

Lesson 6.5

ISABELLA FOGG: A WOMAN ON THE FIELD

Objective: Students will formulate questions for further research after reading Isabella Fogg's letter to the Maine Soldier's Relief Agency.

Materials:

- **Doc 6.5:** Isabella Fogg's letter to John Hathaway

Timing: Two to three class periods, plus time outside of class

Background Reading and Information:

- Chapter Six, Section Four
- When Isabella Fogg's son Hugh left Calais for Washington as a member of the 6th Maine Regiment, she went with him and volunteered for the Maine Camp and Hospital Association. After the Battle of Antietam, she traveled to the battlefields, bringing sick and wounded soldiers much-needed supplies. As she describes in her letter to John Hathaway of the Maine Soldier's Relief Agency, she was horrified to find many neglected soldiers left in barns and sheds on the battlefields.

Procedure:

1. Review with students the section on Sarah Smith Sampson and the role that many women played in the Civil War: caring for sick soldiers, either in nearby hospitals or on the battlefields themselves. Tell them they will be examining a report written by one of these women, Isabella Fogg. Give them the background information on Fogg (above).
2. Have students read the letter out loud, alternating readers. Stop often to define difficult words or to clarify any confusing sentences. When you are finished reading, discuss the letter, asking questions like the following:
 - What kinds of things do we learn from this letter? What has Isabella Fogg been doing?
 - Do you get the sense that her work is important from her letter? Why?
 - Is she happy with the effort that others are making to relieve the soldiers on the battlefield? Why or why not?
 - What kinds of supplies do the injured soldiers need, according to Fogg? Would you imagine they might need anything more than what she names?
 - Do you think Fogg is trying to convince Mr. Hathaway of anything in this letter? Or is she simply reporting facts?
 - Do you think she enjoys her work? Why or why not?
3. Ask students now to think about what was not said in this letter. What information are they missing? Have them read the letter again to themselves, and come up with 2-3 questions each, based on what was not said in the letter. Their questions should be

interesting to them, and should require some research to answer them. They should also try their best to make their questions original. Some examples:

- Was the Battle of Antietam an exceptionally brutal battle, or was this kind of desolation normal for the war?
- How might the soldiers describe their conditions?
- What would the U.S. Sanitary Commission have to say about cutting the supplies they requested at Sharpsburg in half? Did they do this on other occasions? Did other people have the same complaints, or was Isabella Fogg exceptionally critical of them?

4. Students should then select one of their questions and set out to answer it. Give them at least a day in class, plus time outside of class to research their question. They should then write a brief paper (1 page) that answers the question they chose, and gives the source(s) they found the answer from. If they were not able to find out the answer to one of their questions, they should write an explanation of where they looked for information and why they think they could not find what they needed.

Evaluation: Grade student papers based on the originality of the questions asked, the thoroughness of the research, and the clarity of the writing

Follow-up Activities:

- Have students represent one of the scenes described in Isabella Fogg's letter, through drawing, sculpting, painting, or some other visual depiction.
- Have students create a medal of honor for women like Isabella Fogg, including representations of scenes from the battlefield and the hospitals, and a sentence that honors them for their work.
- Students may include their paper as part of their Chapter Portfolio, if they choose.

Alignment with Learning Results:

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Social Studies: **HISTORY**

Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.

Descriptor **E1b**: Analyze and critique major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of the United States and world and the implications for the present and the future.

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Social Studies: **APPLICATIONS**

Standard: **Researching and Developing Positions on Current Social Studies Issues**

Students research, select, and present a position on a current social studies issue by proposing and revising research questions, and locating and selecting information from multiple and varied sources.

Descriptor **A1c**: Locate and access relevant information that includes multiple perspectives from varied sources.

EXCERPT OF LETTER FROM ISABELLA FOGG TO JOHN HATHAWAY

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Berlin, Nov. 10, 1862

Mr. Hathaway,

Dear Sir,

I suppose Mr. W[atson] has given you some information in regard to how we were occupying our time in Frederic, so I will give you some account of our movements since. We left Frederic on Saturday, the 1st in company with Mr. Hayes, stopped at Middletown, and found them very comfortable, men happy, said the ladies were very kind, went on to Kedarsville [Keedysville], but what a painful contrast! There we found several Maine men, in a church and three other buildings occupied as Hospitals, lying on the bare floor with their coats for pillows. Their stores consisted of hard bread, beef and coffee, as we had no supplies with us, of course we could not relieve, they promised to apply to the commission on the day following. We then went up to Smoketown Hospital, here we found 30 Maine men. This place is in a most miserable condition, the men complain very much, although Mrs. Harris and several Penn.ladies, with a great quantity of supplies were there. The effluvia¹ arising from the condition of these grounds is intolerable, quite enough to make a man in perfect health sick, and how men can recover in such a place is a mystery to me. . .

We then . . . proceeded to Harpers Ferry. Here the sick are in a fearful condition, in every old house and church and hundreds on the ground. You no doubt think your ladies in Washington are doing a great work, but I can assure you, if they were here, they would find the *stern reality of want, privation and extreme suffering*. . . . At Gen. Slocum's request we went over to Loudin Valley to learn the condition of several hundreds, who had been sent the day previous without any preparation. We found them lying on the ground, in all directions, many convalescent², but a great many *very low*. At this time no surgeons, nurses or cooks were on the ground and hard bread their only food. Fortunately, we had that morning obtained a *few supplies* from the Commission³, after much pleading, for they actually appeared as if they were contributing out of their own pocket and for *our* personal wants, however, we went to work to administer to the wants of the sick. . .

After feeding every one who could not help themselves, we left for Berlin, and here the misery and suffering beggars all description, the heart sickens at the sight. We visited the Hospital of the 10th Maine, found them more comfortable than many others, but yet very much can be *added to their* comfort. Taking a stroll through the town, we searched every old school house, log cabin &c for the poor men who had been left behind, as our army moved on. In an old hut destitute of doors or windows and minus a part of the roof, we found 7 men, who had slept in the woods the night before, had crept in there, for the

¹effluvia: fumes

²convalescent: improving, recovering

³Commission: The U.S. Sanitary Commission

miserable shelter the place afforded.--Our inquiries were for Maine men, and although these were not from our State, they claimed our sympathy.--Conversing with one of them, he told us he was sick, thought he had the measles, on this point, our opinion did not coincide with his, we supposing it to be a case of small pox, which of course required immediate attention. With no little difficulty we at last succeeded in finding the surgeon of the district, who corroborated our opinion, our next step was to report to Col. Fillebrown, who expressed earnest thanks for our attention to the case.--In a dilapidated school house, without fireplace, we found a man sick and old, who had enlisted in the Maine 12th. He was now 57 years old, had been left, injured in the spine, at Fortress Monroe, then knocked about from one Hospital to another, thrust into a New York regiment till at last all discouraged, he knew not what to do. Measures have now been set on foot by Mr. Hayes for his discharge. . . .

Again we went to Smoketown, hoping to find them in a more comfortable condition than when we were last there, but how sadly were we disappointed.--How I wish I could introduce you, and the Washington Com. to Smoketown Hos. in the midst of this driving snow storm! You could have seen the poor fellows huddled together, with their pallets of straw on the ground, their tents connected by flyes, the same as erected in the heat of summer, many without walls and no stoves. Those who were able to creep out of their tents were crouched over fires, built in the woods, their heads covered with snow. And *all* I may say, almost without exception with thin muslin shirts on.--The exposure has been such that diptheria has broken out among them, and in nearly every case proves fatal. One of our poor Maine boys who had been very diligent in looking up for us those belonging to Maine, at our last visit had been seized suddenly with diptheria, cause by exposure, and lived but two or three hours.--Distributing what few articles we had received from the Commission among them, we moved on, deeply regretting we had no winter clothing, as many of them were destitute of stockings. I cannot describe what my feelings were that I had no articles of woolen clothing to distribute. . . .

Next, we proceeded to the school house at Bakersville, where so many of the 5th had been left without supplies. Imagine our indignation to find that the requisition⁴ we had left for them with the commission at Sharpsburg had been cut off fully one half on every article. They probably were not expecting we should be on the track again.--We found the industrious steward, William Noyes of Saco, grating corn on a grater he had made from an old canteen, to furnish meal wherewith to make gruel for his sick men. This is only a sample of his expedients for his men, give his name a place in your reports for he is worthy. At Hagerstown we found several Maine men, but in a more comfortable condition than we had expected. The citizens deserve great credit for their efforts in providing for the wants of the sick soldiers as there are nearly a thousand in that vicinity. But we found very many of our Maine men with muslin shirts on and some without any. Here we found three boxes for Maine Regiments, one of them of not much account, containing mostly old pillow cases, another chiefly muslin shirts, but the third, to our great joy, contained upwards of a hundred flannel shirts, with some other useful articles. Imagine now, with what pleasure we retraced our steps to Bakersville and Smoketown! Could you have seen the happy faces and heard the thankful expressions of gratitude you would have felt that too much could not be done for their comfort.--We then came on to

⁴requisition: demand, request

Burketsville, found many Maine men there are they likewise were without woolen shirts. We were able also to supply them and arrived home about 7 o'clock, after the tedious labor and hard exposure of three days. I should have written before but I suppose Mr. Hayes and Mr. Watson kept you informed of our movements. You may be assured however we have not spent much idle time. . . .

Yours with very great respect.

I. Fogg