Delivery of Instructions:

1. Mystery From History: Murder at Andersonville Prison

2. Students pick three partners and investigate one piece of evidence from the trial of Henry Wirz.

3. Look for important facts from the 5 eyewitness accounts and explain who you think was responsible.

4. Poll – Was Henry Wirz responsible for the 13,000 deaths at Andersonville?
WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANDERSONVILLE?
13,000 PEOPLE DIED AT ANDERSONVILLE
He is best known for his command of Confederate prisoner of war camp near Andersonville, Georgia; he was tried and executed after the war for conspiracy and murder relating to his command of the camp. But was he responsible?
FACTS ABOUT ANDERSONVILLE?
It was a Confederate prison for Union soldiers in Georgia.
The prison was nothing more than an open field.
There was not enough food, water or medical supplies.
The water was contaminated.
- It was 16.5 acres which was large enough to hold 10,000 prisoners.
- But...more than 40,000 came to the prison!
- The prison was to be rectangular in shape with a small creek flowing roughly through the center of the compound.
- The creek became contaminated with raw sewage, bugs, and disease.
There was a line about fifteen feet from the wall that soldiers could not cross.

Any soldier who crossed this line would be instantly shot dead.

It would forever be known as “The Deadline”.
A large group of prisoners who called themselves “The Raiders” terrorized other prisoners. They would beat, rob and sometimes kill their fellow prisoners in order to steal what they had.
Was Henry Wirz responsible for Andersonville?
After the war, the United States wanted someone to pay for the deaths of 13,000 soldiers.

Prison Commandant Henry Wirz was arrested and charged with War Crimes.
A number of former prisoners testified on conditions at Andersonville, many accusing Wirz of acts of cruelty, for some of which Wirz was not even present in the camp.
Wirz was found guilty and was sentenced to death. On November 10, 1865, he was hanged.
Was Henry Wirz responsible?
1. You will read 5 eyewitness accounts from the trial and look for any facts that prove Henry Wirz was guilty or innocent of the 13,000 deaths at Andersonville.

2. Each group will present their testimony and opinions to the class.

3. At the end of class, we will take a vote on the guilt or innocence of Henry Wirz. Good luck!
B. Evidence/Eyewitness Accounts: (Must have an important fact from each from the trial testimony to help prove your case.) *50 points and ½ your grade!

A.G. Blair – I heard from other prisoners that Captain Wirz withheld rations (food) from the prisoners on purpose. “...he made the remark that if rations were in his hands we would not get any. That was in the beginning of July, 1864.” “I saw prisoners shot on or near the dead-line on several occasions”

“I cannot say that I ever saw Captain Wirz present when any of these men were shot”

“I never heard Captain Wirz make the remark of not giving the prisoners rations”
WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANDERSONVILLE?
Felix De La Baume

20th New York regiment.
Prisoner from the 8th of July, 1864 until May 1865.
Augustus Moesner
Doctor Joseph Jones

Sent in September, 1864, by order of the Surgeon-General to investigate conditions at Andersonville.
A.G. Blair

122nd New York. Prisoner at Andersonville from May, 1864 until 1865.
George W. Gray

7th Indiana Calvary, Company B. Andersonville prisoner from the 10th of June, 1864, and remained until November 1864.
1. How did the witness describe the conditions at Andersonville Prison? (Give specific examples)

2. In what ways were soldiers dying at Andersonville?

3. List the witness facts you think proved that Confederate Commandant Henry Wirz mistreated his prisoners.
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1. How many prisoners died at Andersonville Prison?

2. Who were the Union prisoners who attacked, robbed and murdered other prisoners?

3. What was the “dead line” at Andersonville?

4. Was Andersonville Commander Henry Wirz guilty or not guilty of the deaths at Andersonville?