New Hampshire in the Civil War Lesson Plan  
Thaddeus Lowe, New Hampshire’s Civil War Balloonist  
Created by: New Hampshire in the Civil War workshop participants and the New Hampshire Historical Society, 2014–15  
Topic: Thaddeus Lowe, New Hampshire’s Civil War Balloonist  
Level: Middle School and High School  

ABSTRACT / SUMMARY  
Thaddeus Lowe of New Hampshire promoted and experimented with hydrogen-filled balloons as lookout posts during warfare. During the Civil War Lowe persuaded President Abraham Lincoln of the value of reconnaissance from manned balloons in the air both during and between battles. This was an early practical use of manned flight in aeronautical history.  

QUESTIONS / TASKS  
How did Thaddeus Lowe and his manned balloons contribute to Civil War warfare and aeronautical history?  

EXPECTED OUTCOMES  
• Learn to use primary and secondary sources to answer reference questions  
• Discover the importance of air reconnaissance during the Civil War  

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES  
1. Research the story of Thaddeus Lowe and his fight to have manned balloon flight accepted as a way to gather information about the enemy on the battlefield. Include reading a newspaper account of a manned balloon flight.  
2. Draw a picture or make a model of one of Lowe’s balloons.  
3. Using historical sources, either:  
   a. write a historically accurate, fact-based newspaper account describing a Lowe balloon, how it flies, and its uses, assuming readers had never seen a balloon before and had no idea how or why one could be used in battle, or  
   b. create a historically accurate children’s poster with illustrations for grades 3-4 telling about Thaddeus Lowe and his balloons in the Civil War.  

ASSESSMENTS  
In class, orally or in writing, each student will describe the sources chosen, why they were chosen, and how they were used to create historical accuracy in 3a or 3b.  

PROJECT DURATION  
In-Class Time (estimated): 2 class periods  
Out-of-Class Time (estimated): 6 hours
RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Library Collection


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Primary Resources:**


**Secondary Sources:**


