

# Exhibition Teacher Resources for Middle and High School

## Remembered: The Life of Lucy Higgs Nichols



## About the Exhibition

*Remembered: The Life of Lucy Higgs Nichols* was added to the Carnegie Center as a permanent exhibition after nearly four years of research. The exhibit guides visitors through Lucy's life, from 1838 – 1915. Period documents and letters detail her life as an enslaved person in Tennessee, a nurse during the Civil War, and her post-war life in freedom. It also highlights her six year battle for a nurse's pension, which was ultimately awarded through a Special Act of Congress. Visitors can explore maps that pinpoint the paths she took and examine actual artifacts from the Civil War, including an Enfield rifle and an amputation saw of the same type used by the surgeons Lucy served with in the 23rd Indiana Volunteers.

Lucy Nichols' life is one of perseverance; from her escape from enslavement to the loss of her daughter to her fight for her nurse's pension, Lucy never stopped. This perseverance that she showed in her life gained her notoriety in the local area as well as national news outlets and has led her to capture the attention of numerous local elementary students through our free educational experience geared toward 3rd-5th graders.



# Questions for Viewing and Discussion

The following questions can be used to guide viewing and discussion of the artifacts and texts in the exhibition.

- What piece of information or artifact did you find most interesting? Why?
- What stands out to you the most in the exhibition?
- How do the information and artifacts presented in the exhibition make you feel?
- This exhibition is made up of a multitude of primary sources. How are primary sources beneficial when exploring history?
- What do you want to know more about after viewing the exhibition?
- Lucy Nichols experienced many hardships throughout her life. How can she be used as a model of perseverance for people over 100 years after her death?

## Activities

### Second Confiscation Act [Carousel Reading](#) (Social Studies)

Divide the text of the [Second Confiscation Act](#) passed by Congress July 17, 1862 into smaller sections and post them around the classroom with a large piece of paper for students to record their thoughts about each section. Divide students up into groups, the same number as sections of the Act that you created. Students will go around to each section with their group to read each section and note the ways that each section would have helped or hurt Lucy as she was seeking her freedom. They will record their thoughts on the paper provided at each station. Once all groups have finished, have a full class discussion about the most and least beneficial parts of the Act for Lucy and others like her who would have been seeking their freedom in the early 1860s.

### [Petition to Congress](#) (Social Studies/Language Arts)

After hearing the story of Lucy's life and all that she did to help the Union Army during the Civil War, students will use their skills at persuasive writing to petition Congress in favor of Lucy getting her nurse's pension. For reference, the Senators from Indiana in 1898, when Lucy was granted her pension, were David Turpie and Charles W. Franklin. Students can write their petition to either or both of those Senators. It took years of petitioning and

depositions for Lucy to finally be awarded her pension and this was made even more difficult due to the fact that Lucy did not know how to read or write herself. Students will use details of Lucy's life that they learned from the exhibition to write their petition on her behalf.

### [Found or Blackout Poetry](#) (English/Language Arts)

After students view the exhibition of Lucy's life, distribute a page from a book or newspaper and have students create found poetry about Lucy's story from the text they are given. The text they receive does not have to be connected to Lucy. This is an opportunity for students to get creative with what they are given to create a found composition using the words and phrases they find. They may reuse their chosen words and phrases from the text they get to create their poems. For blackout poetry students will get one page of text and will cross out all but select phrases on the paper to create their poems about Lucy's story.

### [Eulogy for Mona](#) (English/Language Arts)

Losing Mona at Vicksburg was a major moment in not only Lucy's life but also those who she served with in the 23rd. Have students write a eulogy for the young girl that could have been said by one of the soldiers who was at her humble service with Lucy and the other members of the 23rd. How these are shared with the class is up to you. They could be read aloud, hung in the hallway or on a bulletin board, posted online to Google Classroom, etc.

### [Memorial Design](#) (Art Making)

Students will choose a person, such as Mona or Lucy, or a group of people, such as Civil War nurses or Black Civil War soldiers, and design a memorial for them. This design should include a chosen location for the completed memorial, a detailed drawing of what the memorial would look like, and a written description of the memorial. To take this one step further, students could present their proposals and have the class vote on their favorite.

### [Illustrated Map](#) (Geography/Art Making)

Throughout her life Lucy moved around quite a bit. Some of this was her choice, some of it was at the hands of her enslavers. Use the maps in the exhibition to create a map of Lucy's life. Have students choose at least 5 locations that were important to Lucy's life. They should label the location and create an illustration that relates to the importance of that place to Lucy.



## Additional Resources

### Exhibition Webpage

<http://carnegiecenter.org/exhibitions/remembered-life-lucy-higgs-nichols/>

Webpage on the Carnegie Center's website with information and audio from the exhibition

### Lucy Higgs Nichols Biography

<https://www.digitalresearch.bsu.edu/digitalcivilrightsmuseum/items/show/38>

Short biography of Lucy from Ball State University

### Lucy Higgs Nichols Biography

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eabDBtf\\_jNWV46fIVsPYp8QLfSFYMAf9\\_d-ApprUXoA/copy\\_](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eabDBtf_jNWV46fIVsPYp8QLfSFYMAf9_d-ApprUXoA/copy_)

Short biography of Lucy geared towards younger students from the Carnegie Center

### LoC, Primary Source Analysis

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers>

Guides for teachers and students for analyzing different types of primary sources created by the Library of Congress which could be used to spark additional discussion about the artwork

### Congressional Legislation

<https://www.congress.gov/>

Website with current and historical legislation from Congress as well as links to live sessions of the House and Senate

## About Us

The Carnegie Center for Art & History is one of Southern Indiana's cultural cornerstones. Housed in New Albany's original library building, the Carnegie Center has ongoing exhibits about the history of the Underground Railroad in the region and the remarkable life story of celebrated Civil War nurse Lucy Higgs Nichols. The Carnegie also features rotating exhibitions of contemporary local, national, and international art in a wide range of visual mediums, as well as many opportunities for hands-on learning.

As a branch of the Floyd County Library, the Carnegie Center supports the growth and creativity of an engaged, informed, and connected community. Those tenets form the basis of the Carnegie Center's creation of quality programming for both youth and adults. Admission is always free as part of our dedication to community accessibility and inclusivity. Visit or schedule a tour on Mondays through Saturdays, and join us for special programs on Thursday evenings.

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812-944-7336 -- [www.carnegiecenter.org](http://www.carnegiecenter.org)

Monday-Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

