INTRODUCTION

Authors: Glenn Johnston and Johanna Seymour, Education Consultants, Maryland Military Historical Society
Grade Level: 8th Grade
Duration: One 50-Minute Class Period

The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to the idea that the successful defense of Baltimore in 1814 was primarily achieved through the actions of local citizens and not the U.S. Army, Navy, or Marines. Although only a percentage of people in the region actually carried a weapon in Baltimore’s defense, the lesson will present stories of how citizens (e.g. soldiers, free and enslaved African-Americans, merchants, carpenters, actors, and sailors) executed a historic defense of the region by erecting and maintaining a large earthen ground defense line and several shore fortifications. This hands-on lesson will allow students to explore primary source documents to answer the core question, “How did Baltimore citizens contribute to the defense of Baltimore in the Fall of 1814?”

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this block of instruction:
1. Students will be able to provide an example of how each of three diverse groups chosen by the student contributed to the defense of Baltimore.
2. Using quotes from 3-5 primary source excerpts provided for the exercise, students will develop a short narrative explaining what was needed to construct and maintain the large earthen defenses and shore fortifications around the City of Baltimore during the War of 1812.

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Introductory set (3 minutes)
Ask students to think about what they know about how Baltimore was defended when the British attacked during the War of 1812. Give them a hint to think of the words of the Star Spangled Banner.

Step 2: Lesson rationale (1 minute)
Explain to students that they are going to explore documents written by the citizens of Baltimore (primary sources) from August to November 1814 so they may better understand citizens’ roles in defending Baltimore 200 years ago.
Lesson Plan: Defense of Baltimore

Step 3: Framing the learning activity (3 minutes)
Make available to students on the board, screen, or through a handout, the following questions that will guide them in their reading:

- Why did officials think Baltimore needed to be defended in 1814 and from whom?
- How do you think that civilians planned to defend their city?
- Which groups of people helped in Baltimore’s defense?
- How is a primary source different than a textbook?
- Were these primary sources helpful to you in understanding the Baltimore defense or were they confusing? Why?

Step 4: Input (10 minutes)
- Distribute support materials
  - Topic Background
  - Vocabulary sheet.
- Allow students to read these materials individuals and to formulate questions.
- Provide students an opportunity to ask questions.

Step 3: Pair and Share activity (10 minutes)
- Distribute resource sheet
- Form into learning pairs
- Instruct students to write their answers to the focusing questions on Resource Sheet #13.

Step 5: Synthesis of learning and assessment (13 minutes)
- Reform class into whole class seating if necessary
- Discuss your findings as a whole group.
- Collect Resource sheets in order to assess learning
- Also worth discussing:
  - What other primary sources would be useful in understanding the defense of Baltimore?
  - What is a secondary source and how would secondary sources be helpful in understanding the defense of Baltimore?

STANDARDS

National History Standards

United States Era 4
Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Standard 1A- The student understands the international background and consequences of the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the Monroe Doctrine.

Maryland State Curriculum Standards for United States History

Standard 5.0 History
Topic C. Conflict Between Ideas and Institutions

Indicator 2- Analyze the emerging foreign policy of the United States. b. Explain how the continuing conflict between Great Britain and France influenced domestic and foreign policy of the United States.

Indicator 4- Analyze the Institution of Slavery and its Influence of on Societies in United States. b. Analyze the experiences of African-American slaves and free blacks
Lesson Plan: Defense of Baltimore

Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes
Topic A. Read to Learn and Construct Meaning about Social Studies

Indicator 1- Use Appropriate and Opportunities to Increase Understandings of Social Studies Vocabulary. c. Use Content Clues to Understand New Social Studies Vocabulary.

Indicator 2- Use Strategies to Prepare for Reading (Before Reading). c. Set a Purpose for Reading the Text.

Indicator 4- Use Strategies to Demonstrate Understanding of the Text (After Reading). a. Identify and Explain What is Directly States in the Text. b. Identify, Paraphrase or Summarize the Main Idea of the Text. f. Explain What is Not Directly Stated in the Text by Drawing Inferences. i. Draw Conclusions and Make Generalizations on the Text, Multiple Text, and/or Prior Knowledge

Topic B. Write to Learn and Communicate Social Studies Understandings

Indicator 1- Select and use informal writing strategies, such as short/response/essay answer/brief constructed responses, journal writing, note taking, and graphic organizers, to clarify, organize, remember, and/or express new understandings. a. Identify key ideas.

Additional Standards

Grades 6-8
Reading Standards for Literacy in Reading/Social Studies

CCR Anchor Standard #1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources

CCR Anchor Standard #9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

CCR Anchor Standard #2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. WHST.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

TOPIC BACKGROUND

In 1814, Baltimore stood as the third largest city in the United States, with 40,000 citizens. After the defeat of the US Army at the Battle of Bladensburg in Maryland as well as the burning of the City of Washington, Baltimore’s citizens created the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, chaired by Mayor Edward Johnson. Meeting daily, it resolved to draft every white male between the ages of 16-50 and to provide each recruit with a firearm and accessories, including a bayonet, cartridge box, and tools necessary to maintain them. The Committee appointed Samuel Smith, a major general of the Maryland militia, to head the city defenses. Additionally, Smith served as a United States Senator (Federalist Party) and was a Revolutionary War veteran. Before accepting the position, he sought the approval of his uncle, Levin Winder, who was Governor of Maryland. Upon his uncle’s approval he took command of the Baltimore Military District from General William Winder, who had previously held command of the district.  

The militia was under the control of the Governor of Maryland— not the President of the United States. General Smith answered to the Governor.

Nearly 9,000 citizens began work on August 27, 1814, digging earthwork defenses. Smith gambled that the British would approach by water so he concentrated citizens’ efforts along the waterfront and to the north and west of Baltimore. These workers could not rely on the federal or state government for aid such as blankets, tents and funds for workers’ families. The militia, under Major General John Stricker, had already appropriated local supplies, such as wagons which the defenders used to haul ammunition. Baltimore public funds became exhausted and Smith mortgaged his own property to replenish these funds.²

To aid the effort to gather any remaining supplies that the city’s residents possessed, the Committee of Safety and Vigilance required its residents to surrender any wheelbarrows and building supplies. Also they instructed hospitals to stand on alert. They appointed a relief committee to solicit cash for poor families whose chief breadwinner now worked for the city’s defense. Despite harsh conditions, Baltimore citizens felt a spurge of patriotism and eagerly joined the militia’s efforts to defend the city via these earthen works and water fortifications. Also joining the efforts, elements of the Regular Army and U.S. Navy, as well as militia and citizens from Pennsylvania and Virginia came to Baltimore’s aid. Although helpful in manning and maintaining the defenses, these out-of-state soldiers and workers further strained limited supplies.³

RESOURCES

- Resource #1- Asking to use local houses and hospitals (GIF)
- Resource #2- Defense wall workers excused from militia duty (GIF)
- Resource #3- AA asked to build defenses (GIF)
- Resource #4- AA Protected as a Fire men (GIF)
- Resource #5- need 8 or 10 carpenters (GIF)
- Resource #6- need axes (GIF)
- Resource #7- need artillery for defenses (GIF)
- Resource #8- Theatre offering profits (GIF)
- Resource #9-Theatre company gives profits (GIF)

² Mahon, 308.
Lesson Plan: Defense of Baltimore

• Resource #10-Hat Makers wish to give a day of service (GIF)
• Resource #11- sailors volunteering to help at defenses (GIF)
• Resource #12- Be kinder to AA workers (GIF)
• Resources #13- Student Answers (PDF)

VOCABULARY LIST
(in order which unknown words appear)

Chinquapin Hill- area in Baltimore which is currently a residential area located in the Govans section.
Current location of Belvedere Square shops on Northern Parkway and York Road

Vigilance- alert watchfulness

Constables- peace officers with less authority and smaller jurisdiction than a sheriff, empowered to serve
writs and warrants and make arrests

Livery Stables- a stable that boards horses and keeps horses and carriages for hire

Palisades- a line of steep, high cliffs, especially of basalt, usually along a river; a wall made with vertical
sticks and logs

Journeyman- one who has fully served an apprenticeship in a trade or craft and is a qualified worker in
another’s employ; an experienced and competent but undistinguished worker

Hatter- one whose occupation is the manufacture, selling, or repair of hats

REFERENCES


http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137FOMC/137visual3.htm

Vocabulary Words:

http://www.livebaltimore.com/neighborhoods/list/chinquapinparkbelvedere/

http://www.thefreedictionary.com/vigilance

http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Constables

http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Livery+Stables

http://www.thefreedictionary.com/palisades

http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Journeymen

http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Hatter