

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

Burden, Maria Schell. *Professor T. S. C. Lowe and his Mountain Railway*. Los Angeles: Borden Publishing Company, 1993. 625.3 B949

McGee, William E. *Men of Granite: True Stories of New Hampshire's Fighting Men*. Portsmouth: Peter Randall, 2007. 920.0778 M145

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Primary Resources:

"Fair Oaks, Va. Prof. Thaddeus S. Lowe Observing the Battle from his Balloon 'Intrepid,'" Library of Congress, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015.

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/cwp2003000067/PP/>

"Prof. T. S. C. Lowe, Civil War Balloonist," Library of Congress, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a19654/>

"Prof. Thaddeus Lowe's 'Balloon Camp' at Gaines Mill, Va., May 1862: Lowe Prepares to Ascend; Soldiers Crowded Around Car of Balloon," Library of Congress, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b47780/>

"Professor Lowe Dictating a Dispatch to Gen. McClellan during the Battle of Fair Oaks," Library of Congress, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015.

<http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.33126/>

"Professor Lowe's Balloon 'Eagle' in a Storm," Library of Congress, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.33127/>

"Professor Lowe's Military Balloon Near Gaines Mill, VA," Library of Congress, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.33091/>

"Professor Thaddeus Lowe's Balloon Gas Generators. The U.S. Capitol in background, Washington, DC, circa 1861," National Archives, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015.

<https://research.archives.gov/id/512776>

Secondary Sources:

Clark, Liesl. "A Short History of Ballooning," NOVA, 1997. Accessed July 23, 2015.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/space/short-history-of-ballooning.html>

Crouch, Tom. "On This Spot," Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum: AirSpaceBlog, 2009. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://blog.nasm.si.edu/aviation/on-this-spot/>

Green, James L. "Civil War Ballooning During the Seven Days Campaign," Civil War Trust, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/civil-war-ballooning/ballooning-during-the-seven.html>

Kennon, Don. "Flying Over the Capitol, Part 1," U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 2012. Accessed July 23, 2015. <https://uschs.wordpress.com/tag/thaddeus-lowe/>

Pierce, Virginia. "Professor Lowe's 1861 Balloon Voyage to Union, SC," South Carolina Digital Newspaper Program, 2011. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://library.sc.edu/blogs/newspaper/2011/06/16/professor-lowes-1861-balloon-voyage-to-union-s-c/>

"Civil War Aeronautics (1861–1865)," Library of Congress: Science Reference Guides, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/SciRefGuides/civilwaraeronautics.html>

"Civil War Ballooning," Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://airandspace.si.edu/explore-and-learn/topics/ballooning.cfm>

"Civil War Ballooning: The Story of How Thaddeus Lowe Reinvented Reconnaissance at the Encouragement of President Lincoln," Smithsonian.com, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/videos/category/history/civil-war-ballooning/?no-ist>
Video discussing Thaddeus Lowe and his role within the Civil War (3:05 minutes)

"Conquest of the Skies: A History of Ballooning," Indiana University: Lilly Library, 2008. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/balloons/index.html>

"Mr. Lincoln's Air Force," Smithsonian Education, YouTube.com, 2014. Accessed July 23, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mX2aJjQ_Gs&list=PLFGZwzyPnxTuvjvJJ6Z-VkcHW7Yy670-k&index=6 *Video discussing President Abraham Lincoln*

"Thaddeus Lowe's Balloon Ascent," Smithsonian Institution Archives, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. http://siarchives.si.edu/collections/siris_sic_12871-0

"Thaddeus Lowe and His Balloon 'Intrepid,'" Civil War Trust, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/civil-war-ballooning/prof-thaddeus-s-lowe.html>

"Thaddeus Sobieski Constantine Lowe: Chief Aeronaut, August 20, 1832–January 6, 1913," Civil War Trust, n.d. Accessed July 23, 2015. <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/thaddeus-sobieski-constantine-lowe.html>