

Miller/SAFA visits

October 28 and November 4, 2013

Randall Miller is bringing about 15 students from his introduction to American history class here on two Mondays. This class is made up of non-history majors, who use this class to fill a Gen Ed requirement. Many of them will become elementary teachers.

At this point in the course, the students are studying the Civil War. They were given a choice as to whether to participate in SAFA. They are being prepared for their visit by Randall and the St. Joe's librarian as you will see in the highlighted section below. They also will watch our introductory video and have pre-filled their registration forms.

When they come on Monday, the 28th, I will greet them, give them a quick introduction, and have them lock up their belongings. Then, like Jeff's class, the students will rotate among documents with a worksheet to help direct their viewing and reading. (I will send that along as soon as I have it.)

Based upon our observations with Jeff's class, I can envision 6 stations and having groups of 2-3 students per station. That would be only about 15 minutes per station, but with fewer students at a time and only one source think it might work better.

The sources are:

Susan Ritter Trautwine MacManus diaries – three different volumes, specific entries bookmarked – What was relief work like? How did it fit into a person's life?

The Soldier's Friend – context for relief work

Union Volunteer Relief Refreshment Salon and Hospital records and scrapbook, 1861-1865 - again certain pages bookmarked. The Soldier's Guide to Philadelphia and some of the invitations pulled out as separate documents – How relief organizations were organized and did their work

Annual reports of the Ladies Union Relief Association for 1862 and 1863 – from Baltimore- how relief organizations were organized; gender roles

From the syllabus:

Paper # 2: Document Assessment Essay: Each student will write a short paper, described in options A and B below. Each student should select a paper option from either option A or B (below). One option is based on manuscript and original sources assessments in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; the other is based on primary source assessment from printed sources or from approved digital copies of primary sources.

Option A – Document Description and Historical Introduction (SAFA project): Each student will write and submit a short paper (7-8 pages, typed in 12-point font size, double-spaced, standard margins) introducing and placing in historical context either a manuscript diary or a collection of manuscript letters written by a participant (soldier or civilian) in the American Civil War. The diaries or letters will be drawn from a select group of manuscripts at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, and will require reading them at the HSP during times set aside exclusively for students participating in this project. The work for this project will be part of the Students and Faculty in Archives project (SAFA), which is a three-year project of selected colleges and universities from New England, the New York City area, and the Philadelphia region to bring undergraduates in introductory history courses into archives and introduce them to modern historical research methods and analysis of primary sources.

Each student, in consultation with the professor, will go to the HSP to examine a series of primary sources related to the Civil War.* At the HSP each student will work with an archivist or manuscript curator and with the professor in learning how to read and evaluate manuscript materials. After such review, each student will select either a diary or set of letters from the select group of manuscripts set aside for this project and read and assess the significance of the diary or set of letters by writing a brief description of them, placing them in historical context, identifying principal characters or events mentioned in them as relevant to the diary or letter writer's interests, and suggesting their significance in understanding the Civil War experience from the perspective of either a soldier or a civilian.

As part of the process, each student will prepare a brief (one- or two-page) statement identifying the diary or set of letters he/she will be assessing, noting the questions he/she will be considering in assessing the materials, and noting any appropriate and pertinent secondary sources he/she will be consulting for historical context. Consult the calendar for the due date for that statement. No late statements will be accepted. No electronic submissions will be accepted; hard copy only. The professor will not grade the final paper unless he has approved the document(s). Attach a copy of the initialed approval sheet to the final paper.

To help in finding secondary sources and relevant supporting materials to interpret such document(s), the reference librarian at Saint Joseph's University will conduct a workshop for this class, during our regular class period, on Thursday, September 19, 2013, in the library learning resource room. There will also be a preliminary review session on reading manuscript materials before making the first trip to the HSP; the time and date of that session will be determined after the semester begins. That session will take place on campus.

The principal assignment, then, is to examine and consider the manuscript document(s) and write a short, but authoritative, introduction to the document(s), identifying the principal characters, concerns, content, and such, and placing the document(s) in historical context. The questions you should ask in reading the first-person accounts and writing the paper are: who was the author of the work and why did he/she write the diary or letters as he/she did; for whom did he/she write the diary or letters; what matters concerned the writer and why were they important to that person, what is the historical value of the work (e.g., what does it tell us about the author's time period, various interests, the war either on the homefront or with the army, daily life). Consider also what difference(s) it makes in perspective, style, subjects discussed, or anything that the author was a man or a woman, a soldier or a civilian, a Pennsylvanian from a city, town, or rural area, old or young, and so on. In effect, ask what distinguishes the writer's identity and interests?

The paper need not be heavily annotated, but any quotations or borrowings of significant ideas and presentations from other sources must be cited. Use any standard citation form (e.g., *Chicago Manual of Style*, MLA style). Consult the calendar for the due date for the paper. The paper must be submitted in hard copy; no electronic submissions will be accepted. Attach the initialed approval sheet to the final paper.

The paper will be graded on its demonstrated mastery of subject, use of evidence, responsiveness to assignment, argument, and clarity of expression. Egregious and/or persistent errors in spelling and/or grammar will count against the grade. The entire assignment—preparation for and participation in research at the HSP and the paper—counts 15% of the final grade. Because of the “extra” level of difficulty for this assignment, it also will be graded on a factor of “degree of difficulty,” much like in Olympic diving, at the rate of 1.5 times the base value of 1 for the basic assignment for paper 2, with the degree of difficulty points to be factored in as part of the professor’s assessment of the student’s preparation, participation, and presentation in the project. Thus, it is possible for a student to get more than 15% in value for completing the SAFA project.