



Phil Sheridan Camp Number 4
Department of California & Pacific
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



*“ . . . so that children can learn about the flag and
the sacrifices that made it what it was today.”*

1989 National Encampment
Grand Army of the Republic

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAMS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

PHIL SHERIDAN CAMP NUMBER 4
SONS OF UNION VETERAND OF THE CIVIL WAR
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I. BACKGROUND

Studies have shown that the historical knowledge of young Americans is less than most educators and citizens would desire. Teachers struggle with the ever-growing number of students they must help educate in an ever-growing number of subjects. Students' knowledge of history has suffered because of reduced course requirements, and textbook treatments that are bland and voiceless and directed more toward trivial coverage of details than to the fullness needed to bring vitality and credibility to events of the past.

The teaching and learning of history in the elementary school is less focused on building definitive knowledge or formal thinking ability than it is aimed at more immediate and attainable ends. For young elementary students, an important purpose of education in history is to make the past seem real instead of remaining an untouchable abstraction held only in adult memories or hollow textbook passages. History instruction will help children recognize their own relationship to history, realizing that their actions and lives are a potential part of yet-to-be-written histories.

A. Special Experiences Pump Life Into Children's History Learning

Such experiences go beyond the "staples" of the classroom instruction and include field trips to museums and historical sites, simulations, craft and model-building experiences, individualized and in-depth National History Day projects, and oral history projects. When students are properly prepared for such experiences, the depth of understanding they build more than justifies the extra effort they entail.

B. History Improves Judgment

This is perhaps the most often-cited practical reason for studying history, and it was foremost in the mind of Thomas Jefferson when he wrote that schooling in America's new democracy should be "chiefly historical." He said, "...the people... are the ultimate guardians of their own liberty.... by apprising them of the past will enable them to judge of the future. It will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men."

C. Knowledge Of The Past Is Required For Understanding Present Realities

When people share some common knowledge of history, they can discuss their understandings with one another. We study the past in school not because students need to know a collection of old facts, but because history helps them understand how the world works and how human beings behave.

Students familiar with history know their unique place in the stream of time; they have a sense of the trajectory of human development, where it may veer off course and how it might be kept on track. A democracy needs citizens with such judgment and wisdom; the past is the only place to find it.

As Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, we are the legal heirs to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Our goal and purpose is to perpetuate the memory of the GAR; what they did in the Civil War and to preserve the Union, and to continue the work they started following the War. Teaching others about our flag, our government, patriotism and citizenship were important to them and should be important to us all. Learning about the other cultures and histories that live among us today is important, but the basic history of the United States cannot take second place to that of others.

D. Purpose and Objectives

This program would establish special projects for elementary and middle school students studying American history at schools within the jurisdiction of the Phil Sheridan Camp No. 4. The basic principles of fraternity, charity, loyalty, honor, patriotism, impartiality, integrity, courage, excellence, innovation, and respect shall govern the overall process.

By honoring deserving students, the SUVCW helps promote the maintenance of unqualified American citizenship. It will be these young people who will eventually lead our Nation, under the flag our forefathers fought to preserve.

Our Purpose and Objectives include –

“... to teach patriotism, and the duties of citizenship, the true history of our country, and the love and honor of our Flag; to oppose every tendency or movement that would weaken loyalty to, or make for the destruction or impairment of our constitutional Union; and to inculcate and broadly sustain the American principles of representative government, of equal rights, and of impartial justice for all.”

Too often, history is perceived as dull; a special program, a presentation by a "living historian," fun contests, and interesting discussions can make history come to life and a memorable experience. Therefore, this Adopt-A-School Standard Operating Procedure provides Camp projects on how to help both the teacher and the student in better understanding American history.

II. ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROJECTS

A. Special Flag Project

The Camp would contact local elementary schools and offer to instructs the students on some history of the flag and rules of etiquette (including raising and lowering the flag, how to fold it, and other important facts).

B. Living History Presentation Project

The Camp would contact local elementary and/or middle schools and offer to local to provide presentations to their history classes during the period they are studying the Civil War.

C. Essay Contest Project

The Camp would contact local elementary and/or middle schools and offer to sponsor an essay contest that could be conducted during the period they are studying the Civil War.

III. PROCEDURES

A. School Identification

The Camp Patriotic Instructor shall identify the candidate school or schools to adopt and present the name(s) to the Camp membership for approval and determination of the project to implement.

B. School Adoption

Draft a brochure or handout should be prepared by the Camp that can be provided to the school principals or teachers that includes information on the SUVCW, its goals and purpose, and the offer to provide any or all of the Adopt-A-School projects. An appointment shall be made to meet with the school and present the Camp's proposals. Should the school wish to participate, discuss the details of the different projects with the teachers who will be involved.

C. Project Documentation

The Camp Patriotic Instructor shall document projects implemented under the Adopt-A-School Program and include the information in his annual report. It is important to take photographs that may have been taken, including presentation ceremonies, which can be included in the Camp newsletter as well as local media as appropriate.

IV. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Special Flag Project

In many elementary schools, the students are given the responsibility of raising and lowering the flag. Therefore, the purpose of this program would be to teach flag etiquette by sponsoring a "Red, White and True Blue" Day at an elementary school. The Camp would identify and contact local schools and offer to instructs the students on some history of the flag and rules of etiquette including raising and lowering the flag, how to fold it, and other important facts.

This is a basic project that would not involve a lot of effort and would provide an opportunity to become associated with the educational community. This type of project cannot only be used to increase knowledge of our flag and patriotism, but offers opportunity to be used as a kick-off to other Camp Adopt-A-School projects.

B. Living History Presentation Project

Many veteran organizations have "speakers bureaus" which provide individuals to make presentations to local school history classes. Sons of Union Veterans Camp members can similarly offer their services to local elementary and/or middle schools to provide presentations to their history classes.

These programs should be given with the age of the students in mind; something one hour or less will hold the students attention quite well. The addition of “Living historians,” and/or reenactors with period attire and accoutrements, will have a positive impact on student understanding. Students should be encouraged to ask questions as that will also help you better understand what is being presented.

C. Essay Contest Project

The most ambitious, and possibly rewarding for the school, as well as the student, is a historical essay contest. Writing an essay where the theme could be "What freedom means to me" or "What the flag means to me," or something similar, not only allows a student to express his or her thoughts, but also includes using learned writing skills. This effort becomes fun when attached to a contest.

It is the philosophy of the Camp to identify and award those students who have demonstrated an exceptional ability to understand and write, consistent with the principles and freedoms espoused by the SUVCW and school curriculum. Today, by honoring those who recognize the achievements of the past, we show our respect for those who have served in the past *and* those who will serve in the future.

The contest details should be developed between the school principal (or designated teacher(s)) the Camp Patriotic Instructor (or Commander’s designee). The judging could be on content and/or grammar, punctuation and, if handwritten, penmanship. To ensure manageability for the Camp, the contest should be between students within one school versus between schools. The winning student would receive an award certificate from the Camp, a gift certificate from a local bookstore, or some other Civil War or history-related item. There could be 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners with different awards for each.

1. Format/Theme Determination

Determination of theme or subject for an essay should be coordinated between the Camp and the school, applying the following guidelines:

- a.) Writing the essays – e.g., biography, first person narrative format, etc.
- b.) Theme/subject – e.g., a specific historical event during the American Civil War or a significant American figure or event leading up to or immediately following the Civil War, etc.

2. Essay Selection

The school staff shall review the submitted essays and select up to ten for submission to the Camp for judging. The selection criteria should include, but not be limited to:

The school staff shall review the student essays and select up to ten for submission to the Camp for judging. Upon this project being initiated with any school, the Camp Commander shall appoint a Camp *Ad Hoc* Committee on Adopt-A-School: Essay Contest Project (chaired by the Camp Patriotic Instructor) to review the final essays. The selection criteria used by the Camp should include, but not be limited to the following:

- a.) Is the essay engaging or static?
- b.) Does the essay accurately capture the subject?
- c.) Is the essay articulate?
- d.) Is the essay concise and organized.

3. Award Presentation

The Camp *Ad Hoc* Committee on Adopt-A-School: Essay Contest Project will select 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. The Camp Patriotic Instructor (or Commander's designee) shall coordinate with the school for the date, time, and place of presentation of awards.

V. AWARDS

A. Special Flag Project

SUVCW Flag Facts flyer along with a small American flag for all student participants.

B. Living History Presentation Project

SUVCW/Camp document on summarizing the history of the Civil War in California and the formation of the GAR and SUVCW to all student participants.

C. Essay Contest Project

1. Certificate of award (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place)
2. Copy of a Civil War History book (determined by prize level)
3. Gift Certificate to a local Book Store

VI. FUNDING

Funding for the implementation of awards granted by these Adopt-A-School projects must be authorized for appropriation *prior* to the initiation of any project with a school. The Camp shall determine the precise funding/award levels.

VII. POINTS OF CONTACT

Questions regarding these instructions can be addressed to the following:

- Commander, Phil Sheridan Camp Number 4, SUVCW –
- Patriotic Instructor, Phil Sheridan Camp Number 4, SUVCW –

Attachment A: PHOTOGRAPHIC WAIVER FORM

**Phil Sheridan Camp Number 4
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**

PHOTO PERMISSION WAIVER – ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Phil Sheridan Camp Number 4 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War has my permission to use a photograph, likeness, artwork, profile and/or story of my child in any current and future publications, Internet web sites and other promotional materials produced, used by and representing the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. I understand the circulation of the materials could be worldwide and that there will be no compensation to me for this use

**Print
Parent's Name**

**Print
Student's Name**

Parent's Signature

Date

Photo Date: _____

