

West Virginia Studies Resource Development

Title of Lesson:

Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum- Civil War Military Post

Grade level:

8th Grade

Summary: Students will learn about the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum, aka Weston State Hospital, through research, after a brief discussion in class on what a mental hospital is, and what being “insane” means. Students will then do on-line research on the asylum, Dorthea Dix, and Dr. Thomas Kirkbride. Their research will culminate into a tri-fold pamphlet on the asylum, Kirkbride’s theories on moral treatment through design, and its connection to the Civil War era, and the community of Weston.

WV CCR Social Studies Standards:

SS.8.22: Demonstrate an understanding of the American Civil War including its causes, effects, and the major events that led to West Virginia statehood.

- Explain the effects of key events leading to western Virginia’s separation from Virginia after secession (e.g., First and Second Wheeling Conventions and John Brown’s Raid).
- Describe the moral, ethical, and legal tensions that led to the creation of the new state of West Virginia and how these tensions were resolved (e.g., Virginia vs. West Virginia 1871).
- Compare and contrast the military strategies of the North and South with regard to specific events and geographic locations in West Virginia (e.g., the Battle of Philippi, Rich Mountain, Droop Mountain, Battle of Scary Creek and Battle of Carnifex Ferry).
- Identify significant contributions of men and women of West Virginia during the Civil War and identify the roles of ethnic and racial minorities.

Essential Questions:

- What is a mental hospital for?
- Who was Dorthea Dix, and what was her connection to the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum?
- How did Dr. Thomas Kirkbride’s theories on the treatment of mental health issues give rise to construction and implementation of the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum?
- What part did the asylum play during the Civil War in western Virginia, and in the community of Weston?

Materials and Resources:

- Computer lab or mobile laptops/tablets
- Computer printer and paper,
- Lamination machine or sheets,
- Notebook/copy paper (rough outline)
- <http://trans-alleghenylunaticasylum.com/>
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/in-west-virginia-a-moving-respectful-tour-of-the-trans-allegheny-lunatic-asylum/2018/05/24/03d476e6-5937-11e8-858f-12becb4d6067_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.bc752f30de19

Learning Plan:

- **Students will be able to identify/define the phrase “mental institution,” and explain what a mental hospital is for after a brief discussion and the showing of a video clip on Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum.**
- **Students will research on-line the biographies of Dorothea Dix, and Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, the founder of “moral treatment of the insane”, and be able to cite their contributions to changing the way mental health was treated in the 1800’s.**
- **Students will research the history of the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum, cite how Dr. Kirkbride’s theories were incorporated into it.**
- **Students will cite how the asylum played a part in the Civil War, as well as in the community of Weston.**
- **Working in pairs, students will construct a rough draft incorporating their findings along with any pictures into a tri-fold pamphlet. The pamphlet must contain a brief history of the asylum, a brief background of Dix and Kirkbride with pictures, a short summary of the asylum’s use in the Civil War, and a selection of past and present pictures of the asylum.**
- **Using Microsoft Publisher, paired students will construct their pamphlet, print a hard-copy, and then laminate them.**

Checking for Understanding:

- **Restatement of the assignment by the teacher.**
- **Having students verbally restate their assignment.**
- **Teacher will maneuver around the room to be sure students are following the instructions, checking research, and seeing that the pamphlet is taking on all parts of the requirements given in the assignment.**

Accommodations:

- **Below average students will be paired with a higher average student**
- **Those students with specific IEP requirements such as additional time, restating directions, etc., will be accommodated thusly. They may also substitute drawings and handwritten material in place of digital if originally required.**

