

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Sutlers

By **Richard H. Holloway**

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Lord, Francis A.	<i>Civil War Sutlers and Their Wares</i> . New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1969.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. "Title," in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Delo, David M.	<i>Peddlers and Post Traders: The Army Sutler on the Frontier</i> . Helena, MT: Kingfisher Books, 1992.
McCaffrey, James M.	"A Short History of the Civil War Sutler: The Rough and Readies of the Retail Trade," in <i>Civil War Times Illustrated</i> 24 (April 1985): 36-39.
Miller, Darlis I.	"The Perils of a Post Sutler: William H. Moore at Fort Union, New Mexico, 1859-1870," in <i>Journal of the West</i> 32, no. 2 (April 1993): 7-18.
Sarna, Jonathan D.	<i>When General Grant Expelled the Jews</i> . New York: Nextbook, 2012.
Sarna, Jonathan A. and Benjamin. Shapell	<i>Lincoln and the Jews: A History</i> . New York: Macmillan, 2015.
Spear, Donald P.	"The Sutler in the Union Army," in <i>Civil War History</i> 16, no. 2 (June 1970): 121-38.

Organizations

Web Resources

Other Sources

Scholars

Name	Email
Richard H Holloway	clangraham@aol.com

Topic Précis

At Shiloh the 13th Louisiana Infantry Battalion stopped their advance to loot the Sutlers' stores in the abandoned camp of the 6th Iowa Infantry Regiment. The cache of goods contained cooked hams, marinated oysters, cases of sweet and sugarless biscuits, barrels of Goshen butter, apples, oranges, refined sugar, whiskey, cases of grapes, cognac, bottles of anisette and other liquors, peppermint candy, quantities of cheese, cases of smoking and chewing tobacco, barrels of fruit juice and syrup, coffee brewing on abandoned campfires and much more. In addition to the edibles, a sutler would sell almost anything a soldier could desire. These were commodities of all descriptions and included camp equipment, clocks, watches, clothing, drugs, games, hair dyes, jewelry, lanterns, locks, eating utensils, glasses and wallets. Sutlers initially began plying their wares in America during the era of the French and Indian War. Eventually every U.S. fort or cantonment required at least one sutler on post. Sutler items and prices were usually what the market would allow and sutlers were subject to little regulation. By the onset of the American Civil War, the Federal government implemented a series of rules to govern sutlers and the cost of their merchandise. The 1861 U.S. Army regulations stated that governmental sutlers were appointed by the secretary of war with each post being allowed one sutler as well as each regiment in the field, and the sutlers were to be selected by the post or regimental commanders. Later appointments were made subject to the recommendation of the senior officer of the unit or post. Later still prices were to be set by the local commander, though most sutlers managed to raise their prices above the set rates. Major General Henry Wager Halleck became so disgusted with sutlers that he wanted the entire system abolished. Major General Ulysses S. Grant issued an order in late 1862 which expelled Jewish sutlers from the entire expanse of his department in Tennessee. He gave them only twenty-four hours to vacate themselves from his command and any traders that tried to return would be immediately arrested and confined as regular prisoners. Other

Union departments followed suit with similar directives. Major General Benjamin Franklin Butler actually tasked gunboats to patrol the James River in search of ships laden with sutler stores in order to levy taxes before they were able to disembark and sell their goods. Soldiers often inflicted retribution on sutlers for their high prices by stealing their goods. There were fewer Confederate sutlers and little regulation concerning them. Confederate sutlers also served as soldiers, unlike their northern counterparts. Two Civil War era sutlers became famous after the war, Joseph Spiegel who started a popular mercantile store and James Anthony Bailey, an impresario who helped create the Barnum and Bailey circus.
