

CSS *Neuse* and the Civil War in Eastern North Carolina

Overview:

By 1863, the Civil War continued, and the Confederacy looked for methods to defend the sounds and other inland waters from the Union. In North Carolina, the Confederacy hoped to protect the port of Wilmington, as well as reclaim the sounds lost earlier in the war. The Confederacy expected that ironclads would fulfill this purpose and began building them in North Carolina. One of these ironclads was the CSS *Neuse* which was built in Whitehall, North Carolina, (now Seven Springs). After the ironclad was built, it remained moored at Kinston, North Carolina, for the remainder of the war until the ship was scuttled by the crew. Although the ship never traveled far beyond Kinston, the CSS *Neuse* played an important role in Kinston, as the community and the crew noticed the ironclad both during and after the war. For this lesson, students will consider the Civil War in Eastern North Carolina with regard to the people in Kinston, North Carolina, as the war ended.

Lesson Essential Question: What impact did the conflict of the Civil War have on Eastern North Carolina?

North Carolina Essential Standards

8.H.2 Understand the ways in which conflict, compromise and negotiation have shaped North Carolina and the United States.

8.H.2.1 Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states' rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States.

Vocabulary

CSS *Neuse*, ironclad, scuttled, primary source, secondary source

Life on the CSS *Neuse*:

Background Information:

- For additional information on the CSS *Neuse*, this website offers background information: <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/neuse/background.htm> and <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/neuse/history.htm>
- In addition, one of these videos can offer additional information about the site:
 - 2 minute video about the CSS *Neuse*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6fksiJUZX4>
 - 5 minute video about the CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAV1tAnfpi8>
- Additional videos on the Civil War:
 - Crash Course video on the Civil War:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rY9zHNOjGrs>
 - Crash Course video on the battles of the Civil War:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25HHVDOaGeE>

Materials:

Access to a video on the CSS Neuse's background information
Copies of the letters

Tasks:

The teacher will:

- Ask students if they can think of a place, festival, event, monument, object, or other interesting feature in their hometown that attracts attention from the people in their community. Then, tell students that the CSS *Neuse* in Kinston, North Carolina, attracted attention when it was under construction. Tell students that they will be learning about the CSS *Neuse* and the town of Kinston during the Civil War from crew members on the boat.
- Tell students background information about the Civil War in North Carolina as well as the CSS *Neuse*. The teacher can use the videos about the CSS *Neuse* to introduce it to the students.
- Provide students with the two letters to read about the Civil War in Kinston, North Carolina, written by crew members of the CSS *Neuse*.
- Ask students to answer the questions and discuss their answers with a partner.
- Have students write a letter as a person living in Kinston about the CSS *Neuse* and challenges caused by the Civil War.
- Optional: Allow a few students to share their letters with the class.

The students will:

- Answer the teacher's opening question.
- Listen to the teacher's introduction about the Civil War in Kinston and the CSS *Neuse*.
- Read the letters about the CSS *Neuse* and life in Kinston from crew members.
- Answer the questions about the readings.
- Write a letter as a person living in Kinston about the CSS *Neuse* and the challenges caused by the Civil War.
- Optional: Some students can read their letters to the class.

Life on the CSS Neuse:

Letter from Richard Bacot (2nd Lieutenant on the CSS *Neuse*) to his sister Ada Bacot on July 18, 1864. To see another letter, look at the CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center's website:

<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/neuse/bacot-let.htm>

“It is strange to me how few amusements and comforts our people have, as a general thing; and I believe they get about as little for their taken up & hung; that would stop such rascals quicker than any money as any people in the world. The “**Gunboats**” (as we are called here) have concluded to have as nice a time as possible and find plenty of amusements. We have the **exclusive** use of a **tin-pin** alley, where we exercise our “muscles” every morning. We pitch **Quoits** after dinner & have various **diversions** for the evening; such as boating, visiting, walking, &c.” He continued his letter on July 19th saying, “Everything is enormously high & of course that is very unsatisfactory to a man living on a salary which doesn't rise with the prices of **provisions** &c. Butter alone is \$7 per lb.”

Definitions

Gunboat: ironclads like the CSS *Neuse*, also refers to the crew

Exclusive: having sole right

Tin-pin: a game like bowling

Quoits: a game similar to horseshoes or ring toss

Diversions: distractions, activities

Holdenites: supporters of William Holden a candidate for governor in 1864

Conciliatory measures: attempts to make peace or negotiate.

Provisions: supplies, food

Life in Kinston, on the home front:

“Local African Americans” from an exhibit at the CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center.

“In 1860, Lenoir County had a Black majority. Of its roughly 10,000 inhabitants, approximately 5,000 were enslaved and 178 were listed on the census as free blacks. The town of Kinston itself contained about 1,340 people, 640 of whom were enslaved. The free black population included a blacksmith, seamstress, mattress makers, and servants for various **residences** and for the Saint Charles Hotel, located at the corner of Gordon and Heritage streets. The area's free blacks took advantage of labor opportunities during the war, performing manual labor for the Confederate Army, including helping prepare **entrenchments** for the *Neuse* as it was being built in White Hall. As the war progressed, and Union lines came closer to the area, enslaved freedom seekers left the area for points east. Slave owners often moved their labor force farther west and away from the Union **occupation**.”

Definitions:

Residences: homes

Entrenchments: trenches

Occupation: control, possession.

Letter from Joseph Porter to “Gilley” Virgillia Boatwright, Nov. 22, 1863 transcribed by Dr. James A. Porter, III from the Charles Eugene Porter Letters located at the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center in Fredericksburg, VA, www.crharchives.org

“Here you can see the rich **speculator** coining money out of the hearts blood of our noble soldiers wives and children, driving around in their thousand dollar carriages and two thousand dollar horses while their wives and daughters walk the streets dressed in silks and satins, and so proud and vain that they think the ground is not good enough for them to walk upon. Oh how I despise the class of people.

Then there is another class here which suits me much better and they are our own true southern ladies. There you will see dressed in **homespun** made with their own hands which they can wear with as much grace as the **speculators** wives can in their silks. You will always see them busy at work sewing and if you should happen to ask them what they were making, they will answer with a smile, “We are making clothes for the Soldiers.”

Then we have another class here. They are the soldiers’ wives and children. You must not think that I place the soldier’s wife and children in the last circle of society. Oh no, God forbid, but I happen to place them last in my list of the different varieties of citizens that **compose** this celebrated town. They (the soldiers wife and children) you will see walking about the town, or seated at home as their different occupations may lead them, but all of them wearing a cheerful look except in very few instances.

Kinston has more churches in it that I ever saw in as small a town as it is. There has been **protracted** meeting going on for the last week among the Baptists and Methodists united. I went last night and heard a very fine sermon delivered by a soldier. They had quite a number of converts and mourners. I am going this evening. I would have gone this morning, but I am “**officer of the day**” and could not leave. I expect the meeting will last sometime yet.

But the greatest attraction here is the celebrated **gunboat** “Neuse” now lying at the wharf here. There are not less than two hundred persons visit here daily a great part of whom are ladies and you just ought to see me a flying around among them showing them all over the boat.”

Definitions:

Speculator: a person who works with finance.

Homespun: cloth created or spun at home

Compose: including, made of

Protracted: going on for a longer time

“officer of the day”: a rotating role where an officer oversees law enforcement

Gunboat: an ironclad, like the CSS *Neuse*

Reading Questions:

1. What are some activities crew members did for fun?
2. What was a problem for the crew members and townspeople?
3. What were some occupations of free blacks in Kinston?
4. What did slave owners do as the war continued?
5. What are the three different groups of townspeople that Porter identifies? Porter has the most respect for which groups? Why?
6. What are some important activities that happen in Kinston?
7. Which of these excerpts are primary sources? How do you know this?
8. Which of these excerpts are secondary sources? How do you know this?
9. Why do you think there fewer primary sources about or written by African Americans?

Answers to the Questions:

1. What are some activities crew members did for fun?
 - a. Tin-pin (a game like bowling), Quoits (a game like ring toss or horseshoes), boating, visiting, walking
2. What was a problem for the crew members and townspeople?
 - a. The cost of butter and other goods was high due to the inflation of Confederate currency.
3. What were some occupations of free blacks in Kinston?
 - a. Blacksmith, seamstress, mattress maker, servant, labor for the Confederate Army
4. What did slave owners do as the war continued?
 - a. The slave owners moved their slaves farther west to prevent the slaves from escaping to Union occupied areas.
5. What are the three different groups of townspeople that Porter identifies? Porter has the most respect for which groups? Why?
 - a. Speculators and their families who took of advantage and profited from the war.
 - b. “Southern ladies” who wore homespun clothes and made clothes for the soldiers.
 - c. Soldiers’ wives and children who Porter described as relatively happy.
 - d. He has more respect for the “southern ladies” and soldiers’ wives due to their contributions to the war effort.
6. What are some important activities that happen in Kinston?
 - a. How does religion impact Kinston?
 - i. Many people attended church during the war.
 - b. How does the CSS *Neuse* impact Kinston?
 - i. Many people visited the ironclad, with Porter describing 200 people per day visiting.
7. Which of these excerpts are primary sources? How do you know this?
 - a. The letters from Bacot and Porter are primary sources because they were written by a person who lived during the time period.
8. Which of these excerpts are secondary sources? How do you know this?
 - a. The description of African Americans during the Civil War is a secondary source because it was written by a person who was not alive during the time period.
9. Why do you think there fewer primary sources about or written by African Americans?
 - a. In North Carolina, laws prevented African Americans (especially slaves) from learning to read and write (although they could still learn math). Although a few African Americans could probably read and write, there are limited sources from these groups.

Environmental Impact

Overview:

After learning about the CSS *Neuse*, students will consider the impact of the sinking of the CSS *Neuse* on the river and its environment. Students will also consider the impact of humans on the Neuse River today.

Lesson Essential Question:

- What is the human impact on water systems in North Carolina?
 - What environmental impact did the CSS *Neuse* have on Neuse River?
 - What environmental impact do people have on the Neuse River today?

North Carolina Essential Standards:

8.E.1 — Understand the hydrosphere and the impact of humans on local systems and the effects of the hydrosphere on humans.

8.E.1.1 — Explain the structure of the hydrosphere including: Water distribution on earth; Local river basin and water availability.

8.E.1.4 — Conclude that the good health of humans requires: Monitoring of the hydrosphere; Water quality standards; Methods of water treatment; Maintaining safe water quality; Stewardship.

Materials:

- Computers/ tablets that allow students to read information from the following website: <http://www.riverlaw.us/theneuse.html>
- Description of the CSS *Neuse*'s sinking.
- Questions listed on the board or printed for the students.
- Optional video to further discussion about the human impact on the environment: <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/crash-course-bio-ecology/crash-course-ecology-2/v/crash-course-ecology-10>

Language Demands:

Water pollution, scuttled

Tasks:

The teacher will:

- Explain that humans impact water systems and waterways in various ways. In addition, the teacher may have students read the textbook's (or another classroom text's) description of the human impact on waterways.
- Ask students to read information from the website about the Neuse River and the description of the CSS *Neuse* being scuttled.
- Have students answer the question on the worksheet independently.
- Group students and allow for a classroom discussion on the environmental impact of the CSS *Neuse*'s sinking as well as the environmental impact that students have on the waterways today.

The students will:

- Listen to the teacher's description of the human impact on waterways and water systems. The student may also read another text discussing the human impact on water systems as decided by the teacher.
- Read the website on the Neuse River and the description of the CSS *Neuse*'s sinking in the Neuse River.
- Answer the questions about the environmental impact independently.
- Discuss with their group and the class their conclusions about the environmental impact.

The Sinking of the CSS Neuse

As the Union army approached Kinston, the CSS *Neuse's* crew scuttled (or sunk) the ironclad. When the crew scuttled the ship, the CSS *Neuse* and all items on board fell into the river. The boat itself remained at the bottom of the Neuse River until 1960s.

When the boat sank, an estimated 5,000 pounds of powder remained on the boat, with about 1,000 pounds being rigged to explode. The gunpowder itself is a water soluble compound consisting of charcoal, salt peter, and sulfur. Beyond causing the initial explosion, the remaining gunpowder would likely dissolve in the water soon after falling into the water. In addition, other items remained on the boat including shells for guns, the ironclad's iron plating, the boiler and engine, the stove, pots for cooking, and many other items used by the crew.

The Recovery of the CSS Neuse

People considered recovering the CSS *Neuse* several times. In 1940, the Army Corps of Engineers considered recovering the ironclad, but their report indicated that the *Neuse* posed no threat to boats navigating the river. In the 1960s, several men decided to recover the CSS *Neuse*. When they began, they tried to remove the sand that covered the boat. They moved the sand to other areas of the river. In addition, the salvagers used two mud pumps and a cofferdam (a dam built around the boat so that they could pump out the water) to help remove sand from inside the ironclad. As the recovery process continued, the river remained low, making the recovery easier. The salvagers soon realized that the boat was unable to float again even after they removed sand and artifacts from the boat to decrease its weight. This realization caused the salvagers to run cables underneath the boat and attach the cables to drums that were used to float the boat. After several attempts using house moving equipment, the boat was eventually lifted from the river in May of 1963. For more information about the recovery process,

After reading this short description, look at the following website to learn more about the Neuse River's environment:

North Carolina Riverkeepers & Waterkeeper Alliance's website about the Neuse River:

<http://www.riverlaw.us/theneuse.html>

A major topic today centers around pollution and the environment in various rivers and the ocean. Undoubtedly, there is a human impact occurring when people use and pollute water. Based on your readings about the CSS *Neuse* and the additional resources, consider the possible environmental impact of the explosion of the CSS *Neuse* as well as its impact on the bottom of the Neuse River.

Questions:

- 1) Hypothesize the short term impacts of the CSS *Neuse's* explosion and recovery on the river.
- 2) Hypothesize the long term impact of the CSS *Neuse's* explosion and recovery on the river.
- 3) What are some dangers for habitat destruction of the Neuse River today?
- 4) What precautions do you believe that we need to take today to protect the Neuse River and its inhabitants as one of the largest estuaries in the United States?
- 5) What efforts can you take to help protect the Neuse River and other rivers in the state?

Statistics with the Elevation and Ranges of Civil War Cannons

Essential Question: How can real world data be displayed and analyzed using a scatter plot?

Overview

In this lesson, students will construct a scatter plot and describe the data from a real world example. The real world example describes the elevation of a Mountain Howitzer in relation to the ranges that the cannon can shoot. The data comes from the Official Records of the Navy during the Civil War, and the Mountain Howitzer is a reproduction cannon on display at the CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center. For more information on the site or this data, please visit the website at <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/neuse/>.

Common Core Standards:

Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.8.SP.A.1

Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data to investigate patterns of association between two quantities. Describe patterns such as clustering, outliers, positive or negative association, linear association, and nonlinear association.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.8.SP.A.2

Know that straight lines are widely used to model relationships between two quantitative variables. For scatter plots that suggest a linear association, informally fit a straight line, and informally assess the model fit by judging the closeness of the data points to the line.

Materials: worksheet, graph paper, calculator (optional)

Language Demands:

Line of best fit, outliers, positive association, negative association, linear association, nonlinear association, clustering

Tasks:

The teacher will:

- Review with students the line of best fit, outliers, positive association, negative association, nonlinear association, linear association, clustering, scatter plots.
- Provide students with the worksheet about the range of the Mountain howitzer.
- Review the answers to the questions on the worksheet.

The student will:

- Listen to the teacher's review of information needed for this lesson.
- Complete the worksheet.
- Check the answers based on the teacher's explanation.

Mountain Howitzer:

Based on a French army gun of the 1830s, the Mountain Howitzer was a transportable cannon used during the Civil War. Being relatively small and able to be disassembled and reassembled, the cannon was easy to move over rough terrains and mountainous areas. The Mountain Howitzer used exploding shots and canisters to shoot at the enemy. The table below shows the shell's range in yards in relation to its elevation in degrees.

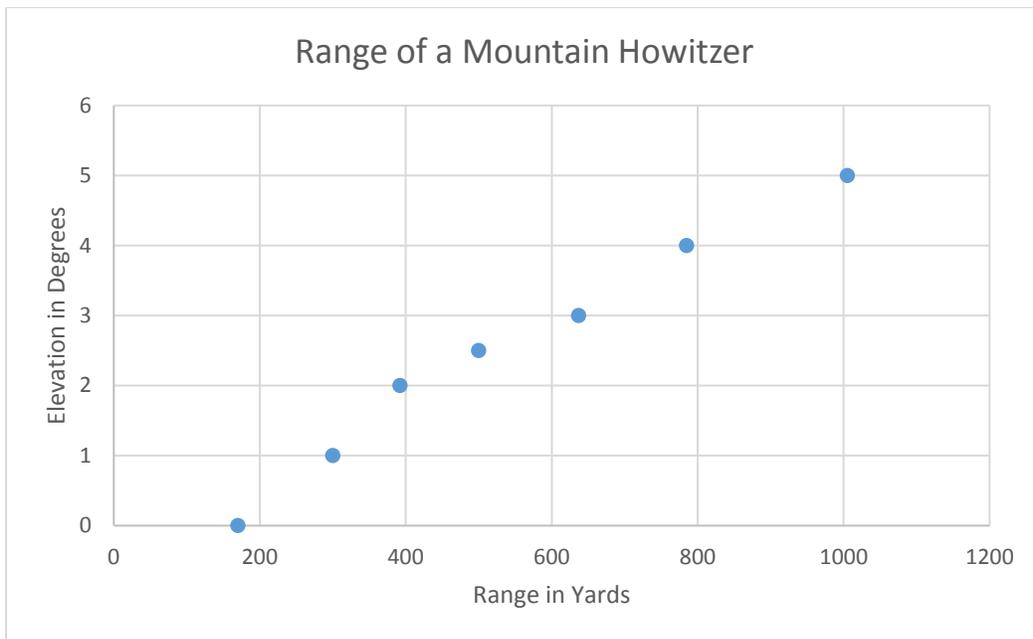
Ranges of Mountain Howitzer	
Elevation in Degrees	Range in Yards
0	170
1	300
2	392
2.5	500
3	637
4	785
5	1,005

Answer the following questions using the table provided.

- 1) Create a scatterplot using the data above.
- 2) Does the data have a positive or negative correlation?
- 3) Are there any outliers?
- 4) Estimate and draw a line of best fit from this data set.
- 5) Using your line, estimate the range in yards of a shell launched at 3.5 degrees.

Answers

1)



2) Positive correlation

3) No

4) Answers will vary. Students will attempt to draw a line that goes through as many points as possible.

5) Answers will vary. Numbers will likely be close to 700-750 yards.