

Lesson Plan #13 for *Genius of Freedom: Henry Highland Garnet & “A Copperhead Victory”* by Charlene Weigel

Grade Level: Middle or high school

Topics: Henry Highland Garnet, Reconstruction, Abolition movements, Black conventions

Pennsylvania History Standards: 8.1.6 B, 8.1.9 B, 8.3.9 A, 8.3.9 B, 8.3.9 D

Pennsylvania Core Standards: 8.5.6-8 A, 8.5.9-10 A, 8.5.11-12 A, 8.5.6-8 B, 8.5.9-10 B, 8.5.11-12 B, 8.5.6-8 C, 8.5.9-10 C, 8.5.11-12 C, 8.5.6-8 D, 8.5.9-10 D, 8.5.11-12 D

***African American History*, Prentice Hall textbook:** page 287

Overview: Pennsylvania high school students studying the Civil War readily grasp a highly summarized narrative of Union and Confederate interests, but they have tendency toward over-simplifying along the geographic lines of “North” and “South.” Also, although familiar with black activists such as Frederick Douglass, they may view the movements for abolition, suffrage and civil rights as led by Northern whites, not realizing that a broader black community was vibrantly, and bravely, taking ownership. By thinking critically about the primary source “A Copperhead Victory” (*The Liberator*, October 21, 1864), students gain a deeper understanding of the broad mix of views and opinions in the North, and the resultant uncertainty of outcomes at the time. Students will examine and analyze the article in context of the major historical events and political movements to understand the deep and divisive political and racial forces at work in the North. Students will also compare the forms that activism, and reaction to that activism, took in the 1860s and today.

Materials:

Image of Henry Highland Garnet [HHG photo](#)

From the Exhibit: “A Copperhead Victory,” *The Liberator*, October 21, 1864.

Smartboard/Overhead projector

“A Copperhead Victory” *Primary Source Analysis Worksheet*

Teacher Background:

- Additional context on the Copperheads and their motivations/objectives Weber, Jennifer L. "Lincoln's Critics: The Copperheads." *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 32.1 (2011): 33-47. *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*. Web. 24 Mar. 2015. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.2629860.0032.105>.
- Full text of article excerpted in Primary Source Article Analysis Sheet (copy of article attached to lesson plan): Fantz, Ashely. "Array of world leaders joins 3.7 million in France to defy terrorism." *CNN* 12 Jan. 2015:

n. pag. CNN. Web. 24 Mar. 2015.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/01/11/world/charlie-hebdo-paris-march/>

- Background on Northern broader dissent to Union during Civil War and further information on Peace Democrats and Copperheads: Rooney, Rachel, and Margaret Storey. "Treason or Loyal Opposition? The Copperheads and Dissent during the Civil War." *Digital Collections for the Classroom*. The Newberry, 3 May 2014. Web. 24 Mar. 2015. <http://dcc.newberry.org/collections/copperheads-and-dissent-during-the-civil-war>.

Procedure:

1. Project image of Henry Highland Garnet and explain that, though born into slavery, he became a well-known abolitionist, orator, and clergyman. In 1843 he gave a speech entitled, "A Call to Rebellion," that called for enslaved people to rise up, even violently, against their masters. This led to his being viewed as a radical, even by other abolitionists. Also indicate that Colored Conventions had been taking place since 1830 when the first one was held in Philadelphia at Mother Bethel Church and organized by pastor Richard Allen.

2. Distribute copies of the article to students. Pair them up to complete the *Primary Source Analysis* worksheet (teacher answer key also provided).

3. Using a transparency or Smartboard image, have student groups share their answers and correct any misconceptions or mistakes. An answer key is provided to help guide this discussion.

4. Extensions -

- Broader analysis of the Peace Democrat/Copperhead agenda, exploring the broad variations within opposition to the Republican Party policy (primary source: Letter from Gideon Allen to Annie Cox) <http://dcc.newberry.org/collections/copperheads-and-dissent-during-the-civil-war>
- Image analysis from the National Convention of Colored Men (primary source: <http://blackhistory.harpweek.com/7Illustrations/Reconstruction/NatColoredConvBI.htm>)

OCTOBER 21.

A COPPERHEAD VICTORY.

The evening before the assembling of the colored Convention in this city, several of its members had arrived, and the Rev. H. H. Garnet, and two or three others had taken quarters at the St. Charles Hotel. In the fore part of the evening, a train came in, and Mr. Garnet stepped into the depot to see if any of his friends had arrived. On his return, just before entering the door of the Hotel, he was set upon by three or four rowdies, and one of them who is well known struck him a violent blow on the side of his face, and knocked him down; not a word having been spoken or the slightest provocation given for the assault. Mr. Garnet is a cripple, and walks with difficulty. Some years ago, he was presented with a valuable gold-headed cane by his fellow-citizens of New York, on which his name and the occasion of its presentation were engraved. They stole his cane from him, and took from his hat papers prepared to present to the Convention. The papers were afterwards found floating in the Canal, and recovered. The cane was kept as a trophy of victory of three or four double-fisted rowdies over one poor lame "nigger." A night or two after this, another colored man who came to attend the Convention was violently assaulted by another copperhead rowdy, but we did not learn that he captured any trophy to show his master as an evidence of his prowess. Both of these cases are in the hands of our police, and before they get through with the criminal prosecutions and others in the Supreme Court, we trust they will find that assaulting colored men in Syracuse is not a very profitable business.

These assaults, particularly the one on Mr. Garnet on Monday evening, produced considerable excitement among the delegates that had arrived in our city, and a proposition to go to some other place to hold their convention was urged by Mr. Garnet and others, notwithstanding the assurances given them by our efficient Mayor and chief of police that they should be protected in their persons and in all their rights the same as other men. An adjournment to any other place, under these circumstances, would have been an injury to the character of the city, not deserved by it, and the worst policy possible for them to pursue as colored men; as it would virtually invite such treatment in other places. But better counsels prevailed, and their convention was held with no further demonstrations of violence or disturbance other than an occasional satanic scowl as colored men passed about the streets.—*Syracuse State League*

Primary Source Analysis Worksheet
"A Copperhead Victory," *The Liberator*, October 21, 1864
Student Version

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1. Working with a partner, identify the key elements of the events as depicted in the article (the narrative):

2. Review the sentence, "The cane was kept as a trophy of victory of three or four double-fisted rowdies over one poor, lame 'nigger.'" Considering this sentence in context of the overall article and the journalist's use of quotation marks, what is the journalist saying? Is this sentence a factual, objective depiction of the event? What might you infer about the leaning of *The Liberator* in regard to black civil rights from this sentence?

3. A *stakeholder* is a person or a group with an interest or concern in the outcome of an event or situation. Complete the following chart, thinking about the various stakeholders in the event as depicted in the article.

	Stakeholder	Desired outcome in the event (their “stake”)	Evidence from article to support your analysis of desired outcome
1	Mr. Garnet and attendees at the Convention		
2	Copperhead attackers		
3	The Mayor and Police		
4	The article’s author		

4. Reading closely, what clues do you find in the article about who the Copperheads were? What evidence do you see in the article to support your analysis?

5. What does the journalist say Mr. Garnet and the Convention delegates should do in response to the assaults (second paragraph of article)? Consider the following excerpt from a *CNN* article on the response to the killings of the journalists at the French publication *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2105. What similarities and differences can you identify between the response to the assault on Mr. Garnet and the killings at the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters?

Array of world leaders joins 3.7 million in France to defy terrorism

By [Ashley Fantz](#), CNN

Updated 8:24 AM ET, Mon January 12, 2015



(CNN) At least 3.7 million people, including world leaders, marched in anti-terrorism rallies in Paris and elsewhere in France on Sunday, French officials said, calling the massive gathering in the nation's capital the largest in France's history.

The day was emotional and peaceful, a gesture of unity just days after Islamic extremists slaughtered 17 people.

World leaders joined French President Francois Hollande, including British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. The day also brought together an unlikely duo at the rally: Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The rally began with a march through Paris streets at 3 p.m., but a massive group of people stayed into the night. Among them was Dalil Boubakeur, the rector of the Great Mosque of Paris and president of the French Council of the Muslim Faith.

One man in the crowd said the French people must not "give in to fear." Terrorists, he said, "will not win."

Others carried signs that echoed the now-famous phrase that honored slain journalists at the magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, "Je suis Charlie."

6. What questions do you have about the event or information described in the article?

Primary Source Analysis Worksheet
"A Copperhead Victory," *The Liberator*, October 21, 1864
Teacher Answer Key

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1. Working with a partner, identify the key elements of the events as depicted in the article (the narrative):

Teacher Notes: Students will summarize the article in different ways. Some of the key components (with additional teacher context supplied parenthetically) should include:

- Rev. H. H. (Henry Highland) Garnet, a leader of the “colored Convention” (full title: National Convention of Colored Citizens of the United States), met in Syracuse (the Syracuse National Convention of Colored Men) in October, 1864.
 - Garnet used a cane due to a difficulty walking.
 - While awaiting the arrival of other delegates at the train station, Rev. Garnet was violently attacked by three or four men. They stole his cane as a trophy of the attack, a cane that had been presented to him in honor by other citizens of NY. Given the title of the article and the later use of the term “copperhead rowdy,” the reader can assume these men were Copperheads.
 - They stole his papers that contained the notes of a speech he was to deliver at the Convention, throwing them into a canal. The notes were later retrieved.
 - Another man attending the Convention was attacked a few days later.
 - The police investigated.
 - Several attendees wanted to relocate the convention to another city, including Mr. Garnet.
 - The police and mayor promised to ensure the safety of the attendees.
2. Review the sentence, “The cane was kept as a trophy of victory of three or four double-fisted rowdies over one poor, lame ‘nigger.’” Considering this sentence in context of the overall article and the journalist’s use of quotation marks, what is the journalist suggesting? Is this sentence a factual, objective depiction of the event? What might you infer about leaning of *The Liberator* in regard to black civil rights from this sentence?

Teacher Notes: The journalist is employing sarcasm to emphasize the power imbalance between the attackers and the victim. By highlighting the imbalance and putting the word “nigger” in quotation marks, the journalist is signaling his or her disdain for use of that term to describe a person of color.

3. A *stakeholder* is a person or a group with an interest or concern in the outcome of an event or situation. Complete the following chart, thinking about the various stakeholders in the event as depicted in the article.

	Stakeholder	Desired outcome in the event (their "stake")	Evidence from article to support your analysis of desired outcome
1	Mr. Garnet and attendees at the Convention	To attend a convention for people of color	"... assembling of the colored Convention" "...papers prepared to present at the Convention"
2	Copperhead attackers	To intimidate the men attending the convention	"violent blow... without the slightest provocation..." "... cane kept as a trophy of victory..." "... assaulting colored men in Syracuse..."
3	The Mayor and Police	To pursue the perpetrators of the crime and to provide equal protection to all men in Syracuse. To maintain law and order in their city.	"... before they get through with the criminal prosecutions and others in the Supreme Court, we trust they will find that assaulting colored men in Syracuse is not a very profitable business." "An adjournment to any other place, under these circumstances, would have been an injury to the character of the city..."
4	The article's author	To position the Copperhead assaulters as criminals, thugs and terrorists. To show editorial censure of the actions of the Copperheads. To encourage the men in the Convention to not bow down to terrorism.	"... victory of three or four double-fisted rowdies over one poor lame 'nigger.'" " "... adjournment to any other place, under these circumstances, would have been an injury to the character of the city, not deserved by it, and the worst policy possible for them to pursue as colored men; as it would virtually invite such treatment in other places."

4. Reading closely, what clues do you find in the article about who the Copperheads were? What evidence do you see in the article to support your analysis?

Teacher Notes: The primary source documents a violent, terrorist act by Copperheads. Depending on the time available for the lesson, there is an opportunity to explore the broader concept of the voice of dissent. Copperheads were alternatively referred to as Peace Democrats (the Northern branch of the Democrat Party). These opponents to Lincoln's strategy based their opposition on economic, racial and political differences with the Republican Party policies. Not all Peace Democrats advocated the violence exhibited by the Copperheads against Reverend Henry Highland Garnet.

Analysis of the article reveals the Copperheads were opposed to the participants in the Convention. By inference, students can conclude that they were opposed to black men organizing to advance the standing of blacks in America (no specifics about the agenda of the Convention itself are included in the article). Evidence includes:

- *Targeting a prominent figure at the Convention for violence*
- *Stealing and discarding the text of a speech to be delivered at the Convention*
- *Retention of the memorial cane that honored Reverend Garnet*
- *Assault on a second member of the Convention*

5. What does the journalist say Mr. Garnet and the Convention delegates should do in response to the assaults (second paragraph of article)? Consider the following excerpt from a *CNN* article on the response to the killings of the journalists at the French publication *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015. What similarities and differences can you identify the response to the assault on Mr. Garnet and the killings at the *Charlie Ebd*o headquarters?

Teacher Notes: Both articles highlight a refusal to be intimidated in the face of terroristic actions. "A Copperhead Victory" article calls for the object of terrorism to refuse to alter course (e.g., to move the convention to a different city) in the face of terrorism. The government (Mayor and police) pledge support for the safety of the attendees. The CNN article shows a broad response across groups to act together in defiance of terrorism. Government officials as well as those who were not directly targeted (whites in Syracuse and the broader population in France) become actively involved in the opposition to the terrorists.

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By [Ashley Fantz](#), CNN

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World leaders joined French President Francois Hollande, including British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. The day also brought together an unlikely duo at the rally: Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The rally began with a march through Paris streets at 3 p.m., but a massive group of people stayed into the night. Among them was Dalil Boubakeur, the rector of the Great Mosque of Paris and president of the French Council of the Muslim Faith.

One man in the crowd said the French people must not "give in to fear." Terrorists, he said, "will not win." Others carried signs that echoed the now-famous phrase that honored slain journalists at the magazine Charlie Hebdo, "Je suis Charlie."

6. What questions do you have about the event or information described in the article?
Teacher Notes: Some topics rich for further discussion might include:

- Who was Reverend Garnet and why was he a leader at the Convention?
- What was the agenda for the Convention? What was achieved?
- Were some cities safer than Syracuse for black activists? If so, where? Why were they safer?
- Were these types of violent events typical of the Copperheads? Did they achieve the intended results?
- How instrumental were these types of conventions in the overall advancement of political, economic and civil rights for blacks at the time?