

Making Georgia Howl: General Sherman's March to the Sea

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Individual Performance

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I chose my topic, General Sherman's capture of Atlanta, as my topic because there have been few times in American history when the stakes were as high as the fall of 1864. Had Sherman not captured Atlanta, it is almost undisputed that George B. McClellan would have won the 1864 election. McClellan would have signed an immediate ceasefire with the Confederacy, bringing an end to the Civil War with the Union still divided. This would have had tremendous impacts upon American history, black rights and slavery, and the existence of the United States altogether. While researching, I found this incredibly perplexing and it difficult **not** to use this as my topic.

I conducted my research in many ways. Most of the sources I used were primary sources, which I obtained on online databases. A very sizable portion of my research came from books obtained from local libraries. Additionally, I gained a lot of knowledge from conducting interviews with local experts on my topic from local museums. I put a lot of effort into ensuring that both perspectives were represented in my work, as this was and continues to be a very polarizing topic.

I selected performance as my category. I chose this category because I love acting and felt that the perspectives of my topic could best be presented in a performance format, in which different characters can show their views. I created my performance by first deciding which characters best represented the causes and effects of Sherman's Atlanta campaign. From there, I wrote a script which I felt worked for my characters' personalities. Additionally, I worked to get costumes together that are both simplistic and accurate. I also attempted to recreate accurate voice impressions after conducting research and revision. I loved bringing my characters to life.

I feel that my topic is deeply related and representative of this year's theme, Triumph and Tragedy. Sherman's campaign was a major triumph for the Union, since it cut deep into the Confederate heartland and extinguished Rebel morale. The capture of Atlanta allowed Sherman to bring destruction across not only Georgia, but up through both of the Carolinas and towards the Virginia front of the war where Ulysses Grant was fighting, ultimately creating the last straw to defeat the Rebellion. Meanwhile, the people of Georgia were left deeply scarred from tragedies left by Sherman. Many homes, farms, and livelihoods were destroyed by the military campaign. In addition, Sherman's actions sowed the seeds for further skepticism and hatred towards the Federal government among Southerners during Reconstruction and beyond. Nevertheless, Sherman's capture of Atlanta sealed the fate for the Republic, and continues to be felt today.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

"A New Road to Peace." The Daily Chattanooga Rebel [Griffin, GA], 30 June 1864.

This article was published by The Daily Chattanooga Rebel, a staunchly-secessionist newspaper in Griffin, Georgia, just across the state line from Chattanooga, Tennessee. The article states that the Union is crippled economically and will eventually be forced to withdraw. It also slams the Union Generals Sherman and Grant for trying to "get the greatest number of Southerners slaughtered in the shortest amount of time." I used this article to get a Southern point of view, since many of my other primary sources, such as Harper's Weekly and the New York Times, were very pro-Union. This helped me see both sides and create a better paper.

Barnard, George N. Atlanta, Georgia. Sherman's Men Destroying Railroad. 1864, Library of Congress.

This photograph by esteemed Civil War-era photographer George N. Barnard shows several of Sherman's soldiers ripping up railroad tracks outside of Atlanta. Photographed in 1864 during the March to the Sea, it is a primary source meant to show the world the Union efforts to take Atlanta. From this source I learned more about Sherman's campaigns and their nature.

Brady, Matthew. Ruins of Richmond, VA., 1865. 1865. National Archives.

This photograph by Mathew Brady, among the most famous photographers ever, shows the utter destruction that the Civil War had wrought upon the Virginian city of Richmond, the capital of the Confederate States of America. This photograph is primary, being taken in 1865. This photo taught me a lot about just how destructive the war was in many cities, and tied in with my project since Atlanta met a similar fate at the hands of General Sherman.

"Capture of Chattanooga." The New York Times, 10 Sep. 1863.

This New York Times article describes the Union General Rosecrans' attempt to capture the of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and his broader campaign in Tennessee against Rebel General Braxton Bragg. Being written in 1863, it is a primary source that attempts to inform the American public of Union operations and how Rosecrans "marched in and took possession of the great Western mountain stronghold." This source allowed me to better understand what was happening in the Western theatre of the Civil War and assisted my paper's context. While it is a very brief article, it is still quite informative and taught me important contextual information for my project.

Fox, William F. *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*. Albany, NY, Albany Publishing Company, 1889.

This report was created by William F. Fox, and it details the losses of all regiments in the American Civil War. While it was written after the war, it is still a primary source because Fox fought in the war. The purposes of this report are mostly to inform and to supply information about losses in the Civil War to those who need it for research, as well as for census-like reasons. This highly-detailed and well-informing source allowed me to conduct my research more easily and I learned the scope of the war's destruction.

"General Sherman's March through Georgia." *Harper's Weekly* [New York, NY], 26 Nov. 1864.

This article is a primary source, and was published by *Harper's Weekly*, a Northern newspaper that was staunchly pro-Union. It was written not long after Sherman embarked on his March to the Sea, and reports on the march accordingly. This article supplied me information about Sherman's operations from Atlanta to Savannah and public perception of those operations.

"Grant and His Campaign." *The Daily Chattanooga Rebel* [Griffin, GA], 30 June 1864.

This is an article published by the Griffin, Georgia branch of the *Daily Chattanooga Rebel*, a staunchly pro-Confederate newspaper based in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This article is primary and reports on General Grant's possible plans for military campaigns in 1864, including Sherman's March to the Sea. This article gave me a Southern perspective and gave me further context.

"Sherman's Expedition-- What Will Come of It!" *The Daily Chattanooga Rebel* [Selma, AL], 23 Nov. 1864.

This article was published by the Selma, Alabama branch of the *Daily Chattanooga Rebel*, a staunchly pro-Confederate newspaper. It was published on November 23, shortly after General Sherman started his march to the sea, and it accordingly describes the beginning of Sherman's march from a Southern perspective. It declares that Sherman was suicidal for cutting himself off from supply lines and would soon be captured by Confederate armies. These were Confederate false hopes at best, and pure secessionist propaganda at worst, and were points reiterated by Confederate President Jefferson Davis as he toured Georgia around the same time. I learned a lot from this article and gained more Southern perspective, as contrasted with *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Times*.

“Sherman’s Great Forward Movement.” The New York Times, 30 May 1864.

This New York Times article details Sherman’s movements in Northern Georgia. It begins when “General Sherman resumed his forward movement from Kingston, Georgia”, and proceeds from there. Being written in 1864, it is a primary source written at the time of the campaigns. The purpose is to inform the American public of military operations taking place, and it informed me to a high degree as it allowed me to better conduct my research and write my paper.

"Sherman's March Southward." The Daily Chattanooga Rebel [Griffin, GA], 21 Nov. 1864.

This article was published by the Griffin, Georgia branch of the Daily Chattanooga Rebel, a staunchly pro-Confederate newspaper. It was published on November 23, shortly after General Sherman started his march to the sea, and it accordingly describes the beginning of Sherman’s march from a Southern perspective. It declares that Sherman was suicidal for cutting himself off from supply lines and would soon be captured by Confederate armies. These were Confederate false hopes at best, and pure secessionist propaganda at worst, and were points reiterated by Confederate President Jefferson Davis as he toured Georgia around the same time. I learned a lot from this article and gained more Southern perspective, as contrasted with Harper’s Weekly and the New York Times.

“The Advance Upon Atlanta.” The New York Times, 27 Jul. 1864.

This primary source article was published by the New York Times and details Sherman’s operations as he neared the vicinity of Atlanta, Georgia. Around this time, Sherman’s men were destroying Confederate infrastructure and cutting off Atlanta’s supply lines, essentially putting Atlanta on the brink of starvation. This article helped me learn more about Sherman’s operations and context for my paper.

“The Assault on the Kennesaw Mountain.” The New York Times, 04 Jul. 1864.

This New York Times article, written in 1864, is a primary source which details the Assault on the Kennesaw Mountain, which was a military engagement in Northern Georgia in which William Sherman’s army fought. The purpose is to inform the American public of the Union’s military advances. This article helped me write my paper and provide context for Sherman’s campaigns. I learned that this was Sherman’s only true failure in battle while in Georgia.

“The Mob in New York.” The New York Times, 14 Jul. 1863.

This source, published by the New York Times, is a primary source. It is about the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, when thousands of angry (and mostly Irish) New Yorkers protested the draft and the war as a whole by targeting the draft offices and African Americans. This source allowed me to know more about the riots, which were a prime example of the disdain for the war that made it so necessary for the Union to rethink its warfare strategies, which ultimately led to Sherman’s campaigns. This source is unique because it was written in New York, where the riots took place.

Sherman, William Tecumseh. ““March to the Sea” Order.” History, Facts On File, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=102041&itemid=WE52&primarySourceId=5061. Accessed 27 Sept. 2018.

This is a primary source, written by General William Tecumseh Sherman. This is the order made by Sherman in November 1864 while in Atlanta to leave the city and embark on the March to the Sea. It commands the use of theft and foraging by Union soldiers to sustain the army, since Sherman was cutting himself off from all supply lines. This source gave me information about what Sherman was attempting to accomplish in his campaigns and what instructions he gave to his soldiers.

Lunt, Dolly Sumner. “Account of Sherman's March to the Sea: Diary Entries.” History, Facts On File, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=102041&itemid=WE52&primarySourceId=7342. Accessed 27 Sept. 2018.

This source is the diary of Dolly Sumner Lunt, a woman who lived in Atlanta at the time of Sherman’s campaigns. It details the utter horrors of the pillaging, burning, executing, and stealing that was exercised by the Union Army while in Atlanta, who Lunt describes as being “Like demons they rush in! My yards are full. To my smoke-house, my dairy, pantry, kitchen and cellar, like famished wolves they come, breaking locks and whatever is in their way.” This source was among my most useful and most interesting. It gave me a civilian and Southern perspective on the events that occurred and allowed me to have a deeper knowledge of the destruction in Atlanta.

Sherman, William Tecumseh. “Letter to Henry W. Halleck.” History, Facts On File, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=102041&itemid=WE52&primarySourceId=4732. Accessed 27 Sept. 2018.

This is a primary source written by General Sherman to fellow General Henry W. Halleck about Sherman’s plans for the March to the Sea. It was important because it taught me that many Union generals were very skeptical of Sherman’s plan to cut himself off from all supply lines and aid. Eventually, however Halleck and Grant were convinced and gave Sherman the green light to carry out his operations.

Sherman, William Tecumseh. "Letter to James M. Calhoun." History, Facts On File, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=102041&itemid=WE52&primarySourceId=7554. Accessed 27 Sept. 2018.

This is a primary source written by General William Sherman to James M. Calhoun, the Mayor of Atlanta. Sherman had given a warning to Calhoun, telling him to surrender to Union forces. Calhoun ignored this warning and said that Sherman was at fault for the war's destruction. Sherman countered in this letter by explaining that taking Atlanta was necessary for Union operations and that destruction would ensue if Calhoun did not comply. Not long later, Atlanta was taken and burned.

Secondary Sources

Armstrong, Jennifer. *Photo by Brady: A Picture of the Civil War*. New York, Atheneum Books, 2005.

This book by Civil War expert Jennifer Armstrong is a secondary source, and presents Civil War photographer Mathew Brady's primary source photographs in chronological order as they were taken throughout the war. This book helped my research a lot and gave me a visual idea of what was truly going on during General Sherman's campaigns.

Ferrell, Claudine L. *Reconstruction*. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 2003. *Greenwood Guides to Historical Events 1500-1900*.

This secondary-source book is by Civil War expert and historian Claudine L. Ferrell. This book describes all aspects of the people, places, and events that caused and took place during the Reconstruction Era. This book assisted my research because it allowed me to understand the impacts of Sherman's campaigns and the corresponding destruction upon Reconstruction, for all of Sherman's destruction had to be repaired and rebuilt after the war's end.

Golay, Michael. "Sherman's March to the Sea." *Civil War*, Fourth Edition, Chelsea House, 2016. History, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=102041&itemid=WE52&articleId=398332. Accessed 27 Sept. 2018.

This secondary source is among my most useful and most valuable. It details all of Sherman's operations, from Chattanooga through the Carolinas. It provides a massive amount of useful information and is very informative. I used this source in all areas of my research.

Schechter, Barnet. *The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and the Fight to Reconstruct America*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005.

This source, written by Barnet Schechter, a Civil War expert and historian, is a secondary source. It is about the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, when thousands of angry (and mostly Irish) New Yorkers protested the draft and the war as a whole by targeting the draft offices and African Americans. This source allowed me to know more about the riots, which were a prime example of the disdain for the war that made it so necessary for the Union to rethink its warfare strategies, which ultimately led to Sherman's campaigns.

Tendrich Frank, Lisa. "Sherman's March through Georgia." *Civil War and Reconstruction*, Third Edition, Facts On File, 2017. History, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=102041&itemid=WE52&articleId=200652. Accessed 27 Sept. 2018.

This secondary source was written by Lisa Tendrich-Frank, a Civil War historian. It is about Sherman's campaigns through Georgia and their subsequent effects on the people of Georgia, specifically Atlanta. I used this source throughout my research in several different areas.

Trudeau, Noah Andre. *Southern Storm: Sherman's March to the Sea*. New York, Harper Collins, 2008.

Ward, Geoffrey C. *The Civil War*. New York, Alfred A Knopf, 2009.

This is a secondary source book written by Civil War expert Noah Andre Trudeau. It goes into extraordinary detail to describe Sherman's March to the Sea from Atlanta to Savannah. I learned a great deal of information from this book which helped supply information and details throughout my research paper.

Wheeler, Linda. "The New York Draft Riots of 1863." *The Washington Post*, 29 Apr. 2013, www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-new-york-draft-riots-of-1863/2013/04/26/a1aacf52-a620-11e2-a8e2-5b98cb59187f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.62f2c0f36fca.

This Washington Post article was written by historian Linda Wheeler and is a secondary source. It details the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, which were a prime example of the Northern disdain for the lengthy war. The draft riots showed that tensions were rising and that Lincoln would not last long if a change wasn't made militarily to make larger gains against the Confederacy. I learned more about the nature of the riots and the background that led up to them. This information allowed me to create a clearer context for my topic in my paper.

Woodworth, Steven E. Sherman. New York, Macmillan Publishers, 2009. Great Generals Series.

This book by well-known Civil War historian Steven Woodworth provides a biographical account of William Tecumseh Sherman's life and his time as a general in the Union Army. This is a secondary source. This book helped me learn more about who Sherman was and gave me context of his life and detailed many events that pertain to my paper.