

Local and United States History through the Eyes of Remington

This history lesson is designed for grade levels 10-12. The expected time it takes to go through all material is one class period. Students acquire and integrate, extend and refine, and complete a meaningful use task. This lesson will cover three Remington works: *Charge of the Rough Riders*, *The Alert* and *Fall of the Cowboy*.

Essential Questions for grade levels 10-12:

- Why is it important that we study history?
- What is an artifact? Can art be considered an artifact?
- Who was Frederic Remington and when was he alive?
- What was happening around the U.S. during his lifetime?
- How can studying artifacts from Frederic Remington's lifetime help us learn about him?
- How will it help us learn about the history of our community and the history of the United States?

Declarative Knowledge: Frederic Remington's life timeline with other events happening in Remington's life, examples of artifacts with descriptions of their histories to pass around, definition of sketch, drawing, painting, bronze,

Procedural Knowledge: How to use critical thinking to make assumptions by looking at artifacts, how to fill out a KWL chart, how to write and test a hypothesis about history, how the Native Americans, American Cowboys, Military figures, and Buffalo Soldiers were connected to each other

10-12 NYS Social Studies Standards:

NY.SS.10-12.1.2 Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives

NY.SS.10-12.1.2.1 ...discuss several schemes for periodizing the history of New York State and the United States

NY.SS.10-12.1.2.2 ...develop and test hypotheses about important events, eras, or issues in New York State and United States history, setting clear and valid criteria for judging the importance and significance of these events, eras, or issues

NY.SS.10-12.1.2.3 ...compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States

NY.SS.10-12.1.2.4 ...examine how the Constitution, United States law, and the rights of citizenship provide a major unifying factor in bringing together Americans from diverse roots and traditions

NY.SS.10-12.1.2.5 ...analyze the United States involvement in foreign affairs and a willingness to engage in international politics, examining the ideas and traditions leading to these foreign policies

NY.SS.10-12.1.2.6 ...compare and contrast the values exhibited and foreign policies implemented by the United States and other nations over time with those expressed in the United Nations Charter and international law

Hypotheses about Important Events, Reviewed in Artifact Form for Debate:

- Copy of Emancipation Proclamation (1863): If Abraham did not write the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery would still exist. Then Remington would not have travelled with the Buffalo Soldiers.
- Piece of barbed wire in a case (1873): If Joseph Glidden did not invent the form of barbed wire that we recognize today then handlers would still be driving cattle across the continent. Remington would not have been able to paint *The Fall of the Cowboy*.
- Picture of the American battleship *Maine* (February 15th of 1898): If this battleship hadn't sunk, we wouldn't have fought the Spanish American War and Cuba would still be under Spain's command. Remington would not have been able to paint *Charge of the Rough Riders*.

Activities from Beginning to End:

1. Draw a KWL Chart on your board (Know, Want to Know, and Learn)
2. Ask the essential questions to your group of students as the lesson launch activity
3. Fill in answers about what the students know and want to know
4. Go over a brief time line of Remington's life
5. Pass around artifacts and have a group discussion about them
6. Show the coordinating paintings with the artifacts, (*The Alert*, *Charge of the Rough Riders*, and *The Fall of the Cowboy*)
7. Have students count off in 3's to work in teams
8. Pass out to teams the handouts that follow, one with *The Alert*, one with *Charge of the Rough Riders*, and one with *The Fall of the Cowboy*
9. Explain the activity: Students will work in teams to develop a hypothesis regarding their important event and Remington's reaction to it (the artwork). The group who works with *The Alert* will be evaluating learning standards **NY.SS.10-12.1.2.4**, the group who works with *Charge of the Rough Riders* will evaluate learning standards **NY.SS.10-12.1.2.5**, and the groups who works with *The Fall of the Cowboy* will evaluate learning standards **NY.SS.10-12.1.2.3**
10. Each group will create an argument, based on the information provided to them, that supports or denies the above hypotheses'
11. Groups present their findings
12. Re-ask the essential questions
13. Finish KWL Chart with what the students have learned (meaningful use task)

Materials: Chalk or marker board for KWL Chart, list of essential questions, handouts

This lesson was designed to engage the three types of learning styles: Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic.

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The Fall of the Cowboy, 1895

Oil on canvas, 25 x 35 1/8

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Hypothesis: If Joseph Glidden did not invent the form of barbed wire that we recognize today then handlers would still be driving cattle across the continent. Remington would not have been able to paint *The Fall of the Cowboy*. Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States

During a trip to Yellowstone Park in the summer of 1893, Remington met Owen Wister, a writer from Philadelphia who was at the beginning of a notable career. The two established an instant friendship; Wister was on assignment for *Harper's* to write a series of articles on "the whole adventure of the West," and Remington was its potential illustrator. In the series of projects that followed, Wister provided the writing and Remington furnished the sketches along with plenty of advice. In October 1894 Remington wrote: "Say Wister—Go ahead please—make me an article on the evolution of the puncher—the 'passing' as it were... . Don't mistake the nice young men who amble around wire fences for the 'wild rider of the plains.'" For Remington, the real cowboy was already a thing of the past.

Wister's article, titled "The Evolution of the Cow-Puncher," finally appeared in the September 1895 issue of *Harper's Monthly*, accompanied by a number of illustrations by Remington. One of these was the painting shown here. Beneath leaden skies of gunmetal gray, two cowboys have halted their horses in a bleak wintry landscape. One of them has dismounted to remove the rails of a fence gate so they can pass through. The whole scene is infused with the slow rhythms and somber tones of an elegy; a lament for something that has gone forever. Remington, like his friend Theodore Roosevelt, also a great popularizer of the West in this period, viewed the cowboy as the last great figure of America's frontier history; hardy and self-reliant, but doomed to extinction in the wake of civilization's steady progress. This mythic image was soon to be immortalized in the pages of Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, published to wide acclaim in 1902—arguably the first western novel



Charge of the Rough Riders, 1898
Oil on canvas, 35" x 60"
Frederic Remington Art Museum, Ogdensburg, NY

Hypothesis: (February 15th of 1898): If the American battleship *Maine* hadn't sunk, we wouldn't have fought the Spanish American War and Cuba would still be under Spain's command. Remington would not have been able to paint *Charge of the Rough Riders*. Analyze the United States involvement in foreign affairs and a willingness to engage in international politics, examining the ideas and traditions leading to these foreign policies

The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 stated that any further colonization by European Countries of the Caribbean would no longer be accepted by the United States. Spain was exempted pertaining to Cuba. From 1868 to 1878, Cubans fought the Ten Year War against the Spanish for independence, but the Cubans were suppressed. In 1895, a revolt was planned by Cuban revolutionaries, but was contained by General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau. He was brutally effective at slowing the Cuban rebellion, and ordered residents of Cuban districts to relocate to Spanish concentration camps. Americans Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal* quickly saw the benefits of reporting the dramatic headlines to sell their newspapers. On February 15th of 1898, the USS *Maine* sank in the Havana Harbor after a large explosion. 266 men were lost. Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst were again in competition for the better story. The Yellow Journalism they published helped stir our nation to act against the Spanish, blaming them for the sinking of the ship. The House and the Senate passed acts to ensure Cuba would be annexed and remain a free entity after the war. The U.S. demanded Spanish withdrawal and authorized the use of any forces available. War was declared. The American men that were sent were poorly outfitted for the conditions in Cuba. The blue shirt and brown pants that the men are depicted as wearing are military issue wool, which had to have been extremely uncomfortable.



The Alert, 1888
Oil on Canvas, 22" x 19 ½"
Private Collector

Hypothesis: Emancipation Proclamation (1863): If Abraham did not write the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery would still exist. Then Remington would not have travelled with the Buffalo Soldiers. ...Examine how the Constitution, United States law, and the rights of citizenship provide a major unifying factor in bringing together Americans from diverse roots and traditions

The Alert is a fine example of Remington's painting of the late 1880s. One of Remington's favorite western "types", the African American buffalo soldier is shown radiant on a handsome horse. The figures are painted with shining details, set off in the western sunlight. He establishes the western locale as well as the foreground and middle ground with meticulously painted rocky terrain. Distant hills at the horizon are barely visible in the rising desert dust.

Remington was proud of his friendships with the men of Arizona's 10th Cavalry, and the access he got to them as he visited them repeatedly in the 1880s as a reporter/illustrator. His regard for these men is shown in the princely portrayal of this anonymous cavalryman.

Following excerpt from *A Scout with the Buffalo Soldiers*, written and illustrated by Frederic Remington, Slightly abridged from *The Century*; Volume 37, Issue 6, April 1889.

"The old troop-horse heaved a great sigh, and dropping his head went fast asleep, as every good soldier should do when he finds the opportunity. The negro troopers sat about, their black skins shining with perspiration, and took no interest in the matter in hand. They occupied such time in joking and merriment as seemed fitted for growling. They may be tired and they may be hungry, but they do not see fit to augment their misery by finding fault with everybody and everything. In this particular they are charming men with whom to serve.