

Emeline Pigott, Confederate Spy
Pre-Visit Lesson

Have your students read the following story about Emeline Pigott.

Or have them read an article found at:

<http://www.civilwarwomenblog.com/2006/09/emeline-piggot.html>

Emeline Pigott was born and raised in Harlowe Township of Carteret County, North Carolina. When she was 25, she moved with her parents to a farm at Crab Point on the North Carolina coast, just across the creek from where soldiers of the 26th North Carolina were stationed to defend



the coast. The sensitive and compassionate young woman took it upon herself to help the troops in many ways. She tended to the sick and wounded soldiers, even bringing some to her home to nurse. Working throughout three counties, Pigott collected mail along with food, clothing, medicine, and other needed items, and left the goods in designated hollow trees and logs for the Confederates to collect.

Pigott also was brave enough to gather intelligence for the Confederates. By entertaining Union soldiers she gleaned some information, and while she was distracting the enemy, her brother-in-law Rufus Bell dispensed food from her pantry to hungry Rebel soldiers. Local loyal fishermen also gathered information about Union boats' cargoes and destinations as they sold the Yankees fish. They then reported to Pigott, who carried the valuable information hidden in big pockets under her hoop skirt. With mail and other items combined, Pigott sometimes carried as much as 30



pounds of hidden goods. The 26th North Carolina left for Virginia, and Pigott tended to wounded in New Bern, North Carolina. In 1862 she left on the last train out with wounded before the Yankees occupied the town. She fled to Kinston and then to Concord with wounded before returning home.

With the Northerners occupying the area, Pigott came under suspicion in early 1865. One day, while she and Bell were on their rounds, they were arrested and sent to jail. While officials were looking for someone to search the lady, Pigott ate some incriminating information and shredded some of the mail, but many other items were found beneath her skirt, and she was imprisoned in a New Bern residence. Though she faced the death penalty, she was inexplicably released. She was, however, watched and harassed until the end of the war.

The colorful Miss Pigott loved to recount her Civil War adventures, but to the day she died in 1916 she would never reveal how she came to be released from prison.

Photo from NC ECHO

<http://www.inst.ncecho.org/Thumbnail.aspx?searchterm=00407>

On Site Lesson
Emeline Piggot: Confederate Spy

Goal:

To utilize a hands-on approach for students to discover a little known story in North Carolina's history.

Objectives: Students should be able to:

- Discuss why Emeline Pigot acted as she did.
- Contrast daily life in a federally occupied area with life in an unoccupied area

Standard Course of Study Goals:

4 th grade	5 th grade
3.02, 3.05	2.03, 3.03, 4.05

Lesson:

Materials

Skirt and hoop skirt from costume room

Safety pins

Items to represent the following:

1 pr. Boots 1 cap 50 skeins sewing silk toothbrushes dressing pins

3 pr. Pants 1 doz. Linen collars spools of thread hair combs

several pr. Gloves 1 shirt 1 doz. Linen handkerchiefs needles

3 pocket knives 1 razor

DVD with Power Point presentation

1. Discuss the story of Miss Piggot. Students should have read the information in their pre-visit lesson, but a review is helpful. Follow the Power Point for review information.
2. Ask for a volunteer to put on a hoop skirt and cotton skirt. Make sure you have a chair handy, she may want to sit down!
3. Distribute the various items and issue safety pins if necessary to figure out how to attach the items under her skirt. PHOTO OPPORTUNITY!!
4. Discuss with the students how she was captured in a wagon with all of these things that she was smuggling to the Confederate soldiers.
5. Have students help undo the items after your volunteer takes off the skirt and hoop.

Emeline Pigot: Confederate Spy
Post Visit Lesson

This is a transcription of a sketch of Emeline Pigott that was written by her cousin, Levi Woodbury Pigott, in 1902. The questions after the paragraphs should stimulate discussion of the document.

PC1841 Levi Woodbury Pigott Collection, North Carolina State Archives
Copied from a manuscript by Levi Woodbury Pigott

Being handsome and intelligent, bright and dignified, and hightoned (for she came from some of the best families of the land) and bright prospects of a happy future, now all blasted she was so soured with all mankind, especially with the Yankees, and having her fondest hopes destroyed, would not let a man come near enough to make even a semblance of courtship, so that she remains in single blessedness till this late day, 1902. And now, since nearly forty years have settled on her brow, whitening it for a home in heaven, she has mellowed considerably, and is not so bitter against the Yankees; for she knows that if she does not forgive, she cannot expect to be forgiven.

I consider her release a miracle, for the United States government had a clear case against her – although she had permits to buy the Confederate grey cloth that was for a Confederate Lieutenant, and a pair of cavalry boots, yet she had also several letters written to their friends in Dixie and these letters contained news about the Union army which was criminal. I was agreeably surprised, and utterly astonished, when she obtained her release.

After she went home the Union soldiers stationed at Morehead City, NC, would go up and shoot Minnie balls at her mother's house, situated across Calico Creek. This however was done by the soldiers individually and not by authority or knowledge of their officers.

So she considers herself, not a daughter of the Confederacy, but a veteran. There is no class of the community she likes as she does the Confederate Veterans. In fact, her feelings toward them amounts to veneration. They are the very Idols of her great Confederate heart and soul. She loves the ground on which they tread. The old rebel grey suit to her is a thing of beauty and admiration. If she had been a man she would have entered the army and would have been so enthusiastic and courageous that she would either been killed or would have risen to eminence as a soldier.

She loved the cause as few can or do, and she has mourned over the "Lost Cause" intensely, and would not be comforted.

- What does the writer mean when he says that Pigott considered herself a veteran?
- Explain the concept of the “Lost Cause”
- Given what is written in the second paragraph, why do you think Pigott was released from imprisonment and not taken to trial?
- The first paragraph is written in a flowery style that was popular during that time. Can you rewrite it using today’s style?
- Why did Mr. Pigott write this short biography of his cousin?
- Why is it important that such a document be saved and preserved?