
Musical Morale for General Sherman's Army

Middle (6th - 8th grade)

Time required: 30-40 minutes

Specific recommendation: 8th grade Social Studies [Civil War]

Goals/Objectives:

- Define "morale" and understand the role music played to boost morale during the Civil War
- Identify elements of "The Blue Juniata" that promote morale, including both music and text elements

Common Core Standards:

- RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

Materials:

- **Song of America Links:**

To print:

General Sherman & "The Blue Juniata" Handout (includes the text of "The Blue Juniata"):

<https://songofamerica.net/downloads/general-sherman-the-blue-juniata-handout/>

To reference:

Basic Musical Elements handout: <https://songofamerica.net/downloads/basic-musical-elements-handout/>

Song of America online timeline: <http://songofamerica.net/timeline/> (Civil War & Reconstruction)

Song of America Marion Dix Sullivan page: <http://songofamerica.net/composer/sullivan-marion-dix>

To listen to:

Song of America There is No Gender in Music radio program:

<https://songofamerica.net/program/there-is-no-gender-in-music/>

Further references

- Book: *The Untried Life: The Twenty-Ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War*
Google Books: <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0804040478> (p. 353)
- Website: Huntingdon History Research Network (with "The Blue Juniata" Civil War history):
http://www.huntingdonhistoryresearchnetwork.net/?page_id=191

Instruction:

- Students are invited to write down a song that they listen to when they want to boost their spirits and then share that song—and why they like it—with a neighbor

- The teacher makes a quick list of commonalities between the songs chosen - e.g. "upbeat" - that they can compare the qualities of "The Blue Juniata" later in the lesson
 - Refer to the *Song of America* Basic Musical Elements handout for an easy guide to talking about music:
<https://songofamerica.net/downloads/basic-musical-elements-handout/>
- The teacher briefly introduces General Sherman's March to the Sea, referencing the *Song of America* timeline [<http://songofamerica.net/timeline/> (Civil War & Reconstruction)]
- Class discussion: "How would the soldiers be feeling during their journey south?"
- The teacher explains how many troops used songs to promote *morale*, or enthusiasm, confidence and discipline
- The teacher introduces Marion Dix Sullivan's song "Blue Juniata," explaining its significance as the first commercial hit by a woman composer and its connection to the French and Indian War [<http://songofamerica.net/song/blue-juniata>]
- *Guided Practice*
 - Students listen to "Blue Juniata" [<https://songofamerica.net/program/there-is-no-gender-in-music/> at 35:49, or 34:59 with Thomas Hampson introduction] and follow along with the text [<https://songofamerica.net/downloads/general-sherman-the-blue-juniata-handout/>]
 - The teacher reads the first four stanzas aloud and asks, "What lines that I have read would promote morale among soldiers?"
 - Students respond and the teacher writes the responses on the board [ex. "Strong and true my arrows are"]
 - While reading the stanzas, the class defines the vocabulary words identified
 - Students compare musical elements of "The Blue Juniata" to musical elements of the songs that they chose at the beginning of the lesson
- *Independent Practice*
 - In pairs, or individually, students read the remainder of the text and underline lines that would have promoted morale in General Sherman's soldiers
 - Students share their responses as a class

Going Further:

- The teacher reads aloud from the account of Sherman's and his troops reacting to the song (found on the accompanying handout)
- The teacher plays the recording of the song again, as the students imagine Sherman and his troops listening and singing along to "The Blue Juniata." After listening, the teacher asks, "How do you think the music of this song promotes morale?"

Assessment:

As a homework assignment, students choose one line that they believe best promotes morale and will write a paragraph explaining their choice. Students may also choose to design an "inspirational pillow" based on their chosen line from the text.