Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Historical Question
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Introduction
Thinking about Gen. Sherman as an American General, who was born in Ohio, served in the US Army in various locations including California, Kentucky, and Missouri, led the Louisiana State Military Academy (LSU) as superintendent, and was reluctant to serve in command during the Civil War; analyze the following documents to determine and explain the intent of leadership of William Tecumseh Sherman. Determine Sherman’s feelings about the war and his intent towards the conclusion of the war.

Historical Thinking Skill: Evidence, Continuity and Change
Evidence must be provided to determine Sherman’s motivation during the Civil War. Students must provide evidence from the documents to support their opinion of Sherman’s intent to preserve the Union or destroy the South. In analyzing the documents, students should be able to determine if Sherman’s feelings changed throughout the war, as evidenced in the documents. Finally, student’s thoughts about Sherman may change through interaction with the documents, and therefore, at the end of the entire DBQ students will have the opportunity to reflect on their feelings about Sherman before and after this activity.

DOK Level: 4, Extended Thinking

SC Standards
8-4.5: Examine consequences of the major Civil War military strategies.

Materials
- Primary Sources (included)
- Poster Paper
- Markers
- Notebooks
- Pens/Pencils
- Opinion T-Chart

Teacher Guide
The purpose of this activity is to have students think critically, given resources to examine, to form an opinion, supported by evidence, arguing their point in support of General W.T. Sherman’s intent to preserve the nation OR destroy the South.

This activity should be done after study of the Civil War, total war, and Sherman’s March to the Sea. This activity is designed to take two 50-60 minute class periods.

Activity 1:
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

**Gallery Walk:** Prepare resources (images of originals and transcripts) and questions on chart paper. Hang the chart paper resources around the room, providing ample space for a small group of students to work. Divide students into small groups and start each group at a different resource poster. Allow students 5-7 minutes to read each document, or map and answer the questions attached. Students should answer questions on their own paper/notebook, unless otherwise noted. In those instances, markers should be provided at the chart/poster.

**Activity 2:**

**Discussion/Decision Making:** After students have read/analyzed each resource, they should return to their seats to think about what they have learned. In groups of 5-6, students should discuss their feelings about General Sherman as a person. Students should determine whether they support the idea of Sherman’s intent to preserve the nation, or Sherman’s intent to destroy the South. Students should be allowed 10 minutes to discuss, determine their position, and be able to provide evidence to support their stance. Provide students with the “Opinion T-Chart.” Once students have determined their individual feelings to support one stance or the other, the class should be divided in half: one group supporting Sherman’s intent to preserve the nation, and one group supporting Sherman’s intent to destroy the South.

**Activity 3:**

**Debate:** Once the class is divided into two groups students should be allowed 5-10 minutes to discuss their ideas and prepare their arguments to support their side of the debate. Students should be prepared to support their argument with evidence from the resources provided. Students must also be prepared to answer questions from the audience about their beliefs. The purpose of the debate is to express their beliefs but to also persuade the other side to believe as they do. The debate should take 15-20 minutes. Students should be allowed 3 minutes per side to state their original points as to their beliefs, and 2 minutes per side to address teacher and student questions. After the debate, poll the audience to see if anyone changed their opinion of Sherman.

**Activity 4:**

**Reflection:** After the debate, students should return to their individual desks and write a reflection in their notebooks. They should address their original beliefs of Sherman before the activity, how the activity addressed their beliefs or changed their opinion, and how the debate addressed their beliefs or changed their opinions.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

### Opinion T-Chart

| Evidence that General William T. Sherman wanted to preserve the nation... | Evidence that General William T. Sherman wanted to destroy the South... |
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Created July 2017

Source A:
Excerpt of a letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to his wife, Ellen, written during his tenure as Superintendent of Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, in late 1860. (Simpson & Berlin, pg. 4-6).

Dearest Ellen,

This is Saturday evening, and I am seated at the office table where the Academic Board has been all week examining Cadets. We have admitted in all some eighty and rejected about a dozen, for want of elementary knowledge required for admission. Tonight Saturday we close the business and on Monday Recitations begin. Still Many more will straggle in, and I expect we will settle down to about a hundred and twenty, less than we had reason to expect, but quite enough for comfort…

Poor Clay has fallen away much and I have him fed on oats at about a dollar a bushel, and hat $60 a ton but he don’t appear to appreciate it—I have not had a chance to ride him this week, but made Joe take him to exercise this afternoon. Tomorrow Sunday also I must write all the day and Same next week, but then I hope to take some relief. Our House has now the 2nd coat of plaster all save the lower hall and as the scaffolding is removed it looks very well. The house will be good in every respect, and I hope to drive the Plasterer away in ten days—the Carpenter can finish up in ten more days and the painting ought not to take more than a month, so that by Christmas it will be done. A fence has to be built—I intend if affairs move along slowly—to furnish it in part, and occupy it by January—At present we have our old mess which smacks of the same old pork Grease—The Country is very poor and nothing can be bought here but stewed beef & pork—vegetables are out of the question save Potatoes at about $5 the barrel. Professors Vallas & St. Ange still are ugly, but I don’t expect much trouble—only as the Board have divided my authority I will take less interest in details. People here now talk as though Disunion was a fixed thing—men of property say that as this constant feeling of danger of abolitionism exists they would rather try a Southern Confederacy—Louisiana would not secede but should South Carolina secede, I fear other Southern states will follow, and soon General Anarchy will prevail—I say but little, try & mind my own business, and away the issue of events.

…I feel very well indeed—and am free of cold or asthma—I notice with much pleasure what you say of the children. Affectionately, W. T. Sherman
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

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Created July 2017

Inspired by this climate, I feel very well indeed and am free of cold or asthma. I write with much pleasure what you say of the children. Affectionately, W. T. Sherman
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Created July 2017

**Source B:**
Excerpt of a letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to his brother, John, written during his tenure as Superintendent of Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, in late 1860. (Simpson & Berlin, pg. 16-17)

**Louisiana State Seminary of Learning**
**And Military Academy**
**Alexandria, Dec. 9, 1860**

Dear Brother,

I am in receipt of yours from Mansfield. I have also just seen an extract of the President's message—mails are very irregular and we have a foretaste of that confusion that will follow the disruption of our Government. Our whole Government is based on the idea that People are always good & virtuous. Consequently it has always been the case that prejudice and popular caprices could overrule and override the Law. In the North you cannot enforce the fugitive slave law—in the South you cannot punish a man or set of men who hang another on a naked suspicion of being unsound on the Slavery question, or on a Filibustering scheme—These are mere illustrations of the same fact that you cannot enforce the Laws when in the locality there is a prejudice. I have an idea that all attempts at Reconciliation will fail—that S. Carolina will secede, and that other States will follow and that a change of violence is to begin not affecting the slavery alone, but all other interests, property, representations &c.

I think I would be folly to liberate or materially modify the condition of the Slaves. Their labor & its fruits are necessary to the civilized world, and American slavery is the most modified form of compulsory labor. Any tampering with it is unkind to the negros, and causes the very natural outburst of passion of the whites—But if States secede on this pretext, it will be of course only the beginning of the end. Slavery is common to all Southern States—Let secession once take place on that point, and let these States attempt to combine they will discover that there are other interests not so easily reconciled—and then their troubles will begin. For this reason I will not stay South if Louisiana secedes from the Union—as long as she is in the Union I will presume she will remain, but the moment she cuts loose even by a Declaration, I must settle up my affairs here and start again, the fourth time in the last four years. Each time from Calamity—California, New York, Leavenworth, & now Louisiana but the recent Financial affairs make me more & more content that I am unconnected with Banking and Credit, the most disastrous of all vocations. If Louisiana Secede I will quietly settle up here, and proceed by steamboat to St. Louis. The Legislature is now in session—The Convention will be called in January, and if some great Change do not occur in the meantime, or unless I am wrongly informed this State will follow S. Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. This will disorganize the whole army, and resignations without number will occur: if a chance offer got me a place in the Inspector Genl. Dept. or in the Adjut. Generals Department—If these States slide off, better let them go—reorganize the East Middle & West, but not west of the Rocky Mountains in a Compact strong Republic. Let California Oregon (-----) & New Mexico slide into their original obscurity—if S. Carolina alone secede we might depend on her feeling the absurdity of her position and coming back humbled & subdued—but if all the Southern State Secede, would be folly to coerce. The only feasible plan would be to make a compact confederacy of states, that have common binding self-interest to hold them together. I will not send for Ellen as long as this condition of things lasts, and I would not stay here long if I had employment elsewhere that would maintain my
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

family. …but if we are on the eve of Revolution—the past will all be buried, and new men & new leaders will arise, to be swept away by succeeding tides. I (damaged) wish I were where I could watch events, but I cannot offer to give up present means of livelihood—Yrs. (Yours)

W. T. Sherman
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017
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Created July 2017

Source C:
Letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to Louisiana Governor Thomas O. Moore, written during his tenure as Superintendent of Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, in 1861. (Simpson & Berlin, pg. 41-42)

Louisiana St. Seminary of Learning & Mil. Academy
Jany. 18, 1861

Governor Thomas O. Moore
Baton Rouge—
Sir,

As I occupy a Quasi-Military position, under the Laws of the State, I deem it proper to acquaint you that I accepted such position when Louisiana was a state in the Union, and when the motto of this seminary was inscribed in marble over the Main Door, “By the liberality of the General Government of the United States, The Union Esto perpetua.”

Recent events foreshadow a great change and it becomes all men to choose. If Louisiana withdraw from the Federal Union I prefer to maintain my allegiance to the Old Constitution as long as a fragment of it survives: and my longer stay here would be wrong in every sense of the word.

In that event I beg you will send or appoint some authorized agent to take Charge of the arms and munitions of war belonging to the State, or advise me what disposition to make of them.

And furthermore as President of the Board of Supervisors I beg you to take immediate steps to relieve me as superintendent the moment the State determines to secede, for on no earthly account will I do any act, or think any thought hostile to or in defiance of the old Government of the United States. With great respect yr. obt. servant

W. T. Sherman
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017
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Created July 2017

Source D:
Excerpt of a letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to his wife, Ellen, written during his tenure as a General in the Union Army during the Civil War. (Simpson & Berlin, pg. 122-125)

Fort Corcoran July 28, [1861]
Saturday—

Dearest Ellen,

I have already written to you since my return from the Unfortunate defeat at Bulls Run—
I had previously conveyed to you the doubts that oppressed my mind on the Score of discipline.
Four large columns of poorly disciplined militia left this place—the Long bridge and
Alexandria—all concentrating at a place called Centreville 27 miles from Washington. We were
the first column to reach Centreville the Enemy abandoning all defenses en route. The first day
of our arrival our Commander Genl. Tyler advanced on Bulls Run, about 2 ½ miles distant, and
against orders engaged their Batteries. He sent back to Centreville and I advanced with our
Brigade, where we lay for half an hour, amidst descending shots killing a few of our men—The
Batteries were full a mile distant and I confess I, nor any person in my Brigade saw an enemy.
Towards evening we returned to Centreville.

That occurred on Thursday. We lay in camp till Saturday night by which the whole army
was assembled in and about Centreville. We got orders for march at 2½ Sunday morning. Our
column of 3 Brigades—Schenck, Sherman & Keyes—to move straight along a Road to Bulls Run—
…After an hour of close contest our men began to fall into confusion. 111 had been killed some
250 wounded and the Solders began to fall back in disorder—My horse was shot through the
foreleg—my knee was cut round y a ball, and another had hit my Coat collar and did not
penetrate an aid Lt. Bagley was missing, and spite of all exertions the confusion increased, and
the me would not reform—Similar confusion had already occurred among other Regiments & I
saw we were gone.

…The newspapers will tell then thousand things none of which are true. I have had no time to
read them, but I know no one now has the moral courage to tell the truth. Public opinion is a
more terrible tyrant than Napoleon—My own hope is now in the Regulars, and if I can escape
this Volunteer command I will do so, and stick by my Regular Regiment. Gen. McClellan
arrived today with Van Vliet—Stoneman, Benham—Biddle—and many others of my
acquaintance. Affecy. &c.

W.T. Sherman
Dear [Name],

I have already written to you twice my return from the unprotected defiles at Bull Run. I have pressing reasons to fear the danger that threatens my forces on the line of discipline.

From large columns of poorly disciplined militia left this place - the Long Bridge and Alexandria - we essentially at a place called Centreville 27 miles from Washington. We have the first column to reach Centreville the enemy advancing at a Jenner. Individuals to engage them at 8 a.m. One arrived and commanded one by the advance in Bull Run, about 27 miles distant, and opened on us. I engaged them at a Jenner and I arrived with one Brigade. Then we lay for half an hour. The next division was joined and I ordered them to advance. The British then took a line of rifle and I ordered the men in my Brigade back towards Centreville. That occurred on Thursday - he lay in camp the Sunday before by which the British army was assembled on and about Centreville. In fact, the Division of the Seventh - Sherman's is at 6 a.m. Monday. One column of the Brigade - Sherman's - under orders to move straight away to cross the Rappahannock.
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Created July 2017
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Created July 2017

Source E:

Camp at Chewalla June 6th 1862

Major General Grant
My Dear Sir,

I have just received your note, and am rejoiced at your conclusion to remain. For yourself you could not be quiet at home for a week, when armies were moving, and rest could not relieve your mind of the gnawing sensation that injustice has been done you. There is a power in our land, irresponsible, corrupt and malicious—"the press," which has created the intense feelings of hostility that has arrayed the two parts of our country against each other, which must be curbed and brought within the just limits of reason and law, before we can have peace in America.

War cannot cease as long as any flippant fool of an editor may stir up the passions of the multitude, arraign with impunity the motives of the most honorable, and howl on their gang of bloody hounds to hunt down any man who despises their order.

We can deal with armies who have a visible and tangible existence, but it will require tact and skill and courage to clip the wings of this public enemy, and I hope you have sufficiently felt the force of what I say to join in their just punishment before we resign our power and pass into the humble rank of citizens.

The moment you obtained a just celebrity at Donelson, by a stroke of war more rich in consequences than was the battle of Saratoga, envious rivals and malicious men set their pack of hounds at you, to pull you from the pinnacle which you had richly attained.

By patience and silence we can quiet their noise, and in due time make them feel that in defaming others, they have destroyed themselves.

Already is their power of mischief on the wane, and as soon as a few I could name, drop the dirty minions of a corrupt press, they will drop back into the abyss of infamy they deserve.

…I am with great respect Your Obed’s Serv’t—

W. T. Sherman
Maj. Gen’l.
Camp at Shenandoah June 24th

Major Genl. Grant
My Dear Sir,

I have just received your note, and am surprised at your conclusion to remain for yourself, you could not be quiet at home for a week, when armed were moving, and rest could not relieve your mind of the growing sensation that injustice has been done you.

There is a power in this land, irresponsible, corrupt and malicious, "the press," which has created the intense feeling of hostility that has arrayed the two parts of our country against each other, which must be curbed and brought within the just limits of reason and law, before we can have peace in America. War cannot cease as long as any flippant fool of an editor may stir up the passions of the multitude, arranger with impunity the motives of the most honest...
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

Already is their bound of mischief on the name, and as soon as a few I could name, drop the guilty minions of a corrupt judge they will drop back into the abyss of infamy they deserve.

I am with great respect
Your Obedient Servant
W.T. Sherman
Maj.-Gen.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

Source F:

Head Quarters, Memphis, Tennessee

August 14th 1862

Genl. G. J. Pillow, Confederate Army
Oxford, Miss.
Sir,

I have received your letter of August 2d 1862 at the hand of S. P. Walker Esq. It is not proper in War thus to communicate or pass letters, …I am willing that you should know the truth of the matter concerning which you inquire. It so happened that Genl. Curtis was here yesterday and I inquired of him the truth concerning the allegations in the first part of your letter touching the seizure and confiscation of your four hundred slaves near Helena, Arkansas, the killing one overseer, the imprisonment of three others, and generally the devastation of your entire estate in that quarter. Genl. Curtis answered, No slave was taken by armed men from your’s or any other plantation unless he had proof that such slaves had been used in war against him. No overseer had been killed or none imprisoned, and the damage to plantations was only such as will attend all armies such as marked the progress of yours and Genl A. Sidney’s Johnston’s columns a year ago in Kentucky.

I understand Gen. Curtis has given letters of manumission to negro applicants, who satisfy him they have been used as property to carry on war.

I grant no such papers, as my opinion is, it is the provision of a Court to pass on the title to all kinds of property: I simply claim that I have a right to the present labor of slaves, who are fugitive, and such labor is regulated and controlled that it may ultimately be paid for to the Master or slave, according to the case. I have no control over Genl. Curtis, who is my superior, but I take it for granted some just and uniform Rule will soon be established by our common superior to all cases alike…

Genl. Curtis expressed great surprise at your solicitude for these negroes, and at your application, that Genl. Grant and myself would have them restored to you or your agent. He says you had sold them all, or had transferred them by some instrument of writing or record to a gentleman near the plantation who is a loyal citizen of the United States.

…At present I know of none of your negroes in or near Memphis. Certainly none are in the negro pen or any cotton shed here. I am &c. Your obt. Serv.

W. T. Sherman
Maj. Gen.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

**Source G:**
Excerpt of letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to Major General George Thomas of the Union Army during his tenure as a General in the Union Army in 1864.

**Headquarters, Military Division**
**Of the Mississippi,**
**In the Field, Summerville Geo.**
**October 2, 1864 4 AM**

Maj. Gen. Thomas
Comdg. Dept. of the Cumberland,
General,

I think I have thought on the whole Field of the Future, and being now authorized to act I want all things bent to the following General plan of action for the next three months.

Out of the forces now here, and at Atlanta I propose to organize an efficient army of 60, to 65,000 men, with which I propose to destroy Macon, Augusta and it may be Savannah and Charleston, but I will always Keep open the alternates of the Mouth of Apalachicola and Mobile. By this I propose to demonstrate the vulnerability of the South and make its inhabitants feel that war & individual Ruin are synonymous terms. To pursue Hood is folly for he can twist & turn like a fox and wear out any army in pursuit. To continue to occupy long lines of Railroad simply exposes our small detachments to be picked up in detail and forces me to make countermarches to protect Lines of Communication. I know I am right in this and Shall proceed to its maturity. …The only hope of a southern success is in the remote regions difficult of access. We now have a good entering wedge, and Should drive it home. It will take some time to complete these details and I hope to hear from you fully in the meantime. We must preserve a large amount of secrecy, and I may actually change the ultimate point of arrival, but not the main object. I am &c.

W.T. Sherman
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

**Source H**
Letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to General U.S. Grant during his tenure as a General of the Union Army in 1864.

Alatoona 7:30 PM
Oct. 9th 1864

Lt. Gen. Grant
City Point

It will be a physical impossibility to protect this road now that Hood, Forrest, Wheeler and the whole batch of Devils are turned loose without home or habitation. I think Hoods movements indicate a direction to the end of the Selma and Talladega road to Blue Mountain about sixty miles south west of Rome from which he will threaten Kingston, Bridgeport and Decatur and I propose we break up the road from Chattanooga and strike out with wagons for Milledgeville Millen and Savannah.

Until we can repopulate Georgia it is useless to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people will cripple their military resources. By attempting to hold the roads we will lose a thousand men monthly and will gain no result. I can make the march and make Georgia howl. We have over 8000 cattle and 3,000,000 pounds of bread but no corn, but we can forage in the interior of the state.

W.T. Sherman
M. General
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

**Source I**
Military Map showing the marches of the United States Forces under command of Major General W.T. Sherman (Kossak, 1865)
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

**Source J**
Letter from Gen. W.T. Sherman to Major-General Oliver Howard during his tenure as a General in the Union Army in 1865

Hdqrs. Military Division
Of the Mississippi,
In the Field, Rocky Mount
February 23, 1865—10 am

Major-General Howard,
Commanding Right Wing:

General:

I have just been down to the bridge. It will take all of to-day and to-morrow to get this wing across and out. You may go ahead, but keep communication with me. I expect Kilpatrick here this p.m. and will send him well to the left. He reports that two of his foraging parties were murdered by the enemy after capture and labeled, “Death to all foragers.” Now it is clearly our war right to subsist our army on the enemy. Napoleon always did it, but could avail himself of the civil powers he found in existence to collect forage and provisions by regular impressments. We cannot do that here, and I contend if the enemy fails to defend his country we may rightfully appropriate what we want. If our foragers act under mine, yours, or other proper orders they must be protected. I have ordered Kilpatrick to select of his prisoners man for man, shoot them, and leave them by the roadside labeled, so that our enemy will see that for every man he executes he takes the life of one of his own. I want the foragers, however, to be kept within reasonable bounds for the sake of discipline. I will not protect them when they enter dwellings and commit wanton waste, such as woman’s apparel, jewelry, and such things as are not needed by our armor; but they may destroy cotton or tobacco, because these are assumed by the rebel Government to belong to it, and are used as a valuable source of revenue. Nor will I consent to our enemy taking the lives of our men on their judgment. They have lost all title to property, and can lose nothing not already forfeited; but we should punish for a departure from our orders and if the people resist our foragers I will not deem it wrong, but the Confederate army must not be supposed the champion of any people. I lay down these general rules and wish you to be governed by them. If any of your foragers are murdered, take life for life, leaving a record of each case,

I am, with respect,

W. T. Sherman,
Major-General, Commanding.

**Source K**

Headquarters, Military Division
Of the Mississippi
In the Field Feb. 24—1865

Lt. Genl. Wade Hampton
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

Comdg. Cavalry forces C.S.A

General,

It is officially reported to me that our foraging parties are murdered after capture and labelled “Death to all Foragers.” One instance of a Lieut. and seven men near Chesterville and another of twenty “near a Ravine 80 rods from the main Road” about 8 miles from Fosterville.

I have ordered a similar number of prisoners in our hands to be disposed of in like manner.

I hold about 1000 prisoners captured in various ways, and can stand it as long as you; but I hardly think these murders are committed with your Knowledge, and would suggest that you give notice to the People at large, that every life taken by them simply results in the death of one of your confederates.

Of course you cannot question my right to “forage on the country.” It is a war right as old as history. The manner of exercising it varies with circumstances, and if the civil authorities will supply y Requisitions I will forbid all foraging. But I find no civil authorities who can respond to calls for Forage or provisions, and therefore must collect directly of the People. I have no doubt this is the occasion of much misbehavior on the part of our men, but I cannot permit an enemy to judge or punish with wholesale murder.

Personally I regret the bitter feelings engendered by this war: but they were to be expected, and I simply allege that those who struck the first blow, and made war inevitable, ought not in fairness to reproach us for the natural consequences—I merely assert our War Right to Forage, and my resolve to protect my foragers to the extent of life for Life. I am with respect, Yr. obedt. servt.

W. T. Sherman
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

**Source L**

Letter from Mrs. William Moultrie Dwight to her brother, Captain Henry A. Gaillard, Adjutant of Bratton’s Brigade in 1865.

February 22, 1865

I take advantage of a small respite to commence a detailed account of the miseries of the past twenty four hours, which I fear are destined still further to be lengthened out before we are freed from this state of wretchedness and left in mercy to ourselves.

After you left on Monday, three of Wheeler’s Cavalry dined with us—polite gentlemanly fellows that we were sad at parting with, knowing that they were the last grey coats that would bless our eyes for some time. All night long, we were in a state of apprehension and dread, having heard just before dark that Sherman was within a mile and a half of the town. It was not until ten o’clock on Tuesday, however, that our long dreaded visitors made their first appearance, several scouts riding up and inquiring for our horses. Dooty (Mrs. Mary Martin) and myself walked out to meet them, and informed them that the horses had been sent away. With a very incredulous air, they rode around the house, cursing and threatening negroes, to the consternation and horror of the whole yard, several of the negroes rushing in to inform us that they had taken Dick’s hat and sworn to burn every house on the place, if the desired information was not given them. They passed on, however, without inflicting further damage. We, in the meantime, were suffering agonies of dread, but it was not many minutes before another party came dashing into the yard, headed by the most impertinent looking wretch I ever saw, who hitched his mule to the steps, and calling to his comrades to come along, rushed past two of us who had gone into the piazza to meet them, and walking into the room. They were too lawless and rude, and we did not pretend to follow or restrain them, but commissioned Mauma to do so, while we remained in a body in the hall, quietly knitting, nerving and strengthening ourselves for the worst. It would be impossible to describe their deprivation. They ran from one end of the house to the other, opening and breaking locks, emptying every trunk and box, and helping themselves to whatever they liked, singing, whistling and talking at the very top of their voices. Every now and then they would come into the hall with some impertinent question and remarks, which we tried to answer always calmly and in the house, they found an old one stored away in a trunk, which we had forgotten, and five swords. The capture of these last delighted them highly, and they afterwards brought it up as proof to Mrs. Robertson that Southern ladies “could tell lies.”

…Toward noon, an officer rode up, and seemed much incensed and mortified at the behavior of the men, and ordered them out and gave us a guard. Several officers were taken over the house to behold the work of destruction, and all expressed regret, though they were so exultant over their triumphs that they incensed us very much in their way.

…They have tried to gather from us all the information possible concerning the movements of our army, --are all perfectly exultant and declare their firm belief that Richmond and the Confederacy will soon fall, before Sherman’s host of 80,000.

…We can hear nothing from Winnsboro, excepting the burning of the steam mill, Mrs. River’s and Mrs. Lauderdale’s houses, and the greater part of Main Street. The depot and cotton were destroyed before our soldiers left. We have been told repeatedly that we ought to be grateful that our house has stood so long, and do not expect to be allowed to remain under its shelter. We look forward with dread to the coming night. God have mercy upon us!
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

…One of the soldiers spoke the truth yesterday when he said, “You, South Carolinians, will remember Billy Sherman’s march many a long day.”

…Springvale and every house on the place, excepting the negro quarters, is burnt. All of the negroes, except Peter, Simon, Charlie, and Closs, have made their escape, with loss of clothing and some provisions. Tommie came down this morning, hearing that the house was burnt, but will return to secure the horses, which were still safe from the enemy.

The story of the killing of Mr. Harrison, we hear, is false, but Mr. Brice’s and Mr. John Adger’s homes are both burned, and a good many others.
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Created July 2017

The following is a copy of a letter written by Mrs. William Moultrie Wright to her brother, Captain Henry A. Guillard, Adjutant of Bratton’s Brigade, formerly Jenkins’ Brigade.

The letter was not mailed because it could not be gotten through the lines.

February 25, 1865.

I take advantage of a small respite to commence a detailed account of the miscarriage of the past twenty-four hours, which are destined still further to be lengthened out before we are freed from this state of uncertainty and fear in mercy to ourselves.

After you left on Monday, three of Jenkins’ Cavalry dined with us — polite gentlemen — fellows that we were sad to part with, knowing that they were the last grey coats that would bless our eyes for some time. All night long, we were in a state of apprehension and dread, having heard just before noon that Sherman was within a mile and a half of the town. It was not until ten o’clock on Tuesday, however, that our long-expected visitors made their first appearance, several scouts riding up and inquiring for our horses. Deedy (Mrs. Mary Martin) and myself walked out to meet them, and informed them that the horses had been sent away. With a very incredulous air, they rode around the house, cursing and threatening negroes, to the consternation and horror of the whole yard, several of the negroes running in to inform us that they had taken Dick’s hat and worn it over every house on the place, if the desired information was not...
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Created July 2017
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Toward noon, an officer rode up, and seemed much incensed and mortified at the behavior of the men, and ordered them out and gave us a guard. Several officers were taken over the house to behold the work of destruction, and all expressed regret, though they were so exultant over their triumphs that they incensed us very much in their way.

We can hear nothing from Winnsboro, excepting the burning of the steam mill, Mrs. River’s and Mrs. Lauderdale’s houses, and the greater part of Main Street. The depot and cotton were destroyed before our soldiers left. We have been told repeatedly that we ought to be grateful that our house has stood so long, and do not expect to be allowed to remain under its shelter. We look forward with dread to the coming night. God have mercy upon us!

passed on. One of the soldiers spoke the truth yesterday when he said, “You, South Carolinians, will remember Billy Sherman’s march many a long day.” I must close for to-night now, and will
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

Springvale and every house on the place, excepting the negro quarters, is burnt. All of the negroes, except Peter, Simon, Charlie and Olie, have made their escape, with loss of clothing and some provisions. Tommie came down this morning, hearing that the house was burnt, but will return to secure the horses, which were still safe from the enemy.

The story of the killing of Mr. Harrison, we hear, is false, but Mr. Brice’s and Mr. John Adger’s homes are both burned, and a good many others. There is no telling what to believe.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Source M
Newspaper, The Newberry Herald-Extra, dated Wednesday, April 26, 1865.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

**Source N**
**Song written by a member of the 5th Iowa Cavalry about Sherman’s March to the Sea.**
*(Mack & Byers, 1865)*

Our campfires shone bright on the mountains,
That frowned on the river below;
While we stood by our guns in the morning,
And eagerly watched for the foe,
When a rider came out of the darkness
That hung over mountain and tree,
And shouted “Boys! Up and be ready…”
For Sherman will march to the sea,
And shouted “Boys! Up and be ready…”
For Sherman will march to the sea.

Then shout upon shout for bold Sherman,
Went up from each valley and glen;
And the Bugles re-echoed the music,
That rose from the lips of the men,
For we knew that the stars in our banners
More bright in their splendor would be
And that blessings from North land would greet us,
When Sherman marched down to the sea,
And that blessings from Northland would greet us
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Then forward boys forward to battle,
We marched on our wearisome way;
And we stormed the wild hills of Resacca,
God bless those who fell on that day
Then Kennesaw dark in its glory
Frowned down on the flag of the free
But the East and the West bore our standards
When Sherman marched down to the sea
But the East and the West bore our Standards
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Still onward we pressed till our banners
Swept out from Atlanta’s grim walls,
And the blood of the patriots dampened
The soil where the Traitor flag falls,
Yet we paused not to week for the fallen,
That slept by each river and tree.
But we twined them a wreath of the laurel,
When Sherman marched down to the sea,
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?
Created July 2017

But we twined them a wreath of the laurel
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Proud, proud was our army that morning,
That stood by the Cypress and Pine,
When Sherman said “Boys you are weary”
This day fair Savannah is thine.
Then sang we a song for our Chieftain,
That echoed o’er river and lea.
And the stars on our Banners shone brighter,
When Sherman marched down to the sea,
And the stars on our Banners shone brighter,
When Sherman marched down to the sea.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017
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Questions for Source Posters

Source A
1. What type of letter is this? Who is Gen. Sherman writing to?
2. What things do you learn about General Sherman from reading this letter?
3. What impression do you get of General Sherman as a man, from reading this letter?

Source B
1. What things do you learn about Gen. Sherman from reading this letter?
2. How does Sherman feel about the issues between the North and the South?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man, from reading this letter?

Source C
1. What is the purpose of this letter?
2. Why does Sherman feel that he needs to leave Louisiana?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man, from reading this letter?

Source D
1. What is Gen. Sherman describing to Ellen in this letter?
2. How does Sherman feel about the media? What does he believe about the media?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man, from reading this letter?

Source E
1. Who is this letter written to? Why is that important?
2. What is the dangerous power Sherman mentions in the letter and why is it so dangerous?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source F
1. What issue is Gen. Sherman discussing in this letter with Gen. Pillow?
2. How does Sherman feel about Gen. Pillows slaves?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source G
1. What is Gen. Sherman discussing in this letter to Gen. Thomas?
2. What is Gen. Sherman’s plan?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source H
1. What plan is Gen. Sherman sharing with General Grant?
2. What are Sherman’s plans for Georgia?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source I
1. What does this map show? What happened along this trail?
2. Why did Gen. Sherman march to these particular cities labeled on the map?
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source J
1. What problem is Sherman addressing with Gen. Howard?
2. How does Sherman propose to deal with this problem?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source K
1. Who is General Wade Hampton and what issue does Gen. Sherman have with him?
2. How does Sherman suggest to Gen. Hampton that they deal with this problem?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source L
1. Describe Mrs. Dwight’s situation in this letter. What event is she writing about?
2. How do you feel about what is happening to Mrs. Dwight in her home?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source M
1. What is this article about?
2. How does the death of Lincoln affect Gen. Sherman’s feelings about the war?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?

Source N
1. What is this song about? Who is its author?
2. How does the author of this song feel about Sherman and his accomplishments?
3. What impression do you get of Gen. Sherman as a man from reading this letter?
4.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

**Scaffolding the Historical Thinking Skill**

Scaffolding can take many forms in this DBQ, and some are already included. First, the DBQ is designed to be done after the study of the Civil War and Sherman’s March to the Sea—total war strategy. Students should be able to connect their prior knowledge as they answer the questions about each of the documents.

Graphic organizers are a great way for students to structure their information as they answer questions and prepare their ideas and beliefs about Sherman’s intentions. Graphic organizers can be used to prepare debate material and arrange the answers to the DBQ questions.

After the DBQ is introduced, the teacher should model the process of reading and analyzing the text in order to answer the questions. Model how to dig deeper into the text to read between the lines into what the author is saying. Perform a close read on one or more texts to extract information. Several of the documents can be read in class together as a read-aloud activity. Students can read small passages that can be broken down and analyzed as a class before the students move on to the DBQ activities.

Finally, groups can be pre-arranged before students begin the DBQ activity. Intentionally grouping students can help lower level readers with reading and comprehension if higher level students read the information aloud in their small groups. All students can help each other by sharing their ideas and interpretations of materials. Intentional groups, with specific jobs in the groups, will also keep students focused. Students can be readers, writers, time managers, etc.
Was General William T. Sherman’s intent before and during the Civil War to preserve the nation or to destroy the South?

Created July 2017

Resources:
University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library.


University of Notre Dame Archives

Library of Congress Collection of William T. Sherman Papers 1759-1897

Library of Congress Collection of William T. Sherman Papers 1759-1897

University of Notre Dame Archives

University of Notre Dame Archives


Simpson, B. D., & Berlin, J. V. (Eds.). (1999). Sherman's Selected Correspondence of Civil War:
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Created July 2017

