kagi
<i>Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights</i>	Richard Kirkland Jesse Sandford	Tom Rembert William Barron	General Kershaw Henry Matthews
<i>Reconstruction: After the Civil War</i>	Uncle Joe Patsy	Moses Carpetbagger	Salpy Miss Kit

# **What's Included in Each Lesson** *(cont.)*

## **Assigning Roles** *(cont.)*

### **Reading Levels Correlation Chart**

<b>Grade Level Range</b>	<b>Guided Reading</b>	<b>Early Intervention</b>	<b>DRA</b>
3.5–4.0	O–Q	22–24	34–40
4.0–4.5	Q–R	24–25	40
4.5–5.0	R–T	25–27	40–44

### **Meeting the Fluency Objective**

Each lesson focuses on a specific fluency objective, such as reading with accuracy or reading with expression. This section provides procedures for teaching the fluency objective related to the featured script.

### **Content-Area Connection**

Each reader's theater script focuses on the social studies content area. This section of each lesson explains the content and provides suggestions for introducing this content to your students. The content in the scripts can be quite sophisticated and warrants specific instruction to help your students understand it.

### **Fine Arts Connection**

Each script has a song and a poem to accompany it. Your students will perform these songs and poems at designated places within the reader's theater performances. Your kit includes a Performance CD containing all of the songs and poems related to the eight scripts. This section of each lesson offers suggestions for using this CD to learn the songs and poems.

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights

## Lesson Plan

### Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will read their parts fluently and focus on the use of voice and tone to convey the true meaning of their parts.
- **Content Area:** Students will understand the course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people.

### Summary

In *Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights*, Confederate and Union soldiers prepare for the Battle of Fredericksburg. When the battle begins, the Confederates have the advantage of being behind a large stone wall. The Union attacks fail and many soldiers are left to die in front of the wall. One brave Confederate soldier crosses the wall to provide help to the wounded and dying.



### Materials

- *Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights* script booklets
- *Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights* Primary Sources (pages 98–103 or Teacher Resource CD)
- copies of Take-Home Script (Teacher Resource CD)
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

### Introduce the Literature

Ask students what they know about the Civil War, including when it was fought, who fought in it, and why it was fought. Next, ask students to write down their ideas about the following question: What is a hero? Discuss students' ideas and write a class definition of *heroism* on the board or on chart paper. Then, ask students if they think that ordinary people are capable of simple acts of heroism. Have students give examples of everyday acts of heroism, such as helping someone who is suffering. Finally, ask students the following questions: How many of you would risk your own life to save a friend's life? How many of you would risk your life to save your enemy's life? Tell students that they are about to study *Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights*, which is about a Confederate soldier who was willing to risk his life to save his enemies.



### Differentiation Support

Help **English language learners** and **below-grade-level students** gain an understanding of the Civil War by showing them pictures and having them write short descriptions.

Have **on-grade-level** and **above-grade-level students** read information about the Civil War and construct a time line of key events and battles.

### Involving All Students

While this script has only six roles, there are many ways that you can involve all of your students. Assign students who do not have speaking parts alternative roles such as acting as voice coaches to those who have speaking parts or making simple props or backdrops for the reader's theater performance.

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights Lesson Plan

## Reading the Script



1. Tell students to close their eyes as you read the following conversation between Richard Kirkland and Henry Matthews, a Union soldier:

*Henry Matthews: You—you—you are a Confederate soldier!*

*Richard Kirkland: Yes, I am a sergeant in South Carolina's Second Regiment Company E.*

*Henry Matthews: But, we're the enemy. Why are you helping us?*

*Richard Kirkland: Because it is the right thing to do.*

*Henry Matthews: Will you—will you help us all?*

*Richard Kirkland: Yes. I promise you that I will not leave the field until I have helped everyone who is still alive.*

Ask students to describe what they visualized as you read the sentences to them. Ask students what reasons a soldier might have for helping his or her enemies. Explain that they will be reading a script about the Civil War and a Confederate hero who risked his life to help wounded Union soldiers.

2. Provide each student with a copy of the script. Play the professional recording as students follow along in their scripts. As you play the recording, ask students to pay attention to how the readers convey the thoughts and feelings of the characters through their tones and expressions. Then, use the *PowerPoint*® edition of the script to conduct a whole-class reading. Model the most dramatic way to read some of the parts and call on different students to read other parts with the appropriate tone and expression.
3. After reading the script as a class, have students list unfamiliar vocabulary words. Help them learn the unknown words by finding the definitions in the glossary at the end of the script or by using dictionaries. Have students write stories, riddles, or historical facts using the new words. Students who struggle with the words may also want to make picture cards for a flash card review.
4. After students have read the script, ask them to pretend that they are either a Union or Confederate soldier. Using the script to support their work, have students write diary entries that describe in emotional detail exactly what happened to them and their fellow soldiers during the Battle of Fredericksburg. Share and display the entries.

## Differentiation Support



Allow the **English language learners** and **below-grade-level students** to work with a

teacher, a volunteer, or a teacher assistant as they complete their stories, riddles, and diary entries. This way, they can get immediate assistance if they are struggling. Also provide them with high-frequency word lists.

Have **on-grade-level** and **above-grade-level students** do further research on the Battle of Fredericksburg. Students can create new broadcasts, radio shows, or newspaper accounts that include this information.

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights

## Lesson Plan



### Assigning Roles

The roles of the characters are written on three different proficiency levels. Assign roles to students based on their reading proficiency. Remember that when students practice fluency, they should read materials at or below their reading levels. This helps them to focus on their prosody (accuracy, expression, and reading rate). If a student is reading text that is too difficult, his or her attention will be focused on decoding words rather than reading with fluency.

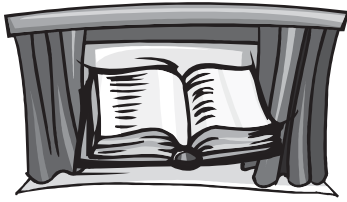
These are approximate reading levels for the roles in this script:

- |                                       |                                    |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ❖ Richard Kirkland:<br>high 3rd grade | ❖ Tom Rembert:<br>low 4th grade    | ❖ General Kershaw:<br>high 4th grade |
| ❖ Jesse Sandford:<br>high 3rd grade   | ❖ William Barron:<br>low 4th grade | ❖ Henry Matthews:<br>high 4th grade  |

### Meeting the Fluency Objective

1. The fluency objective focuses on using the proper intonation and voice while reading the lines. Model how improper intonation can hamper meaning. Write the following sentences from the script on the board and read them aloud in a monotone voice.
  - *“That’s for sure! Your mama’s one of the best cooks in Kershaw County, second only to my mama! ”*
  - *“I hated that Colonel Miles! He forced us to surrender even though we all knew our reinforcements were just an hour’s march away.”*
  - *“Kirkland said, ‘No, I am done for. You can do me no good. Save yourselves and tell my pa I died right. I did my duty. I died at my post.’”*Ask students how to improve the tone and voice by reading the sentences differently. Allow various students to demonstrate to the class the proper tone to use. Discuss how to best express surprise, anger, happiness, sadness, disappointment, and other emotions found in the script.
2. Tell students that the use of tone helps the audience understand how their characters are feeling and thinking. Give each student a copy of the Take-Home Script. Have them listen to the professional recording of the script and mark on their personal copies tips for effective use of tone and voice for each character’s part.
3. In this script, there are times when different characters show strong emotions. When reading these sentences, it is especially important to use the appropriate tone and voice to convey the characters’ thoughts and feelings. Divide the class into six groups, one representing each character, and have the groups study that character and find two to three examples of where emotions are strong and a particular voice and tone should be used. Have them read those examples aloud.
4. Review with students why it is important to be very familiar with the lines of the script in order to read it smoothly and fluently.

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights Lesson Plan



## Social Studies Connection

The focus of this script is on viewing the battles of the Civil War through the eyes of Confederate and Union soldiers and how a single act of heroism saved the lives of many soldiers.

1. Ask students to examine the photograph of the Civil War spy balloon (page 98). Then, have students work in pairs to create dialogues between the person in the spy balloon and the men helping him from below.
2. Have students carefully examine the cover of “Songs of the War” by Private O’Reilly (page 99) and determine what his songs were about. Ask students to write down their ideas and discuss them as a class. As a framework, explain to students that Miles O’Reilly (whose real name was Charles Graham Halpern) was a Union soldier who prepared the controversial order to bring one of the first troops of African American soldiers into the Civil War.
3. Ask students to study the picture entitled *Battle of Fredericksburg* (page 100). Next, have them work in small groups to devise newspaper articles that describe the Battle of Fredericksburg based on this picture.
4. Have students examine the sketch entitled *Wounded at Fredericksburg* (page 101). Ask them to pretend that they are survivors of the battle and write letters home explaining to their families what happened on that day. Discuss the letters as a class.
5. Show students the statue entitled *Richard Kirkland, the Angel of Marye’s Heights* (page 102). Discuss the risks that Kirkland took to minister to the sick and wounded enemy soldiers. Have students write essays on the characteristics of a true hero and compare Kirkland to a modern day hero of their choosing.
6. Have students view the painting *The Two Standard Bearers, Day after Battle* (page 103) and carefully examine and describe all of the symbols they see. Students should infer why the two flags depicted in this painting were torn.

## Differentiation Support



Have **English language learners** work with volunteers, teachers, or teaching assistants so

that they can complete assignments successfully. Give the English language learners lots of opportunities to examine photographs and illustrations of the time period so they will have a better visual understanding of what happened.

Give **below-grade-level students** specific directions and graphic organizers whenever possible. Limit their assignments so students are not too overwhelmed.

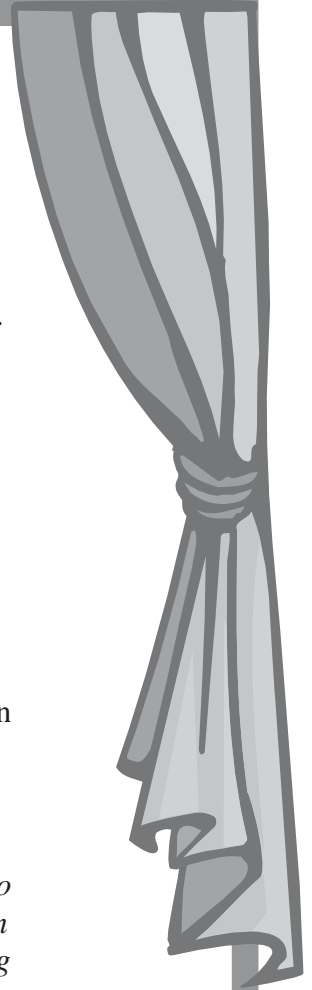
Have **above-grade-level students** compare two Civil War songs and make a recommendation as to which song is the best song for the Union troops to sing.

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights

## Lesson Plan

### Fine Arts Connection

1. Explain to students that the script *Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights* contains the song "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" and the poem "O Captain! My Captain!" The poem and song relate to the reader's theater piece, but they are not limited to use only with this script.
2. After listening to the song several times, divide the class into small groups. Assign each group a different stanza from the song. Then, ask the groups to draw pictures that depict their stanzas. Have students practice singing the song with the necessary voice and tone. Groups can perform their assigned stanzas for the class or for other classrooms.
3. To relate the poem to the fluency objective for this lesson, ask students to listen to the professional reading of the poem. Then, ask them to point out the tone used for the poem. Was the voice monotone, excited, sad, or hopeful? This poem is about the death of the Captain. Did the voice convey the meaning of the words of the poem? Have students practice reading the poem aloud to partners and then read it as a class. Students can make props for the poem and add actions or hand gestures as they practice and perform it for the class.
4. In the epilogue to this script it says, "*In 1909, Kirkland's remains were moved to a more prominent position in the cemetery. They are now close to the grave of General Kershaw. Sculptor Felix deWeldon created a statue in Kirkland's honor. It was placed in front of the stone wall at Fredericksburg in 1965.*" Using clay or a different art medium, ask students to each design a sculpture, painting, or collage that honors the memory of the heroic act of Richard Kirkland.
5. As a class, have students make a mural or model of the Battle of Fredericksburg, including the details from the script, such as the stone wall, the battle scene, and Richard Kirkland helping the wounded soldiers.



### Differentiation Support

Allow **English language learners** to listen to the professional rendition of the poem as many times as necessary to understand its meaning. Help them with any new or difficult vocabulary.

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights Lesson Plan

## Performance CD

Description	Track
Characters, Setting, and Script Reading, pages 6–12	Volume III, Track 01
Song: “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again”	Volume III, Track 02
Script Reading ( <i>cont.</i> ), pages 12–29	Volume III, Track 03
Poem: “O Captain! My Captain!”	Volume III, Track 04
Script Reading ( <i>cont.</i> ), page 29	Volume III, Track 05

## Teacher Resource CD—Primary Sources

Page	Description	Filename
98	Civil War Spy Balloon	balloon.jpg
99	Songs of the War by Private O’ Reilly	warsongs.jpg
100	Battle of Fredericksburg	fredericksburg.jpg
101	Wounded at Fredericksburg	wounded.jpg
102	Richard Kirkland, the Angel of Marye’s Heights	kirkland.jpg
103	The Two Standard Bearers, Day after Battle	bearers.jpg

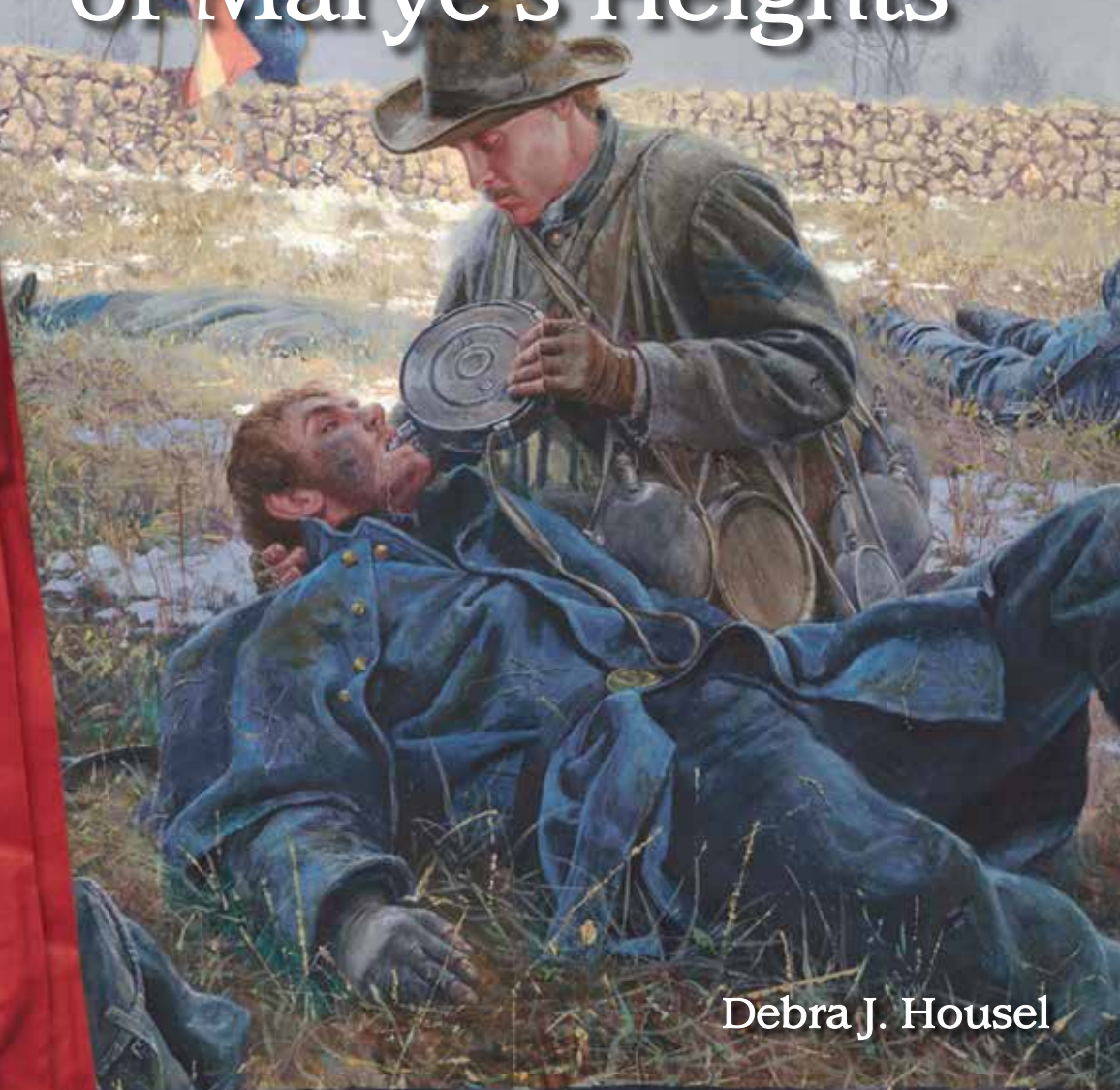
## Teacher Resource CD—Materials

Description	Filename
Take-Home Script: <i>Civil War Hero of Marye’s Heights</i>	THS_hero.pdf
PowerPoint: <i>Civil War Hero of Marye’s Heights</i>	PP_hero.ppt
Song: “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again”	song_hero.pdf
Poem: “O Captain! My Captain!”	poem_hero.pdf



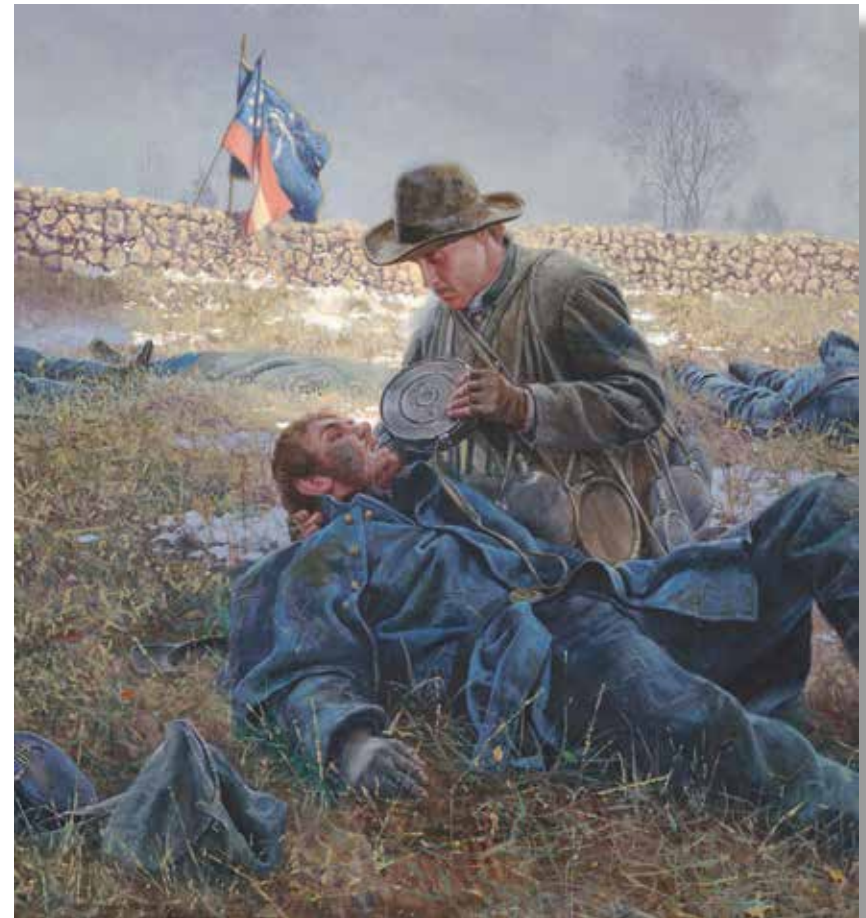
Building Fluency through Reader's Theater

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights



Debra J. Housel

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights



Debra J. Housel

# Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights

## Story Summary

The Battle of Fredericksburg is about to begin. The Confederates have the advantage because they are stationed behind a large stone wall. The Union attacks fail, and many soldiers lie wounded in front of the wall. Confederate soldier Richard Kirkland cannot bear to hear the cries from the injured soldiers. He risks his life by crossing the wall to provide food, water, and blankets to the suffering Union soldiers. Despite the Confederate victory at this battle, the Union soldiers eventually win the war in 1865. That year, General Kershaw, Jesse Sandford, Tom Rembert, and two Union soldiers visit Richard's gravesite to pay tribute to the "Angel of Marye's Heights."

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The Library of Congress

**Publisher**

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**Teacher Created Materials, Inc.**

*5301 Oceanus Drive*

*Huntington Beach, CA 92649*

**<http://www.tcmpub.com>**

**ISBN 978-1-4333-0546-7**

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*Reprinted 2011*

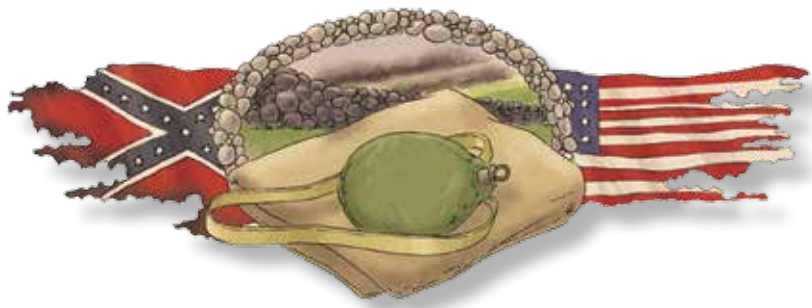
# Tips for **Performing** Reader's Theater

## Adapted from Aaron Shepard

- Don't let your script hide your face. If you can't see the audience, your script is too high.
- Look up often when you speak. Don't just look at your script.
- Talk slowly so the audience knows what you are saying.
- Talk loudly so everyone can hear you.
- Talk with feelings. If the character is sad, let your voice be sad. If the character is surprised, let your voice be surprised.
- Stand up straight. Keep your hands and feet still.
- Remember that even when you are not talking, you are still your character.

# Tips for **Performing** Reader's Theater *(cont.)*

- If the audience laughs, wait for them to stop before you speak again.
- If someone in the audience talks, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't pay attention.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it where it is until the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read his or her part, see if you can read the part instead, make something up, or just skip over it. Don't whisper to the reader!



## Civil War Hero of Marye's Heights

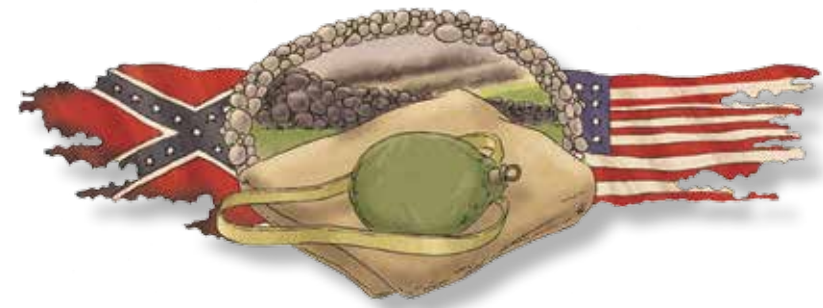
### Characters

Jesse Sandford  
Richard Kirkland  
Tom Rembert

William Barron  
Henry Matthews  
General Kershaw

### Setting

This reader's theater begins on the thirteenth of December, 1862, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Three Confederate soldiers huddle behind a large stone wall. On the northern side of the Rappahannock River, two Union soldiers lie awake in their camp, preparing to attack the Confederate army. Their attacks fail, and many Union soldiers lie dead or injured in front of the wall. The last scene occurs at the Quaker Cemetery in Camden, South Carolina.



### Act I

**Richard Kirkland:** Rembert, Sandford, are you awake?

**Tom Rembert:** Yes, Kirkland. What is it?

**Jesse Sandford:** It's still dark. It must be early in the morning.

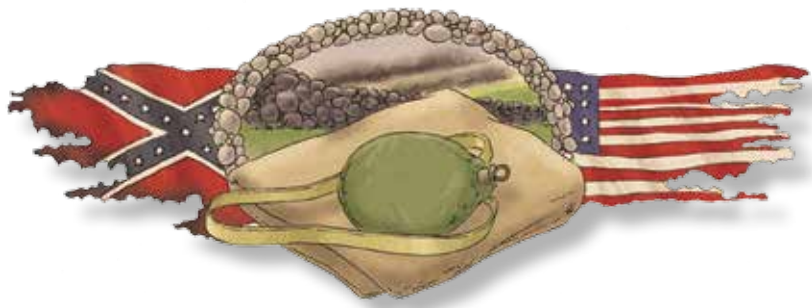
**Richard Kirkland:** I am just lying here missing home. What do each of you miss the most about Flat Rock?

**Tom Rembert:** My mama's cooking! It sure beats the tasteless hardtack we have been eating for weeks.

**Richard Kirkland:** That's for sure! Your mama's one of the best cooks in Kershaw County, second only to my mama!

**Jesse Sandford:** Boy, I sure do miss my parents and my four brothers.

**Tom Rembert:** I miss Emily Ann, and I wish I had her photograph. I should have married her before I left.



**Richard Kirkland:** Hey, you're only 19, just like me. There's still plenty of time to get married.

**Jesse Sandford:** Cheer up! We will be home again in no time. Just think of how we sent those Yankee soldiers fleeing at Bull Run. The Union troops retreated all the way to Washington.

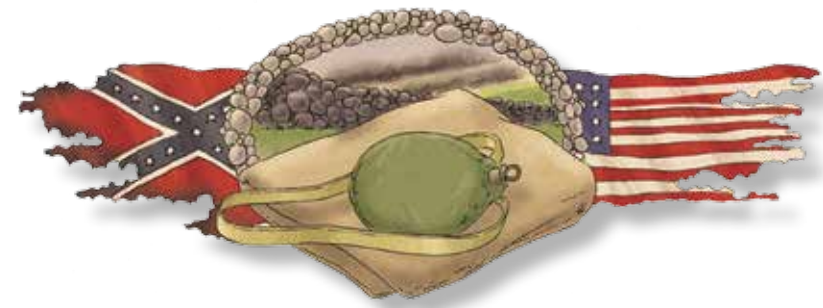
**Tom Rembert:** Remember how General Jackson's troops held their position against the Union attackers? Their courage was amazing.

**Richard Kirkland:** Yes. That is why they started calling him Stonewall Jackson—because he stood firm like a stone wall.

**Jesse Sandford:** Bull Run, Virginia—that was the war's first big battle. Can you believe that was nearly a year and a half ago? The Union leaders were shocked by our army's strength.

**Tom Rembert:** It was there that they realized the war would not end as soon as they had hoped.

**Richard Kirkland:** Then we had another huge victory at Savage Station. Remember how we ran off those troops?



**Tom Rembert:** I would have run, too, if the Land Merrimack had been used against me!

**Richard Kirkland:** You would not! You are no coward, Tom.

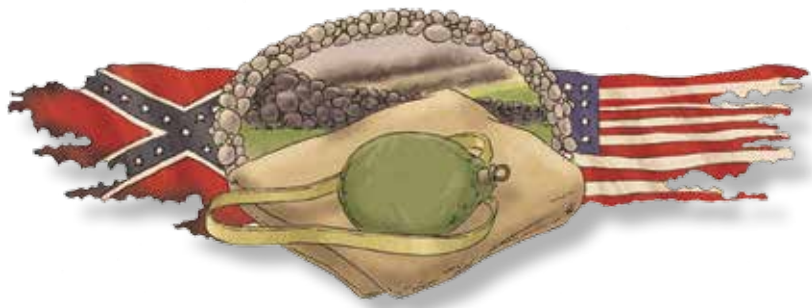
**Tom Rembert:** But think of it, Kirkland—a 32-pound naval rifle mounted on a locomotive and traveling at the same speed as the marching troops—who wouldn't be terrified by that?

**Richard Kirkland:** It certainly was a more impressive weapon than anything the Union had, that's for sure.

**Tom Rembert:** It was a brilliant move on General Magruder's part. I heard later that we had half the number of soldiers as the Yanks.

**Jesse Sandford:** Well, it didn't matter once the Land Merrimack took aim. Those Yanks were so frightened! And, they fled so fast that they abandoned 2,500 wounded soldiers in their field hospital.

**Tom Rembert:** Did you know that this was the first time a railroad battery was used in a war?



**Jesse Sandford:** Magruder was a genius! He chased those Union troops with constant gunfire. He demoralized and defeated an army nearly twice the size of his.

**Tom Rembert:** Kirkland, do you ever feel frightened that you will never see home again?

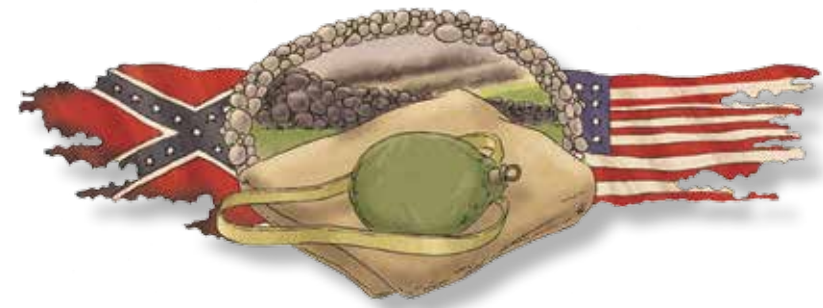
**Richard Kirkland:** I don't like to think like that. What good does it do? And besides, we already lived through the Battle of Sharpsburg.

**Jesse Sandford:** Seems like if we survived that, we can survive just about anything the Yanks throw at us.

**Tom Rembert:** They say that Sharpsburg was the bloodiest 24 hours of the war, so far.

**Jesse Sandford:** I heard that over 12,000 Union and 10,500 Confederate soldiers lay dead by nightfall. Can you believe that was just three months ago?

**Tom Rembert:** That was a horrible day. I have never seen so much blood! And we lost so many good friends—Willie, Jacob, and Josiah.



**Richard Kirkland:** Elijah and Fred, too. We got ambushed because that Union General George McClellan saw a copy of General Robert E. Lee's battle plans.

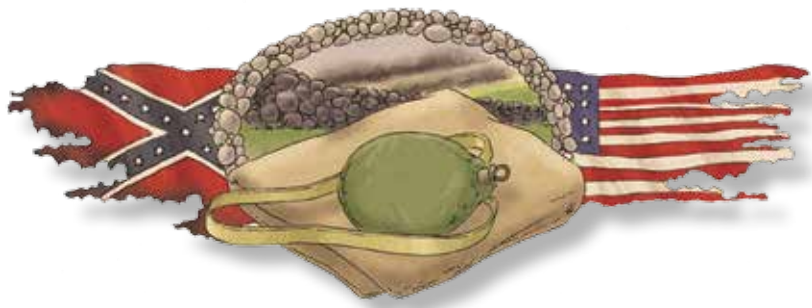
**Tom Rembert:** It was good that the Yanks did not follow us when we retreated under the cover of darkness. We were so weary from transporting the injured that we would have been like sitting ducks.

**Jesse Sandford:** Let's face it. General McClellan made an error. He let us retreat. He should have followed us. I heard that is why President Lincoln replaced him with General Ambrose Burnside.

**Richard Kirkland:** Well, at any rate, we are in great shape for today's battle. I feel like this wall we are behind is the most easily defended position from which we have fought since the war began.

**Tom Rembert:** I can almost feel sorry for the Yanks having to run uphill in the open against the number of guns we have amassed behind this wall.

**Richard Kirkland:** Hey, Sandford, do you remember that song everyone was singing as our regiment marched out of our hometown?



**Jesse Sandford:** Sure. Let's sing it to ourselves, and maybe we will fall asleep.

## Song: When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again

### Act 2

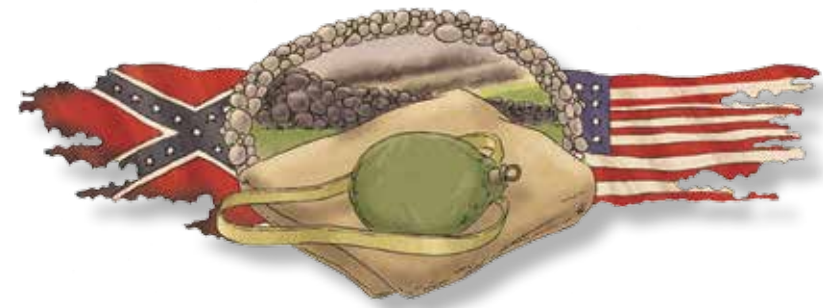
**William Barron:** I wonder if any Confederate soldiers are lying awake tonight?

**Henry Matthews:** I don't know. It is awfully chilly tonight. I can't imagine anyone sleeping.

**William Barron:** I still cannot get over the beating we took at Harpers Ferry.

**Henry Matthews:** It is too discouraging to remember. Lee's army surrounded us and took more than 12,000 of our troops prisoner. We were lucky to escape.

**William Barron:** I bet this will go down as the most shocking surrender in United States history.



**Henry Matthews:** The Confederacy got 200 wagons, 13,000 small arms, and 73 artillery pieces. This was a huge windfall for them. We all know that the South does not have factories to make weapons like these.

**William Barron:** They got all our food, rifles, cannons, and ammunition! That was the first battle I fought in where I felt as if we might not win this war.

**Henry Matthews:** Don't entertain such a thought!

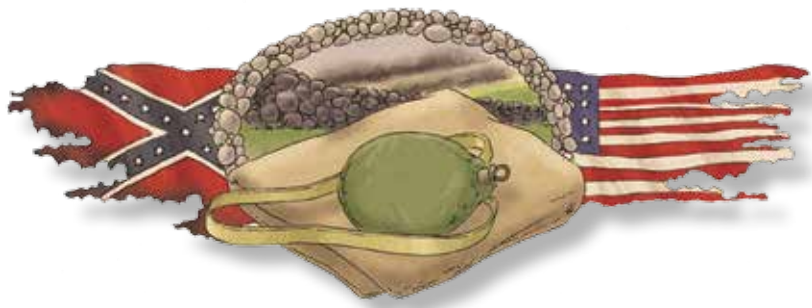
**William Barron:** I hated that Colonel Miles! He forced us to surrender even though we all knew our reinforcements were just an hour's march away.

**Henry Matthews:** You are not the only one who hated him. Shortly after he gave the order to surrender, an exploding shell struck his left leg, but everyone was so furious at him that they refused to take him to the medics!

**William Barron:** Nobody acted upset when he died the next day.

**Henry Matthews:** Good riddance, I say.





**William Barron:** To tell you the truth, I am terrified. I do not like how the Rebel troops keep increasing on the other side of the Rappahannock River. Every day I look over there, and their numbers seem to have doubled.

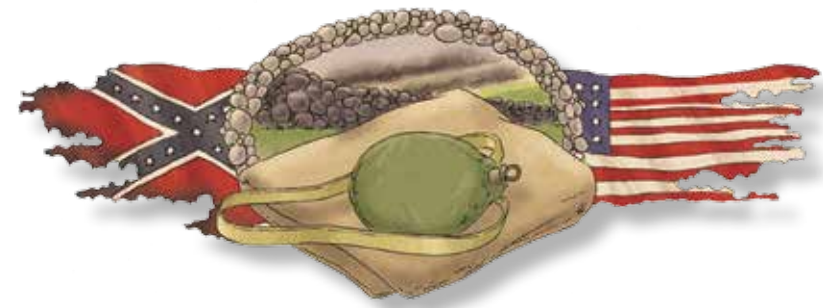
**Henry Matthews:** I agree. I think we were outnumbered several days ago, and every day it gets worse as more rebel reinforcements arrive.

**William Barron:** Why do you think General Burnside is waiting here so long?

**Henry Matthews:** You know as well as I do that every bridge across the Rappahannock River was destroyed in prior battles. We have no way to get across, so General Burnside is waiting for the pontoon bridges to arrive.

**William Barron:** What in the world is a pontoon bridge?

**Henry Matthews:** It's a temporary floating bridge. Our engineers are building several of them upstream as fast as they can. Each pontoon bridge will be tied and staked to the shore. Then, a group of our men will run the length of the bridge and fasten it to the opposite shore.



**William Barron:** But, the men running the length of each bridge will be in the open without any cover!

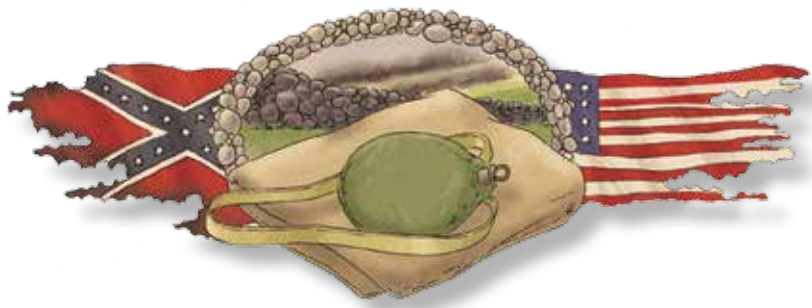
**Henry Matthews:** That is why about two dozen men will go—so that at least two of them will reach the shore.

**William Barron:** Those are mighty grim odds. I have a bad feeling about this. I think we would be better off if we got out of here and regrouped.

**Henry Matthews:** Don't be a coward. We have to fight the Rebels to defeat them.

**William Barron:** Don't you think I know that? But there is a time and a place to fight, and this is not it. Look at our situation: The Confederates have more troops than we do. They are positioned on high ground behind a stone wall. We have to cross the width of the river on pontoon bridges to reach the other shore. Then, we have to rush across low-lying open land and run uphill against enemy fire coming from behind a stone wall. Can you really say you feel confident you'll survive that?

**Henry Matthews:** It is not up to me to be confident that I will survive. It is up to me to trust our leadership and follow their orders.



**William Barron:** Well, in this instance, I feel like our leaders are not thinking straight. They are sending us on a fool's errand—and a deadly one at that.

**Henry Matthews:** You are not thinking of deserting, are you?

**William Barron:** No, of course not. That's almost certain death. At least we have a small chance of surviving this insane battle plan. But, you can't blame me for not wanting to throw my life away by flinging myself against a heavily defended stone wall.

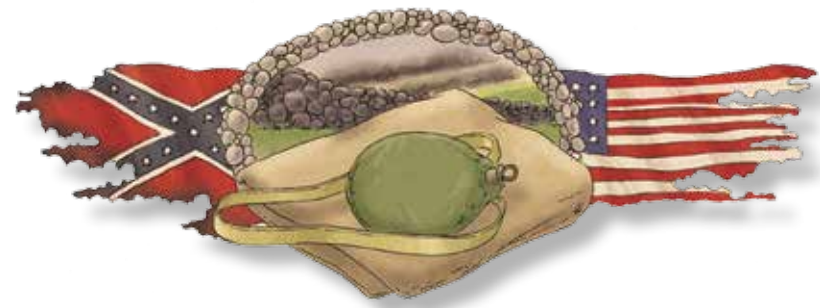
**Henry Matthews:** No, I do not blame you. I am frightened, too, but we have to obey our orders. Maybe there is some brilliant strategy we don't know about.

**William Barron:** I hope so.

### Act 3

**Jesse Sandford:** We can thank this stone wall for protecting our lives, friends. Can you believe those Union troops came at us six different times?

**Tom Rembert:** Nightfall kept them from coming back again.



**Jesse Sandford:** Where exactly are we?

**Tom Rembert:** They call this place Marye's Heights.

**Richard Kirkland:** I can't see the fallen very well because of the darkness, but I can sure hear them. This is more than I can bear.

**William Barron:** Water! Water!

**Henry Matthews:** Help me!

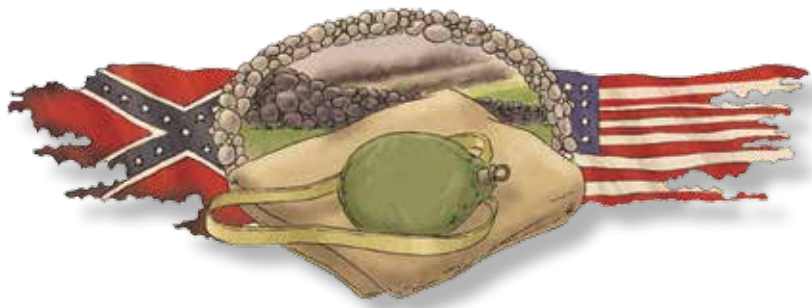
**William Barron:** Water—please, give me water!

**Henry Matthews:** I'm so cold! Mama!

**Richard Kirkland:** Listen to them groaning. There must be thousands of them out there!

**Jesse Sandford:** Why don't their own people take care of them?

**Tom Rembert:** They are probably afraid of being shot. I know I would be.



**William Barron:** Water! Please!

**Henry Matthews:** Oh, let me die! I can't take it any more!

**Richard Kirkland:** I can't stand it. Do you know where General Kershaw is?

**Tom Rembert:** Last I heard, he was in Mrs. Stevens's house reviewing battle plans. Why?

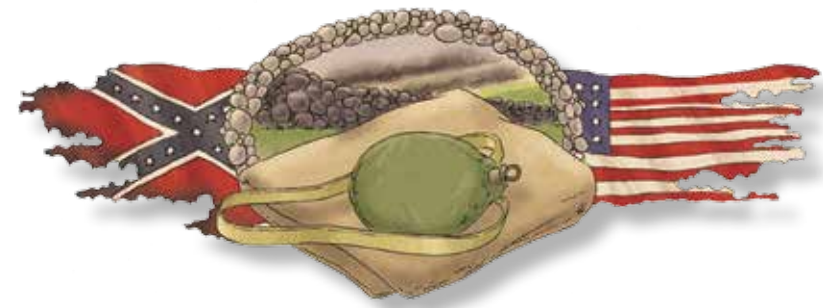
**Richard Kirkland:** I'm going to request permission to help the wounded and dying on the other side of this wall.

**Tom Rembert:** What? Are you insane? They are the enemy!

**Jesse Sandford:** And besides, the Yanks will shoot you dead the moment you cross the wall.

**Richard Kirkland:** I realize that, but I feel compelled to help. I must speak to the general now. Look, here he comes.

**General Kershaw:** Hello, soldiers.



**Richard Kirkland:** General, I cannot stand this.

**General Kershaw:** What is the matter, Sergeant Kirkland?

**Richard Kirkland:** All night and all day I have heard those poor Yankees crying for help, and I cannot stand it any longer. I am asking permission to go help them.

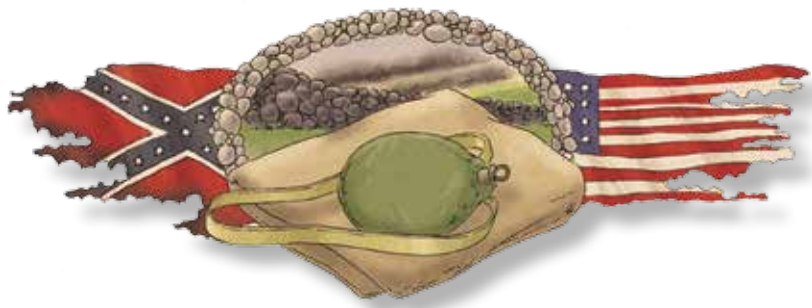
**General Kershaw:** Kirkland, don't you know that you could get a bullet through your head the moment you step over the wall?

**Richard Kirkland:** Yes, sir, I know that, but if you will let me, I am willing to try it.

**General Kershaw:** You are a fine sergeant, and I need you. I cannot let you throw your life away.

**Richard Kirkland:** Please, sir, if I must die, let it be with a clear conscience.

**General Kershaw:** These men are our enemies, and you will die trying to save them!



**Richard Kirkland:** Sir, I am begging you.

**General Kershaw:** I shouldn't allow you to run such a risk, but the sentiment that drives you is so noble that I will not refuse your request. You may go.

**Richard Kirkland:** Thank you, sir. General, may I show a white handkerchief?

**General Kershaw:** No, Kirkland, you may not do that.

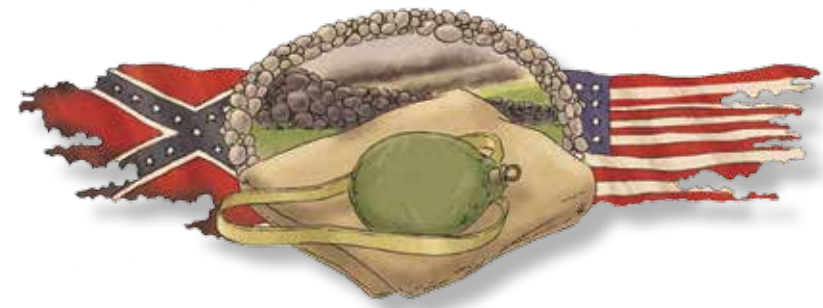
**Richard Kirkland:** All right, sir, I will take my chances.

**General Kershaw:** Good luck, Soldier.

**Richard Kirkland:** Sandford, help me gather up extra blankets, and Rembert, get everyone's canteens. We can fill them at Mrs. Stevens's pump.

**Tom Rembert:** Kirkland, tell me you are not serious.

**Jesse Sandford:** You are not really going out there to forfeit your life for a bunch of Yankees, are you?



**Richard Kirkland:** Yes, I am going out there, no matter what the cost. Now stop protesting and help me get supplies together!

## Act 4

**Jesse Sandford:** Kirkland, promise me you will be careful when you step over this wall. They are still firing.

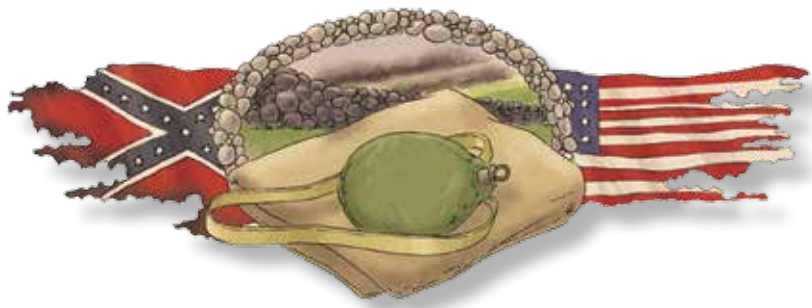
**Richard Kirkland:** I am going to try to raise my hands so that the other soldiers know I am not intending to harm anyone.

**Tom Rembert:** But your hands are so full of canteens and blankets. How are you going to do that?

**Richard Kirkland:** I will just have to do the best I can. Here I go.

**Jesse Sandford:** Rembert, listen. It's quiet. They've stopped firing.

**Tom Rembert:** Look, Kirkland is lifting that wounded soldier's head. He is holding a canteen to his lips.



**William Barron:** Water, oh please, water!

**Richard Kirkland:** Here is some water. Drink it slowly.

**William Barron:** Don't give it all to me—my buddy needs some.

**Richard Kirkland:** Don't worry; I will make sure that everyone who needs water gets some. I have brought blankets, too. Do you need one?

**William Barron:** No, I think my friend needs it more.

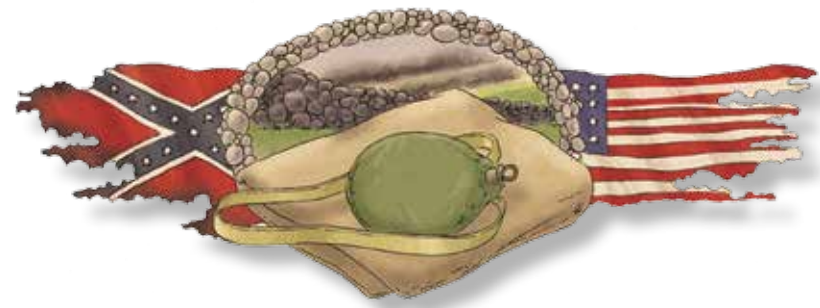
**Richard Kirkland:** Who is he?

**William Barron:** Him—over there. Is my wound fatal?

**Richard Kirkland:** I am not sure. I hope not.

**Henry Matthews:** Hey! Over here! I'm freezing! Please help me!

**Richard Kirkland:** Here is a blanket. I have water, too.



**Henry Matthews:** Please, will you send this letter to my parents? I wrote them good-bye. I'll never see them again.

**Richard Kirkland:** Yes, you will! You are going to survive, but I will post your letter for you all the same.

**Henry Matthews:** You—you—you are a Confederate soldier!

**Richard Kirkland:** Yes, I am a sergeant in South Carolina's Second Regiment Company E.

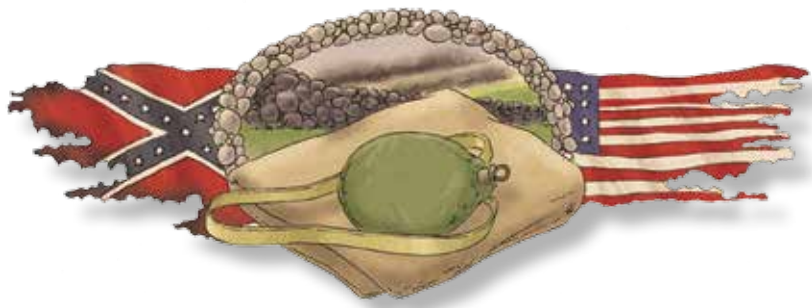
**Henry Matthews:** But, we're the enemy. Why are you helping us?

**Richard Kirkland:** Because it is the right thing to do.

**Henry Matthews:** Will you—will you help us all?

**Richard Kirkland:** Yes. I promise you that I will not leave the field until I have helped everyone who is still alive.

**Jesse Sandford:** Rembert, how long has it been? He has been out there for more than an hour.



**Tom Rembert:** Look, Sandford, he is coming back now.

**Jesse Sandford:** Let's help him over the wall.

**Tom Rembert:** Hey, Kirkland, listen to that! They are cheering for you.

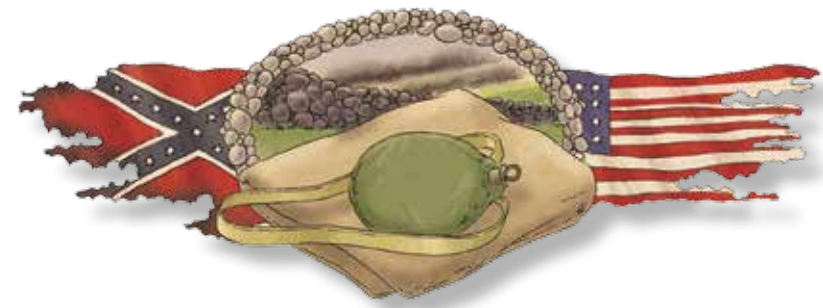
**Jesse Sandford:** And, it is not just our men cheering. The Yanks are cheering, too. You are a hero!

**Richard Kirkland:** I am no hero. I only did what I would want someone to do for me if I were lying there suffering.

**Tom Rembert:** I bet you will never be forgotten for the compassion you have shown here today.

**General Kershaw:** Kirkland, I am so glad you are back safe and sound. I thought I was sending you to your death! I am so proud of you, and I know you made your parents proud today. I will make sure they know their son's caliber.

**Richard Kirkland:** Thank you, General.



**Jesse Sandford:** General Kershaw, how many men do you think we have lost?

**General Kershaw:** It has got to be about 5,000 on our side. But, I would estimate that the Union has lost more than double that number. I think we have seen the worst of this battle, soldiers.

## Act 5

**Jesse Sandford:** Rembert, coming to this lonely grave will help me put my feelings about the war to rest.

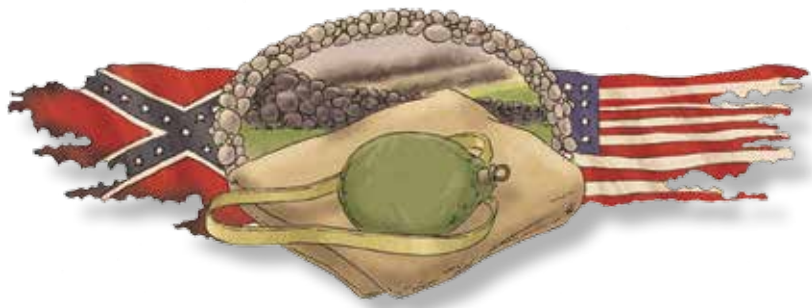
**Tom Rembert:** It has been six months since Lee surrendered. I can't believe we lost, but I am glad it is over.

**Jesse Sandford:** Hey, look! There's a familiar face!

**General Kershaw:** Rembert! Sandford! It is so good to see you both! I am glad you survived the war.

**Tom Rembert:** General Kershaw! I am glad to see you, too.

**Jesse Sandford:** We heard you were taken prisoner at Saylor's Creek in April.



**General Kershaw:** Yes, I was held prisoner for four months, but I received good care at the hands of General George Custer.

**William Barron:** I am so glad to hear that.

**General Kershaw:** Who are you? You sound like a Northerner.

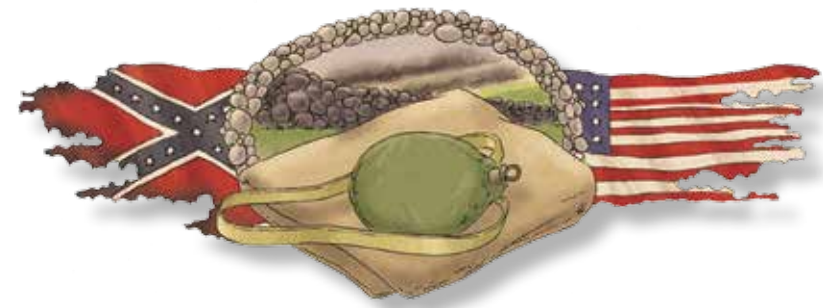
**William Barron:** I am. We have come here to honor Richard Kirkland. I discovered that he was the man who saved my life at Fredericksburg.

**General Kershaw:** He did not tell you his name on the battlefield?

**Henry Matthews:** No, sir, he did not give his name to anyone he helped. I don't think he expected any gratitude or glory. But, I am certain that I would not be standing here today without the aid he gave to me and my buddy here.

**Tom Rembert:** This is one of the most isolated and inaccessible spots for a grave I have ever seen.

**Henry Matthews:** He deserves better. Did you know that after Fredericksburg, everyone started to refer to him as the Angel of Marye's Heights?



**General Kershaw:** Yes, I have heard that.

**William Barron:** It certainly is a fitting title.

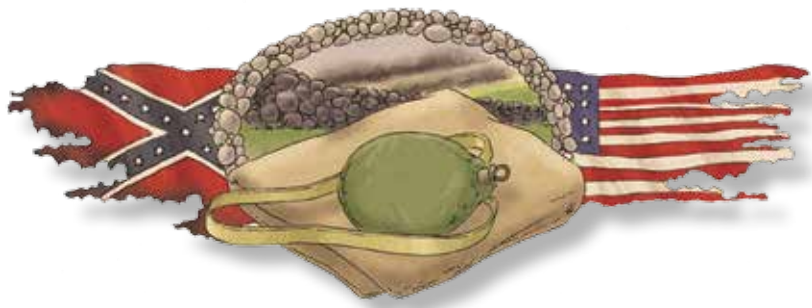
**General Kershaw:** He distinguished himself in the battle of Gettysburg, and I promoted him to Lieutenant. But, he did not even live three more months to enjoy his new rank.

**Henry Matthews:** Please, can you tell us how he died?

**Tom Rembert:** We were with him. It was on the twentieth of September, 1863, during the battle of Chickamauga. Kirkland, Sandford, and I were charging up Snodgrass Hill. We had gotten too far out in front of our regiment.

**Jesse Sandford:** Rembert and I turned to rejoin our unit, but Kirkland lingered for a moment to fire one last shot. He took a rifle ball in the chest. We rushed to his side and tried to lift him, but Kirkland said, "No, I am done for. You can do me no good. Save yourselves and tell my pa I died right. I did my duty. I died at my post."

**Tom Rembert:** Then he breathed his last breath.



**General Kershaw:** Chickamauga was the last major victory for the Confederacy.

**William Barron:** No nobler soul ever fought on the battlefield than that of Richard Kirkland.

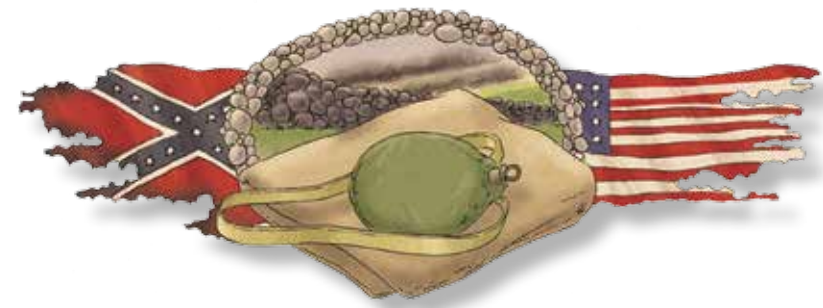
**Henry Matthews:** I met him only once, yet from what he did for me, I will forever feel that he is my friend.

**General Kershaw:** Part of his obituary read: “Young and gallant soldier, rest in peace. Fate has decreed that you should not reap the reward of all your toils, but your name stands recorded upon the long list of victories already sacrificed upon the altar of your country’s liberty.”

**William Barron:** That is moving and very befitting of Kirkland. It is such a shame he did not survive the war. I wanted to thank him for saving my life.

**Henry Matthews:** We lost so many friends on that terrible day.

**William Barron:** I lost my brother there. So many perished. Now even President Lincoln is dead.



**General Kershaw:** Even though we fought on different sides, I think we all agree that war is horrible. Watching the battle of Fredericksburg, General Robert E. Lee said, “It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.”

## Poem: O Captain! My Captain!

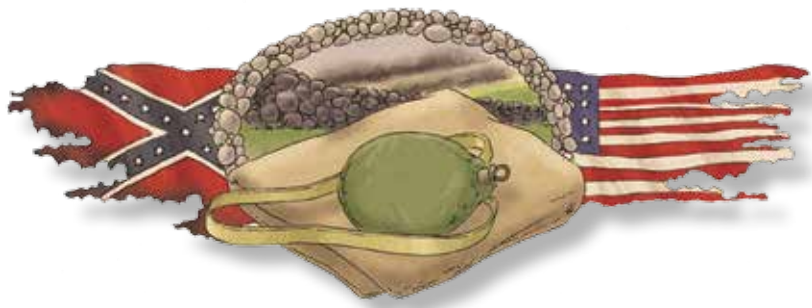
### Epilogue

**Jesse Sandford:** Richard Kirkland’s merciful act has never been forgotten. The Kershaw County Confederate veterans admired him so much that they named their organization The Camp Richard Kirkland.

**Tom Rembert:** They selected him over six Confederate generals born in their county. In 1901, a small white marble stone was placed in Kirkland’s honor in the Episcopal Church of the Prince of Peace in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

**Jesse Sandford:** In 1909, Kirkland’s remains were moved to a more prominent position in the cemetery. They are now close to the grave of General Kershaw. Sculptor Felix deWeldon created a statue in Kirkland’s honor. It was placed in front of the stone wall at Fredericksburg in 1965.





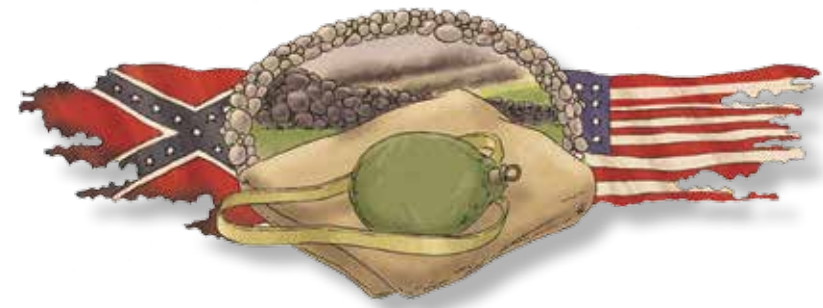
## O Captain! My Captain!

by **Walt Whitman**

O captain! my captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
    But O heart! heart! heart!  
    Leave you not the little spot,  
    Where on the deck my captain lies,  
    Fallen cold and dead.

O captain! my captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up! for you the flag is flung, for you the bugle trills;  
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths, for you the shores  
    a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
    O captain! dear father!  
    This arm beneath your head!  
    It is some dream that on the deck,  
    You've fallen cold and dead.

My captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won!  
    Exult O shores! and ring, O bells!  
    But I, with silent tread,  
    Walk the spot my captain lies,  
    Fallen cold and dead.



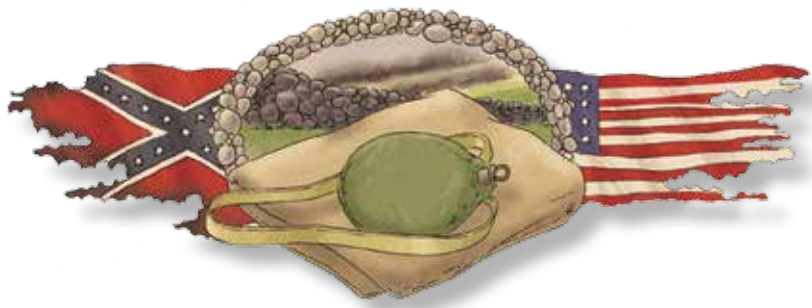
## When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again

by **Patrick S. Gilmore**

When Johnny comes marching home again,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
We'll give him a hearty welcome then  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
The men will cheer and the boys will shout  
The ladies they will all turn out  
And we'll all feel joy  
When Johnny comes marching home.

Get ready for the jubilee,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
We'll give the hero three times three,  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
The laurel wreath is ready now  
To place upon his loyal brow  
And we'll all feel joy  
When Johnny comes marching home.

*This is an abridged version of the complete song.*



## Glossary

**amassed**—gathered

**artillery pieces**—items used for shooting large projectiles (shells, bombs)

**caliber**—degree of merit or excellence; high quality

**demoralized**—ruined the confidence and morale; disheartened

**exulting**—extremely joyful

**forfeit**—to lose; to give up

**hardtack**—a hard, tasteless biscuit made with only flour and water

**inaccessible**—remote; capable of being reached only with difficulty

**keel**—a ship's main structural member that runs lengthwise along the center line from bow to stern, to which the frames of the hull are attached

**laurel wreath**—an award for winning; from the first Olympics, when a winner wore foliage on the head as a sign of victory

**obituary**—death notice in the newspaper

**regiment**—a unit of ground forces, consisting of two or more battalions (battle groups), a headquarters unit, and supporting units

**tread**—to take heavy steps

**victor**—one that defeats an enemy or opponent

**windfall**—unexpected gain, good fortune

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