NORTH vs. SOUTH in Delaware
# CHAPTER 1 - Mapping the Civil War

- United States in 1850  
- United States in 1861  
- Delaware in 1860

# CHAPTER 2 - Tough Choices

- John Tillman  
- Richard Henry Webb  
- Letters of Richard Henry Webb  
- Telegraph to the Family of Richard Henry Webb

# CHAPTER 3 - Fort Delaware

- Fort Delaware  
- The Wailings at Fort Delaware  
- Review Questions  
- Fort Delaware cont.

# CHAPTER 4 - After the War: Reconstruction

- Important Facts

# Appendix

- Letter from Richard Henry Webb to his Father  
- Letter from Richard Henry Webb to his Mother  
- Telegraph to T. D. Webb Esq.
A Civil War is a war between citizens of the same country.

**What?** American Civil War  
**Where?** United States  
**When?** April 12, 1861 – May 1865

*In 1861 Delaware found itself caught in the middle of the fight over slavery.* The northern states had already outlawed slavery and now urged the government to pass a federal law making it illegal throughout the United States. The southern states, whose farmers used *enslaved* labor opposed such a law and ultimately decided to *secede* from the United States. They formed a new country, the Confederate States of America, where slavery would remain legal. When the Confederates attacked a Union fort in South Carolina it was clear the debate over slavery would only be solved by war.

*Take a close look at the maps (see US 1861 on the next page) and answer the following questions.*

Why was Delaware caught in the middle?
What is the title of each map?
Based on the titles, which map will be most helpful to our study of the Civil War?

What does the green line stand for on the United States in 1850 map? What big “compromise” happened in 1850? What did it mean?

What do you think the different colors stand for?

Find Delaware. On the 1861 map, why do you think Delaware and four other states are a different color than the states at the top or bottom?

Was Delaware a slave state or a free state?

Slavery began in Delaware from its start as a colony in 1638 and was still legal in the state during the Civil War. It would make sense that Delaware would join the other slave states in the Confederacy. Right? Maybe not.
And that decided it. Even though Delaware was a slave state and would stay one throughout the war, it would fight against slavery with the North and remain part of the United States.
Once the decision was made to stay in the Union, Delaware, its citizens, and soldiers were challenged to make tough choices to change or preserve the country and state. Delawareans had to choose to become a soldier in the Union army or leave the state and join the Confederacy, sometimes pitting brother against brother. Businesses had to choose whether to sell to Confederate sympathizers. Many factories had to decide if they would produce goods only for the Union army.

John Tillman was born enslaved in Delaware and self-emancipated on the Underground Railroad. Later, he made the decision to join a regiment and fight during the Civil War. Regiments were segregated and Delaware did not authorize a United States “Colored” Troop at this time but nearly a thousand African American men from Delaware joined units in other states and valiantly served the Union cause.

In his book, *Biographical Sketch of the Life and Travels of John W. Tillman*, Tillman reflects: “In 1863, there was a call for colored soldiers to go and fight for their country and liberty, so I shouldered my musket with the rest for to fight for the same cause, and it made me glad when the time came for me to help to save the country and get my equal liberty...”

What does the above quote tell you about Tillman? How did he feel about the “call for colored soldiers”?

Besides the dangers of war, as a self-emancipator, what other dangers would Tillman face fighting during the Civil War?

This photograph of Tillman was used in his reminiscences in 1896. What is Tillman wearing?

What does Tillman’s choice of outfit tell you about him? How he regards his service as a soldier?

To read more about John Tillman’s experience see *The Underground Railroad in Delaware*. 
Richard Henry Webb is another Delawarean who had to make a hard choice during the Civil War. Webb was born in Wilmington to a prominent Quaker family.

What do you know about Quakers?

Quakers believe that there is something of God in everybody and that each human being is of unique worth. This is why Quakers value all people equally and oppose anything that may harm or threaten them, including war.

Their belief in equality meant that many Quakers opposed slavery. But slavery was still legal in many states, so helping freedom seekers was illegal. Still, there were Quakers who felt the injustice of slavery outweighed breaking the law and worked on the Underground Railroad. Some were even arrested. Thomas Garrett, a stationmaster on the Underground Railroad, was found guilty in 1848 of helping a family of freedom seekers escape.

Other Quakers saw the Underground Railroad as a crime, disrupting the peace, and thereby going against Quaker values.

In September 1862, Richard Henry Webb joined the Fourth Regiment Delaware Volunteer Infantry as a second lieutenant.

Why do you think Webb chose to enlist?

Based on what you know about their beliefs and views of the Underground Railroad, why do you think some Quakers would be against Webb’s decision?
After nearly a month in Wilmington, Webb was stationed at Camp Tom Casey overseeing the brigade's ambulance corp. In 1863 he was made provost marshal for Camp Gilpin, Gloucester, Virginia, in charge of caring for the “contrabands,” the former enslaved who joined the camp. He was promoted to first lieutenant in September of the same year.

The Delaware Fourth Regiment first saw combat on June 2, 1864. Webb was killed in battle and buried on the battlefield. His friends drew a map to later find the gravesite and in 1865, the Webb family had Richard’s body returned to Wilmington and buried in Wilmington & Brandywine Cemetery.

We know Richard Henry Webb’s story from the letters, objects, and photographs that belonged to Webb and his family.

Use THIS analyzing a document worksheet to get to know the following letters and telegram.
Read the following letter written by Webb. Use the attached document analysis worksheet to get to know the letter. Full letter and transcription in the Appendix.

**How do you think Webb feels about his choice to enlist?**

**What are some of the reasons why Webb and his fellow soldiers were unhappy with the leadership of his regiment?**

**Why would Webb be interested in joining a Black Regiment?**

Read the following letter written by Webb. Use the attached document analysis worksheet to get to know the letter. Full letter and transcription in the Appendix.

**How is this letter like the previous letter? How is it different?**

**Does Webb write differently depending on who he is writing to?**

**North vs. South in Delaware**
You can read the telegram sent to inform the Webb family that their sons’ remains were identified and on their way back to Wilmington. Full telegram and transcription in the Appendix.

Why would Webb’s family send someone to bring him back to Delaware?

Tillman and Webb are two examples of Delawareans who agreed with Delaware’s decision to fight for the Union, but some Delawareans sided with the Confederacy.

James Dale from Bridgeville, Delaware was a student at West Point Military Academy when war broke out. Military students were asked to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States Army, but Dale refused. Instead, Dale made the choice to join the Confederate Army. In a letter to Confederate president Jefferson Davis, Dale requests a commission in the army of the Confederate States of America, stating, “I am a Delawarean and a true Southern man.” He describes leaving West Point in secret and travelling south through Union Army lines, heading straight to Virginia, fearing for his father’s life if he stopped to visit him in Delaware. Dale joined Col. Stonewall Jackson’s 5th Virginia Infantry and was killed at the Battle of Kernstown in 1862. Like Webb, Dale was buried in Virginia but his family later brought him back to Delaware.

Why does Dale have to travel South in secret?

Why would his father’s life be in danger?
During the Civil War, Fort Delaware, on Pea Patch Island in Delaware City, housed roughly 33,000 prisoners-of-war, mainly Confederate soldiers. The prisoners had few resources and little contact with the outside world.

Julia Jefferson of New Castle and her friends wanted Delaware to support the Confederacy. When that did not happen, they decided they would do what they could to support the Confederate cause. After receiving a pass from the post commandant, they provided food, clothing, tobacco and mail to Confederate soldiers at Fort Delaware. The prisoners sent letters of thanks and requests for help and even sent her a copy of a song they wrote. How can a song be used as a primary source?

What can music tell us about the people who made and listened to it?
Oh! Here we are confined at Fort Delaware
With nothing to drink but a little Lager there
Infested by vermin as much as we can bear
Oh! Jeff can you help us get away from here?

Chorus:
"Home sweet home" the place I ought to be
Home dearest home way down in Tennessee
Where the ash and the oak and the bonnie willow tree
Are all growing green way down in Tennessee.

The island itself will do well enough:
But the flat-footed dutch are filthy and rough
Oh take us away from the vandal clan
Down in "Dixie" among gentleman

Spoiled beef and bad soup is our daily fare
And to complain is more than anyone dare
They will buck us and gag us and cast us in a cell
There to bear the anguish and tortures of hell

The den[?] for our eating is anything but clean
The filth upon the tables is plainly to be seen
The smell of putrifaction rises in the air
To fill out the bill of our daily fare

The sick are well treated the southern Doctors say
And the losses by death scarcely[?] four per day
Its [ ] mixture for scurvy and smallpox
And every other escape from Pandora's box.
Oh! Look at the grave-yard on the Jersey shore
At the hundreds and thousands who'll return no more
Oh! Could they come back again to testify
Against the wicked devils; who lived to see them die

Our kindness to prisoners you cannot deny
We have the proof at hand upon which you may rely
Its no dutch falsehood nor a Yankee trick
But from Southern surgeons who daily see the sick

Our chaplain whose bosom is filled with heavenly joys
Asked leave to pray and preach to Southern boys
Oh! No says the General you [?] are not the man
You [?] are a southern rebel the vilest of your clan

Oh! Speak out young soldiers and let your country hear
All about your treatment at Fort Delaware
How they worked you in their wagons when weary and sad
With only half rations, when plenty they had

The barracks were crowded to an overflow
Without a single comfort on the soldiers to bestow
Oh! There they stood shivering in hopeless despair
With insufficient diet or clothing to wear

The mother stood weeping in sorrow of woe
Ringing her tears with the waters that flow
Her son was expiring at Fort Delaware
Which could have been avoided with prudence and care;

Oh! Take off[f] my fetters and let me be free
To roam o'er the mountains of old Tennessee
To bathe in her waters and breathe her balmy air
And look on her daughters so lovely and fair

Then cheer up brave boys our country shall be free
Our battles will be fought by Gen Bragg and Lee
The Yankee's will fly with trembling and fear
[line missing]—end of page
What does the song tell you about life as a prisoner at Fort Delaware? Cite specific examples from the song.

Who are the “flat-footed Dutch” and what do the Confederate prisoners think of them? Why?

Who is the “Jeff” referred to in the song?

Compare the description of life at Fort Delaware from the song to the above image of Confederate officers at Fort Delaware. How do you think their experiences were different? How were they the same? Do you think an officers’ life was as hard as the soldiers who wrote the song?
Baldwin Coolidge served as a guard at Ft. Delaware during the war. He kept a sketchbook of his time there. *Examine the sketches on the following pages.*

What do the image and sketches tell us about life at Fort Delaware during the Civil War?

How does Coolidge feel about the Confederate prisoners? How do you know?
After four long, bloody years the Civil War came to end when Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered in 1865. More than 600,000 men died; only one man returned home for every four men who went to war. Almost 12,000, Delawareans fought for the Union, and about 2,100 were killed, wounded, or reported missing. Although the exact number is unknown, it is estimated that around 2,000 Delawareans fought for the Confederacy.

Even though Delaware was a slave state, joining the Union meant that Delaware and its citizens were not subjected to Reconstruction.
CHAPTER 4
After the War: Reconstruction

Emancipation Proclamation – issued by President Lincoln in January 1863. Freed enslaved populations in the rebellious Confederate states. Because Delaware sided with the Union, the enslaved population in Delaware was not freed by the proclamation. Delaware continued the practice of enslavement for two years after the Emancipation Proclamation (until the end of the Civil War).

The Reconstruction Amendments – the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the US Constitution adopted between 1865 and 1870 with the intention of guaranteeing freedom to former slaves and to establish and prevent discrimination in certain civil rights to former slaves and all citizens of the United States.

- 13th Amendment (1865) – abolished slavery
- 14th Amendment (1868) – granted citizenship rights and equal protections under the law
- 15th Amendment (1870) - prohibits discrimination in voting rights of citizens based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude"

Delaware refused to ratify all three of the amendments until 1901.

Black Codes – During Reconstruction many state and local governments in the Southern states enacted laws that enforced racial segregation. These codes are often referred to as Jim Crow laws. Delaware had many of these laws well into the late 1960s.

- Separate schools, hospitals, neighborhoods for whites and African Americans
- Hotel, restaurant, theater owners were allowed to refuse service to African Americans
- Interracial marriage was prohibited

Agrarian: composed of or relating to farmers; rural; agricultural
border state: a slave state bordering on a free state before the Civil War
emancipate: to free from bondage
enslaved: to cause to be a slave or to be in a condition of bondage
freedom seeker: an enslaved person attempting to escape bondage
primary sources: documents, images or artifacts that provide a firsthand account of a specific time period
self-emancipate: to set oneself free; a term often used to refer to the action of enslaved people seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad
Underground Railroad: a system of cooperation among active antislavery people in the U.S. before 1863 by which freedom seekers were secretly helped to reach the North or Canada
Secede - to withdraw from or leave a group or a political union.
US Colored Troops – regiments or military units in the United States Army composed primarily of African-American soldiers during the Civil War
Letter from Richard Henry Webb to his father:

Transcription to follow

Dear Father,

I received your letter, with $16. enclosed, this afternoon for which accept my thanks.

The men are very much dissatisfied, their families are suffering at home for the necessities of life and they have no money to send them and the bounty which was promised them by the city when they left has not been paid them; could you please see either C. E. Harte or S. E. Hafels about the bounty and see if it is intended for the men to get it. It is a shame to offer a bounty to start off a draft and then when the state is safe to turn around and refuse to come up with their promise it makes me ashamed of the city which I have been born to say that I am from. On last Monday there was every prospect of a mutiny amongst some of the companies but everything was quieted when the men saw that they would be making the matter worse for themselves and maybe lose their pay. Fortunately our company kept itself out of the scrape because the men pay that we never promised them anything but what they got.

I was in Yorktown on Monday and paid a visit to the old Rebel batteries.
If you see about 20 Officers from the 1st Del. home some day, don't look surprised. We are going to hold out for a while longer for the good of the country but if it keeps on the way it has since we have been at this post why we are going to give it a chance and run the risk of being considered insufficient. Our conscience will clear us for we know that it will be the fault of an insufficient Govt.

When I was in the Army Corps at Alexandria I bought a cavalry saber which will be in Wilmington pretty soon, take good care of it and have it away. I don't want you to think that if I come home from this Regt. that my war business is over, I intend to see the war through if I live, for I think that I may stand a good chance if the black Regts. only will form.

The Regt. is generally exempt of fever but now some jaundice. Please do not show this letter outside of the family as I have trodden on forbidden ground in speaking of my superior, but it is the truth. I would be very well satisfied but for those two things.

I am well.

Respectfully,

Richard H. Wells.
Camp Gilpin, Jan. 21st 1863

Dear Father:

I rec'd your letter with $10 enclosed, this afternoon for which accept my thanks.

The men are very much dissatisfied, their families are suffering at home for the necessaries of life and they have no money to send them, and the bounty which was promised them by the City when they left has not been paid them; could you please see either E. C. Stotsanberg or L. E. Wales about the bounty and see if it is intended for the men to get it. It is a shame to offer a bounty to stave off a draft and then when the state is safe to turn around and refuse to come up with their promise, it makes me ashamed of the city which I have been proud to say that I am from. On last Monday there was every prospect of a mutiny amongst some of the companies but everything was quieted when the men saw that they would be making the matter worse for themselves and maybe lose their pay. Fortunately our company kept itself out of the scrape because the men say that we never promised them anything but what they got.

I was in Yorktown on Monday and paid a visit to the old Rebel batteries on the sight, where Gen. M. S. Clellan shelled them out one morning from an earth work which he threw up at night. A great many trees had been pierced by shot. The battery which is stationed here had shell practice yesterday afternoon, it was a fine sight to see shells bursting in the air but would have shown much better at night.
I wish they would commence forming black regiments and I could get a position in one of them, I would leave this affair for if there ever was a Regt. & Col. played out her they are. Col. drunk and interfering with company business etc. If you see about 20 officers from the 4th Del. home some day don't look surprised. We are going to hold out for a while longer for the good of the country but if it keeps on the way it has since we have been at this post why we are going to give up & leave and run the risk of being considered inefficient. Our consciences will clear us for we know that it will be the fault of an inefficient Col.

When I was in the Amb. Corps at Alexandria I bought a Cavalry sabre which will be in Wilmington pretty soon, take good care of it and put it away. I don't want you to think that if I come home from this Regt. that my war business is over. I intend to see the war through if I live; for I think that I may stand a good chance if the black Regts. only will be form.

Regt. is generally well except a few severe cases of Typhoid Fever & some jaundice.

Please do not show this letter outside of the family as I have trodden on forbidden ground in speaking of my superiors, but it is the truth.

I would be very well satisfied but for those two things.

I am well.

Respectfully

/s/ R. H. Webb
Fairfax Station Va - May 23rd 1864

Dear Mother,

All is now bustle and confusion here for this afternoon at 4 o'clock we received marching orders.

We are ordered to report at a point on the Rappahannock called, I think, Fort Royal - It is on the left of Grant's line.

I have turned in all my stores both subsistence & Quartermaster. But I think in all probability I will have to resume the duties of Commissary next month, as the Colonel still keeps the Brigade 2 M. and told him to keep the horses as it looks as if he intends to use them again.

We all fell very lively and think ourselves fortunate to be...
Fairfax Station, Va. May 23, 1864

Dear Mother:

All is now bustle and confusion here for this afternoon at 4 O'clock we received marching orders.

We are ordered to report at a place on the Rappahannock called, I think, Port Royal. It is on the left of Grant's line.

I have turned in all my stores both subsistence and Quartermaster. But I think in all probability I will have to resume the duties of Commissary next month, as the Colonel still keeps the Brigade Q. M. and told him to keep the horses so it looks as if he intends to use them again.

We all feel very lively and think ourselves fortunate to be kept safe this long and then to have a chance in what I think are the last battles of the Rebellion.

I have packed all superfluous articles in my valises which will soon reach you by Express.

I have with me, some paper and envelopes, pen, inkstand, etc. 2 under shirts, 2 over shirts, 3 pair stockings, 2 pair drawers, and other little articles usefull.

The clothes which you will find in the valise are rather dirty, but you can remedy that—the sheet which is packed around my dress coat and vest is a sanitary article, better keep it for a curiosity.

Did I leave my bible at home, I have looked for it high and low and cannot find it.

We are expecting the train every minute so I will have to close.

My love to all.

Affectionately

Richd. H. Webb

P.S. We are now one mile from the above place and actually out of doors had the sky for a ceiling last night, we left Fairfax at 2 and arrived here at 3 last night.

Tell Father to put those papers which are done up with red tape, in the safe, they may be of some advantage if any other papers are ever returned.

Webb
Telegraph to T. D. Webb Esq:

Transcription to follow
Copy of telegram to T. D. Webb, Esq.

Dated-- Fort Monroe, June 4, 1865

To: Thos. D. Webb, Esq.

Edwd Bringhamst and Company arrived here this morning with the
Remains of R. H. Webb, he is satisfactorily identified. They will
arrive in Wilmington tomorrow afternoon.

Wm. L. James
Col. CGNT
Dear brother,

I read your letter with the utmost attention and I am very much aware of the duties and responsibilities of our positions and the needs of the community. The men are very much aware of their situation and are doing everything in their power to help those in need. I am doing everything in my power to assist them, and I am very proud of the efforts of our fellow soldiers.

Yours truly,

[Signature]