**Search Assignment**

**Andersonville, officially Camp Sumter, Confederate Prison Death Camp for Union Soldiers**

**Grade Level:** 8th

**Subject:** American Civil War History

**Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills:** <http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/PASS/Subject/socstud.pdf>

**United States History-Standard 1:** The student will develop and practice process skills in social studies.

**United States History-Standard 1-3:** Construct various timelines of United States, highlighting landmark dates, technological changes, major political**,** economic and military events, and major historical figures.

**Search Topic**: Andersonville Prison Camp, its timeline and particular historical figures. How did the horrifying mistreatment of Union Soldiers at this prison camp reveal the absence of any supposed imprimatur claimed by the Confederacy? What were the initial actions of Clara Barton concerning the nursing care of the victims confined in Andersonville?

**Using Boolean logic search terms:** Andersonville AND prison, Andersonville AND Clara Barton, Andersonville NOT Union, Andersonville NOT Confederate AND Andersonville OR Civil War, revealed many different sites and view points as well as specific biographical sketches concerning major historical figures.

**Keywords and search terms used were as follows:** Andersonville, Camp Sumter, Clara Barton, Shebang, Captain Henry Wirz, Confederate prisons, General Grant, Civil War, dysentery, diseases.

The main feature of this search is to reveal how atrocious the treatment of Union soldiers was at Andersonville, the starvation, lack of shelter, lack of medical care, and lack of sanitation. I also wanted to find information concerning the care of the prisoners after the Union Army took the prison from the Confederacy, and how Clara Barton’s care of these prisoners initiated a new view of nursing.

I began my search with the Confederacy AND prisons. I will list some of the best sites and sources from this search. I will progress with a time line from the founding of Andersonville to the conclusion and release of the Union prisoners after they were considered healthy enough to be transported. I will conclude with a look at how Clara Barton attempted to establish the identity of Union soldiers who died while in captivity.

I desired to find the earliest history of Andersonville by looking for information concerning Camp Sumter. I searched through EBSCO Host using the Boolean string Camp Sumter NOT Andersonville OR Civil War. One of my hits was the web page found at: <http://www.georgiasharpshooters.org/Camp_Sumter.html>

From an article on this web page we find the following information. In late February 1864, five-hundred federal prisoners arrived by railcar on the Southwestern Railroad and were marched about 1600 feet to a stockade covering 16.5 acres. Within six months, it had been enlarged to over 26 acres and was crowded with 32,000 prisoners. By the end of the war, almost 13,000 graves filled the cemetery nearby. It was called Camp Sumter but would forever be known as the infamous Andersonville.

More information on this web page points us to the fact that the Union Army had quit exchanging prisoners with the Confederacy. The order was given by President Lincoln. For information concerning Lincoln’s decision to stop the exchange one can access the following site: <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=6&hid=15&sid=751d6346-6593-4ac7-afa1-6be6a3128a2a%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=f5h&AN=25580363>

From this site we glean that President Lincoln expected the Confederacy to exchange soldier for soldier whether or not the soldier was black or white. The Confederacy refused this offer as they would not exchange a black soldier for a white soldier. Lincoln threw this problem to General Grant. General Grant desired all prisoner exchanges to be halted and they were. This stopping of prisoner exchange created an abundance of prisoners and that caused a rapid increase of detainees at Camp Sumter.

Another good site for information concerning the conditions of the prison can be found at: <http://thismightyscourge.com/2009/09/22/andersonville-prison-a-photo-essay-and-history/>

This site describes the horrible afflictions the soldiers suffered. It contains excerpts from personal diaries and official reports. This site also has links to blogs, battles, and regimental histories.

The following website hosted by Google has many photos of Camp Sumter:

<http://www.google.com/search?q=civil+war+prison+camp+photos&hl=en&safe=off&prmd=ivns&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=fbCsTaH3M4HZgAf65Y30BQ&sqi=2&ved=0CCIQsAQ&biw=1024&bih=546> These photos show the results of starvation and lack of medical care. The photos are very vivid and one needs to be aware of the stark reality of these photos before sharing them with just anyone.

Camp Sumter was located near Andersonville, GA. Thus, the unofficial name for Camp Sumter became known as Andersonville. The prisoners were able to receive and send mail and they referenced their location in their communication as near Andersonville, GA. The following Web site gives a clear view of the camp and its connection to Andersonville. <http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/andearch.htm>

There were many diaries kept by prisoners in Camp Sumter. Here are several Web sites for Civil War Diaries. The first site contains many diaries and letters. This site can be searched for specific diaries. It is a powerful site for any Civil War research you may undertake.

<http://solomon.cwld.alexanderstreet.com/>

This next site has many diaries and letters from prisoners incarcerated at Camp Sumter, and at least two diaries that are specific to that camp.

<http://localhistory.morrisville.edu/sites/letters/>

The diseases that ran rampant through the camp were basically due to foul drinking water and devastating sanitary conditions. The following web sites speak directly to the medical problems that inmates suffered while incarcerated at Camp Sumter. I searched Google and EBSCO using the terms Andersonville, Camp Sumter, AND diseases. The following two sites give a good overview and names the diseases that were rampant.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/andecon.htm>

<http://www.civilwarhome.com/andersonvillegangrene.htm>

One of the interesting facts concerning Camp Sumter is that there was no shelter for the prisoners. The prisoners had to do the best they could to construct shelter. The strange name the prisoners gave their make shift shelters was Shebang. From a Web Site, <http://www.civilwarstory.nstemp.com/civil-war-prisons.html> we find the following explanation for a Shebang: **Another word or phrase that comes down to us from the Civil War, one that most if not all of us are familiar with, is "The whole shebang." Journals, diaries and other written sources from the period indicate that the phase was first used by a Union prisoner confined at Andersonville when showing off his home, which was nothing more than a few sticks and some tattered cloth. Apparently when asked if that was all he had, he said,** "this is it, the whole shebang.” This site has many diaries of prisoners at Camp Sumter and would be a great asset to anyone doing research on Civil War prisons.

One of the chief problems at Camp Sumter was overcrowding. By the time the war ended there were over 30,000 Union soldiers in confinement. Over population created a near impossible situation for the commander of the prison camp, Captain Henry Wirz. Captain Wirz was the only combatant of the Civil War to be executed for war crimes. The aforementioned information was found at the following web site: <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Henry+Wirz> and it also gives a biographical sketch of Captain Wirz. Other web sites with information concerning Captain Wirz, his trial, and his crimes include the following:

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/wirz/wirz.htm>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Wirz_trial.html>

As I was interested in discovering what made Captain Wirz into the diabolic Commandant I searched using his last name and psychology. I received several hits. The one I found the most interesting was Cincinnati CWRT. The CWRT is the acronym for Civil War Round Table. This site gave a detailed insight into how Wirz was actually following the direction of Confederate General John Winder. Information on Winder explains why Wirz developed his caustic attitude toward the prisoners. This web site is full of in depth evaluations of all the commanders on both sides of the war. <http://www.cincinnaticwrt.org/data/ccwrt_history/talks_text/clyne_Andersonville.htm>

After the surrender of Camp Sumter the illnesses of the prisoners had to be addressed immediately. We are now at the point in this search where Clara Barton becomes the focus. There are many web sites devoted to Ms. Barton but I wanted to limit my search to Camp Sumter and Clara Barton. I used the string Clara Barton AND Andersonville this gave me over 47,000 hits. I then used Clara Barton only and received over 350,000 hits. Trying to lessen the hits I used the string [Clara Barton AND Camp Sumter AND dysentery](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&safe=off&sa=X&ei=Xr2tTbT_IYPB0QHGxqS7Cw&sqi=2&ved=0CBcQvwUoAQ&q=clara+barton+and+camp+sumter+and+dysentery&spell=1). This search gave me 1,010 hits. I then started perusing these hits and found the following web sites that I concluded would best give an overall description of Ms. Barton.

The first web site I found of interest concerning the timeline of Ms. Barton’s arrival at Andersonville (Camp Sumter) was Camp Sumter Timeline. At this site, <http://files.usgwarchives.org/ga/sumter/military/civilwar/timeline.txt> we discover that Ms. Barton arrived on May, 5, 1865. We find that Nurse Barton on Feb. 1st of 1886 made an official demand that the U.S. Government release the names of all Union Soldiers who died in the camp. The U. S. Government declined. This is a great timeline site for all the activities that took place in Sumter County, GA during the Civil War.

For a Civil War biography of Clara Barton go to: <http://www.civilwarhome.com/bartonbio.htm>

Clara Barton was the founder of the Red Cross. The Civil War prison camps were main factors that contributed to Ms. Barton’s desire to teach and educate. An enlightening web site of the Red Cross and Clara Barton is: <http://www.redcross.org/museum/registry/profile.asp?id=33>

Ms. Barton’s life has been a powerful influence for well over a hundred and fifty years. This final site of my investigation is a timeline of Clara Barton’s life.

<http://www.nps.gov/clba/forkids/chron1.htm>

**Search Design**

This design is based on the topic of the Civil War and the prison camp known officially as Camp Sumter and known unofficially as Andersonville. The search reflects the conditions of the prison camp and follows the timeline of when the camp was opened until it was surrendered by the Confederacy at the end of the Civil War. It was also designed to give insight into two famous historical personages from the timeline, Captain Wirz and Ms. Clara Barton.

It was designed to meet the **Oklahoma Pass Objectives of United States History.**

**Standard 1:** The student will develop and practice process skills in social studies.

**Standard 1-3:** Construct various timelines of United States, highlighting landmark dates, technological changes, major political**,** economic and military events, and major historical figures.

**Conducting the Search**

I used the various methods of search that I have learned from the different readings and assignments that we have completed in the earlier part of this course. I used Boolean logic, keywords and strings. I checked the sites for validity and reputable sources appropriate to the questions concerning Civil War Prisons and the historical personages that were described in the search results. I discovered many websites, blogs, and URLs that were not valid and many of these sites contained questionable material as well as unconventional information that would cause racial or geographical tension. I avoided these sites and other sites that would be inappropriate for classroom instruction. I tried to have a timeline throughout my search and published my findings in a chronological order to establish a beginning to the question an appropriate body and a final conclusion.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of sites concerning the Civil War. The study of the Civil War is as current today as it was in the 1860s. By using the search tools available I was able to hone in on what I was researching and avoid many sites that were not needed. The search strategies I used can be of benefit to the students that I projected as final users. The students will be able to access these sites and the links that the sites refer to are applicable to the subject. I would be able to confer with the students and explain to them how websites are constructed and suggest that they understand the website address is similar to a return address on a letter. They should be able to follow the address and its extensions to ascertain where the web page is found and what organization or educational or governmental body hosted the site.

**Findings**

I was able to use the tools that I have learned to make a valid search concerning the questions that I posed. I discovered that I was more enabled doing this search than any previous searches I have done. I learned many interesting facts concerning the Andersonville prison (Camp Sumter). I was able to get a sense of the horrors and the injustices that the Union Soldiers suffered while imprisoned there. I became aware of the cruelties of Captain Wirz, and the generous goodness and care of Ms. Clara Barton.

By using a timeline, I was enabled to gain a better understanding of the society during this time of upheaval as our Country struggled for its very existence. It also deepened my strongly held beliefs that slavery and all the components of this awful institution needed to be destroyed. The cost of lives and the suffering of the common soldier and his extended family, Union and Confederate, should never be forgotten.

I am more appreciative of the new skills I have attained than I once would have thought possible. I have a love of research and have many questions concerning the history of America. With these research tools I will continue to search these questions and share my findings.