

Fort Sinquefield and the Creek War in Alabama

(Suggested for 4th and 10th grade classrooms)

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Overview of lesson:

This lesson will present students with two documented accounts of the attack on Fort Sinquefield, a Creek War site in Clarke County, Alabama. Students will read to understand the sequence of events at Sinquefield and identify causes, effects, and perspectives of the events.

Content Standards:

Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies (2010)

- 4th Grade: Standard 2
 - Relate reasons for European exploration and settlement in Alabama to the impact of European explorers on trade, health, and land expansion in Alabama.
 - Explain reasons for conflicts between Europeans and American Indians in Alabama from 1519 to 1840, including differing beliefs regarding land ownership, religion, and culture
- 4th Grade: Standard 3
 - Explain the social, political, and economic impact of the War of 1812, including battles and significant leaders of the Creek War, on Alabama.
 - Examples:
 - social—adoption of European culture by American Indians, opening of Alabama land for settlement
 - political—forced relocation of American Indians, labeling of Andrew Jackson as a hero and propelling him toward Presidency
 - economic—acquisition of tribal land in Alabama by the United States
- 10th Grade: Standard 7
 - Describe causes, courses, and consequences of United States' expansionism prior to the Civil War, including the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the Northwest Ordinance of 1785, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Louisiana Purchase, the Indian Removal Act, the Trail of Tears, Manifest Destiny, the Mexican War and Cession, Texas Independence, the acquisition of Oregon, the California Gold Rush, and the Western Trails.
- 10th Grade: Standard 8
 - Compare major events in Alabama from 1781 to 1823, including statehood as part of the expanding nation, acquisition of land, settlement, and the Creek War, to those of the developing nation.

National Standards for History

- Era 4, Standard 1 – United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Standard 1 – Culture
 - Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.
- Standard 3 – People, Places, and Environments
 - Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.

Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts (revised, 2013)

- 4th grade – Standard 10
 - Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. [RI.4.1]
- 4th grade – Standard 11
 - Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. [RI.4.2]
- 4th grade – Standard 24
 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. [W.4.3]
- 10th grade – Standard 10
 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. [RI.9-10.1]
- 10th grade – Standard 29b
 - Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. [W.9-10.9]; Apply Grade 10 Reading standards to literary nonfiction.

Primary Learning Objective(s):

This lesson will provide the opportunity for students to:

1. Understand the events of the Creek War battle at Fort Siquiefield.
2. Understand connections between various Creek War events that occurred in pre-statehood Alabama (Fort Mims, Kimbell-James Massacre, attack at Fort Siquiefield).
3. Read and evaluate primary source accounts.
4. Infer information from reading and make connections to outside information.
5. Draw conclusions and discuss various historic perspectives of the same event.
6. Apply evidence and expand understanding of larger Creek War themes (land ownership, causes of conflict, frontier warfare, Native American perspectives).
7. Practice research, critical thinking, and writing skills.

Time allotted: 50 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- Writing Materials
- Online Sources may be printed for use in classroom

Primary Sources

- SOURCE #1: [Digitized book source](#): *The Creek War of 1813 & 1814* by T.H. Ball and H.S. Halbert.
 - See Ch. X “The Kimbell-James Massacre” and Ch. XI “Attack on Fort Sinquefield.”
- SOURCE #2: [Digitized letters and writings](#): Section Two of A.J. Pickett’s “Interesting Notes upon the History of Alabama.” Notes from Col. G.W. Creagh.
 - See pgs. 23-24 for accounts of Fort Sinquefield events.
 - Instructors may wish to have students look at pg. 1 or subsequent handwritten pages of this source to give students the experience of looking at 19th century primary documents.

Other Sources

- [Alabama Department of Archives and History](#) This website includes an easily searchable online digital collection of primary documents. It also offers other educational resources, including lesson plans based on documents in the collection as well as a link to “Alabama Moments in American History.”
 - See [Creek War lesson plans](#).
- [Encyclopedia of Alabama](#): search for Fort Sinquefield, Grove Hill, or Creek War.

Background/Preparation:

- A brief introductory lesson on the Creek War can be found [here](#).
- Information about the Creek War in Alabama can be found [here](#).
- The Alabama Department of Archives and History makes available “Treking Through History Traveling Backpacks” that can be rented on a weekly basis and shipped to schools around the state. The Southeast Indians pack includes artifacts, interactive CDs and DVDs, activity sheets, and other resources for classroom use. More information [here](#).

- Alabama pioneers constructed Fort Sinquefield in Clarke County near the towns of Whatley and Grove Hill in the summer of 1813. The fort provided refuge for white settlers in southwest Alabama during the tumultuous Creek War, especially during land battles with the Red Stick Creeks in mid-1813. Creeks attacked Fort Mims in Baldwin County on August 30, 1813. Red Stick Creek warriors attacked settlers in Clarke County at and around Fort Sinquefield soon after on September 1st and 2nd. (More information about Clarke Country [here](#).)

Documents:

1. Account of Fort Sinquefield attacks – Ch. X “Attack at Fort Sinquefield.” Ball, Rev. T. H. and H. S. Halbert. *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814*. Montgomery, AL: White, Woodruff, & Fowler, 1895. Digitized online at <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cmamcrk4/hbtoc.html>.

2. Account of Fort Sinquefield attacks from the notes of Col. G.W. Creagh – Pickett, Albert James. “Interesting Notes upon the History of Alabama,” 1813-1814. Montgomery, AL, Department of Archives and History – Albert J. Pickett Papers: LPR185, Box 2, Book 2. Digitized online at <http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/voices/id/3094/rec/1>.

Suggested Activities:

- Instructors will introduce sources to class, and read documents or excerpts from documents. (It may be more appropriate to use less-violent excerpts of the texts for use in 4th grade classrooms).
- Instructors may want to ask pointed questions to judge understanding of details, then ask open-ended questions to foster discussion of events.
- Transition into activities.

4th Grade

- Using Documents 1 & 2
 1. Historic Narrative: Students will read account of the attack on Fort Sinquefield (Ch. X in *The Creek War*, and pages 23-24 of primary document #2). Students will label the “characters” involved in the event – women at the river, settlers at the fort, Isaac Hayden, the dogs, Prophet Francis, Creek warriors. Students will then write a brief narrative from the point of view of their chosen character. Students must use specific evidence from the primary sources to construct their narrative. This can be a paragraph or a page. Students may share their narratives with other students, in a small group or with the whole class, so they can think about the event from many perspectives.
 2. Historic Interview: Students will read the stories of Sarah Merrill and Isaac Hayden. Students will then choose a person to “interview” about the events. They may want to interview Merrill, Hayden, one of the Creek warriors, or even one of Hayden’s dogs. Students will develop a short list of questions (such as “Why did you do what you did?” “What were you thinking/feeling when this happened?” “What did you think after the event was over?”). Students will then write responses to the questions from the point of view of their character citing specific evidence or quotes from the texts. Instructor will lead a discussion of the importance of interviews and verbal accounts as historic sources, and then the value of looking at multiple perspectives and understanding motivations when learning about history.

[Assessments should be tailored for grade level and activities. Instructors can create assessment rubrics to evaluate the students’ written work. Instructors may want to consult RubiStar or other instructional sources for suggestions.]

10th Grade

- Using Documents 1 & 2

1. Historic Interview: Students will read accounts of the attack at the Kimbell house and the attack at Fort Siquefield. Students will then identify different “characters” involved in the events – Isaac Hayden, Ransom Kimbell, Sarah Merrill, Prophet Francis, the women at the river, Creek warriors, etc. Students should then choose a “character” they would like to interview. They should develop a list of interview questions and write appropriate responses from the perspective of their character, citing evidence from the texts to back up their inferences. Instructors should emphasize understanding of who, what, where, when, why, and how of the event. It may be useful to give students the opportunity to share their interviews in a small group so they can look at the event from different points of view. Students will then compose a brief news article describing the events at Fort Siquefield, making sure to incorporate elements from their “interviews.” Instructors may choose to have students include citations from the primary source documents in their news articles so students can practice appropriate citations.
2. “Live-Tweet” History: Instructors will divide students into several groups and assign the groups a different character (Isaac Hayden, Ransom Kimbell, Prophet Francis, etc.) or different group (they are a white settler, they are a Creek Warrior, etc.). Students will then write “tweets”, or short statements or personal thoughts about a situation, from the perspective of their character/group. Students should focus on a broad time-span. Students should think about what their character was thinking and experiencing before, during, and after the attacks, and tailor their “tweets”/statements to cover this whole time span. Instructors should emphasize the importance of the motivations that caused the Fort Siquefield attacks, the actions of various parties, and the aftermath/results of the attacks to aid student analysis of sources and synthesis of information. What did the Creeks think of the white settlers’ actions? What did the settlers think of the Creeks’ actions?

Instructors may want students to actually use Twitter or other social media sites to post their writings, or they may want to have students write their “tweets” on index cards, pieces of paper, or type them into a Microsoft Word document. Instructors will have the groups choose their favorite “tweets”/statements, compile them into chronological order, and then share with the class. Instructors may ask if students think the settlers and Creeks could have benefitted from reading each other’s “tweets”/statements. Could the attacks have been prevented? Could Creek War violence after Sept. 2nd, 1813, have been prevented? What would the settlers have thought of the Creeks updates before and after the attacks? What would the Creeks have thought of the settlers updates?

Instructors may also wish to have students write brief news articles chronicling the events at Fort Siquefield. Students could include quotes from their “live-tweets” and cite information from the primary source documents. Instructors may tie several parts of this activity into a broader class discussion on the importance of understanding various perspectives of historic events, the importance of media in history, and the importance of personal accounts of historic events.

3. Small Group Discussion: Divide students into groups. Have them each focus on a different small event at Fort Siquefield – the building of the fort, the attack on the Kimbell house, the attack at Fort Siquefield, or the aftermath of the attacks. Have the groups discuss what the Creeks and white settlers thought of each event, and the motivations behind the different groups’ actions. Students will take notes of the “who, what, where, when, and why” of their small event, compose a short explanation of each of these and then briefly present the “who, what, where, when, and why” of their small event to the class. Close with a discussion of the connections between all of the events and the importance of validating diverse historic perspectives.
- [Assessments should be tailored for grade level and activities. Instructors can create assessment rubrics to evaluate the students’ written work. Instructors may want to consult [RubiStar](#) or other instructional sources for suggestions.]

Assessment Strategies:

- Evaluate student understanding of the causes and effects of the events at Fort Siquefield.
- Evaluate student willingness to look at historic events from multiple perspectives and to compare and contrast the motivations of historic peoples.
- Evaluate students’ writings for comprehension of document readings, understanding of multiple historic perspectives, and effort.

Extension:

Students could:

- Place Fort Siquefield in the greater context of the Creek War.
- Evaluate other Creek War events using ideas learned from the Fort Siquefield lesson (looking at events from multiple perspectives, the importance of verbal accounts of events, understanding motivations for actions, etc.).
- Take class on a field trip to Fort Siquefield, or another Creek War site. Information about visiting Fort Siquefield can be found [here](#).