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ALBUM WORLD WAR I REHABILITATION (PRIMARY SOURCE LEARNING ACTIVITY)

Album Description

This learning activity uses multiple types of sources to learn about the Rehabilitation Act of 1918. In addition to looking at what became of disabled soldiers when they returned home, the activity also asks students to examine ideas about disability.

*Note: Before starting this exercise, discuss respectful language and historical terms (like crippled) which are considered offensive today.

Consider starting with the Observe, Reflect, Question approach to analyze the photographs, manuscripts, and newspaper articles.

Background Information

-The Institution for the Crippled and Disabled started in 1917 as a charity program in New York City run by the American Red Cross. They were inspired by the rehabilitation work being done during World War I in Europe, which the Red Cross was also involved with. In 1919, the Institute released a poster series promoting the rehabilitated of disabled soldiers. I've included a couple of them in this album, but 18 posters can be found on the LOC website.

-In 1918, Congress passed the Soldier's Rehabilitation Act (also known as the Smith-Sears Act) to provide federal money to train/reeducate disabled veterans and help them find jobs. In 1920, the Civilian Vocational Rehabilitation Act (also known as the Smith-Fess Act) expanded these rehabilitation programs to all disabled Americans, including civilians. This website provides a nice overview of major disability-related laws, including these rehabilitation acts.

-Additional information about World War I rehabilitation programs can be found in this LOC exhibit on World War I.

Potential Discussion Questions

1. What was the purpose of the 1918 Rehabilitation Act? What did lawmakers hope to accomplish for individual disabled people and for the country?
2. What factors influenced this rehabilitation act being passed during World War I, instead of during a previous war?
3. What was the purpose of the poster series? Who do you think was the intended audience?
4. What ideas about disability were expressed in these photographs, posters, and laws? Provide specific examples from the sources.
    1. This could be a good place to introduce students to the medical/rehabilitation model of disability. There's a good description of it (including a helpful illustration) here.
5. What does the term "usefulness" mean in this context? Why do you think it was important to people to be considered useful?

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Additional activities:

1. Students can research additional articles about rehabilitation in Chronicling America. Encourage students to look at how rehabilitation changes over time.
2. Students can conduct research in the Veterans History Project to learn more about veterans' experiences with rehabilitation programs. The project includes interviews with veterans from WWI, WWII, Cold War, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, Afghan War, and Iraq War.
3. If you want to do a deeper dive on ideas about rehabilitation during WWI, this blog post from the New York Academy of Medicine Library provides more information. You can find Douglas McMurtrie's *The Disabled Soldier* (referenced in the blog post) in the LOC collections.

This source set can be put into conversation with:

-lessons on the impacts of World War I

-discussions about the changing role of the government in Americans' lives during the Progressive Era

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Alt text for the photographs is available on the LOC website. Alt text for the newspaper articles is available in the reference note section for each source.

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Teaching Notes:

For more great photos on this topic check out Mary Johnson ’s album “World War I Era Disability Photos” (https://tpsteachersnetwork.org/album/26507-world-war-i-era-disability-photos)

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TRAINING WOUNDED, DISABLED SOLDIERS NOW BEING STUDIED (PENSACOLA JOURNAL, JUNE 30 1918).JPG

TRAINING WOUNDED, DISABLED SOLDIERS NOW BEING STUDIED

Washington, June 29.—Every man who goes in the army or navy is now certain that if the Germans "shoot him up" he will not be compelled to sell pencils, or shoe laces to eke out an insufficient pension, or be immured in a soldiers' home to rush out the years until death comes to his relief.

The United States government has studied the whole subject of vocational rehabilitation of wounded and disabled soldiers. The experience of all the belligerents has been gone over carefully and the marvels of re-vocational education accomplished by some of them are fully noted and the federal board for vocational education has been at work on the proposition since August, 1917. The result is the Smith-Sears act, which passed congress June 11, and provides a comprehensive scheme of rehabilitation for wounded and disabled men.

Canada has been doing this work with great success and all of the Canadian experience has been freely given to the United States. The director of that work has been actively cooperat- ing with the federal board for vocational education and was sent by his government to appear before the senate committee and testify at the hearings of the bill, which passed both senate and house without a dissenting vote.

It has been demonstrated in Canada and Europe that no matter how badly a man may be wrecked physically, as a generality he still has latent capabilities for something useful. If those capabilities may be specialized into some line of trade the wounded soldier already knew, that is done. The experience he has had and his knowledge of the trade is a valuable foundation to build upon.

If the trade he is familiar with does not offer an opening then he is induced to enter an allied trade where his previous knowledge will be of value. In some cases the man is entirely re-educated and for an occupation entirely different from that which he had previously followed.

It is seldom that a man is so badly shattered that he cannot be trained to something useful, which he can pursue in the consciousness that he is doing a man's work for a man's pay and that he is back in the current of civil life, a useful and happy citizen who asks no odds of anyone when it comes to making a living.

The task to be discharged by the federal board of vocational education is a large one. Figures from the various countries show that for each million men in the armies, there will be one per cent, or ten thousand men, to be re-educated. This does not include the wounded who are able to and eventually do return to their occupations.

This does not necessarily mean that these are "dismemberment" cases. The general idea is of the legless, armless or sightless man. They are far in the minority. The figures, which have now got down to fairly accurate averages, show that of the 10,000 half of them will be purely "medical" as against "surgical" cases. And of the 5,000 that are "surgical," that is, which need the attention of a surgeon as against a physician, 500 will be cases of dismemberment, which the men have lost members of the body. Three hundred will be cases where a leg has been lost and two hundred where arms have been lost. In 41,000 returned invalided Canadians there were less than forty cases of blindness.

The real problem is the man who has suffered profound shocks to his system and perhaps been rendered incapable of standing the strain of his former occupation. A boiler maker, for instance, comes out with shell shock and his nervous system in tatters. He could not stand the racket in a boiler factory, but he, with his knowledge of iron and steel working could very easily be made into say an expert lathe operator where there is no noise. And so on along the whole line of readjustments.

The federal board for vocational education is the source of most of the war training courses and is going ahead with plans to begin the re-educational work at an early date. It is proposed instead of concentrating the men to be re-educated in large hospital shops, to use the wonderful facilities afforded by the many technical and agricultural schools of the country as far as possible.

HEAVY GERMAN LOSSES ADMITTED BY PRISONER

With the American Army in France, June 27.—Evidence of the heavy German losses in the present offensive often is obtained from German war prisoners. From one of them it has been learned that the seventh German division of reserves lost about 1,200 men in a fruitless attack on Flemont.

This may explain why the German commander, on the following day, withdrew that division from the firing lines.

LEMON JUICE TAKES OFF TAN

Girls! Make bleaching lotion if skin is sunburned, tanned or freckled

Squeeze the juice of two lemons into a bottle containing three ounces of Orchard White, shake well, and you have a quarter pint of the best freckle, sunburn and tan lotion and complexion beautifier, at very, very small cost.

Your grocer has the lemons and any drug store or toilet counter will supply three ounces of Orchard White for a few cents. Massage this sweetly fragrant lotion into the face, neck, arms and hands each day and see how freckles, sunburn, windburn and tan disappear and how clear, soft and white the skin becomes. Yes! It is harmless.—Adv.

Reference Link: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87062268/1918-06-30/ed-1/seq-2/

The Pensacola Journal; June 30, 1918, p.2 (article top center)

Alt Text

TRAINING WOUNDED, DISABLED SOLDIERS NOW BEING STUDIED

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MAKING THEIR OWN LEGS. CRIPPLES ARE EMPLOYED AT THE ARC WORKSHOP AT SAINT MAURICE FOR MAKING ARTIFICIAL LEGS

Teaching Notes:

This rehabilitation work in Europe inspired similar efforts in the United States.

Reference Link: http://www.loc.gov/item/2017680708

Created / Published

- 18 June 1918.

Subject Headings

- - American Red Cross
- - France--Saint-Maurice

Headings

- Glass negatives.

Genre

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- Glass negatives

Notes

- - Cliche envoye le 29 Juin 18/au Secretaire General.
- - Title, date and notes from Red Cross caption card.
- - Photographer name or source of original from caption card or negative sleeve: Mr. Donalson, 18 Juin 18.
- - Group title: Artificial limbs, etc.
- - On caption card: Print in album.
- - Gift; American National Red Cross 1944 and 1952.
- - General information about the American National Red Cross photograph collection is available at http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.anrc
- - Temp note: Batch 31

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print

Digital Id

- anrc 15704 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/anrc.15704

Image not found
https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

CAPT. ARNET AND MRS. ATHERTON SMITH DISCUSSING FARM WORK WITH CRIPPLED FRENCH SOLDIERS AT ARC FARM AT LE LIEGE FOR THE RE-EDUCATION OF MEN MUTILATED IN THE WAR

Teaching Notes:

This rehabilitation work in Europe inspired similar efforts in the United States

Reference Link: http://www.loc.gov/item/2017674040/

Created / Published

- July 1918.

Subject Headings

- - American Red Cross
- - France

Headings

- Glass negatives.

Image not found
https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

Genre

- Glass negatives

Notes

- - Title, date and notes from Red Cross caption card.
- - Photographer name or source of original from caption card or negative sleeve: ARC Commission to France.
- - Group Title: France, Mutile, Personnel.
- - On caption card: (1793)
- - Data: H.E. 50591.
- - Gift; American National Red Cross 1944 and 1952.
- - General information about the American National Red Cross photograph collection is available at http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.anrc
- - Temp note: Batch 17

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print

Digital Id

- anrc 08250 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/anrc.08250

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A MAN WITHOUT LEGS CAN LEARN TO BE HAPPY, USEFUL AND SELF SUPPORTING. BASKET WEAVING IS ONE OF THE MANY TRADES TAUGHT TO SUCH WAR CRIPPLES, IN AN EXCELLENT FRENCH SCHOOL ON THE AVE. DE TOKIO, PARIS

Teaching Notes:

This rehabilitation work in Europe inspired similar efforts in the United States

Reference Link: http://www.loc.gov/item/2017668374/

Created / Published

- 13 November 1918.

Subject Headings

- - American Red Cross
- - France--Paris

Headings

- Glass negatives.

Image not found
https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

Genre

- Glass negatives

Notes

- - Title, date and notes from Red Cross caption card.
- - Photographer name or source of original from caption card or negative sleeve: A.R.C. France.
- - Group title: Mutiles.
- - Gift; American National Red Cross 1944 and 1952.
- - General information about the American National Red Cross photograph collection is available at http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.anrc
- - Temp note: Batch 6

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print

Digital Id

- anrc 02389 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/anrc.02389

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https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HANDICAPPED COPPERSMITHING TRADE (RED CROSS INSTITUTE FOR CRIPPLED AND DISABLED MEN, 1918).PDF

Teaching Notes:

Description of the Soldier Rehabilitation Act of 1918

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https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

THE DISABLED MAN WHO IS PROFITABLY EMPLOYED IS NO LONGER HANDICAPPED

Teaching Notes:

This is 1 of 18 posters from the Institute for the Crippled and Disabled in the LOC collections. All 18 posters are available here:

https://www.loc.gov/photos/?q=Institute+for+the+Crippled+and+Disabled--1910-1920

Reference Link: http://www.loc.gov/item/00651707/

Summary

- Exhibit poster, text only, calling for the extension of veterans benefits to all injured and disabled citizens.

Created / Published

- 1919.

Subject Headings

- - Institute for the Crippled and Disabled--1910-1920

Image not found
https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

- - World War, 1914-1918--Medical aspects
- - Handicapped persons--Education--1910-1920

Headings

- Exhibit posters--1910-1920.
- Halftone photomechanical prints--1910-1920.
- War posters--American--1910-1920.

Notes

- - Exhibit of the Red Cross Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men and the Red Cross Institute for the Blind.

Medium

- 1 photomechanical print (poster) : halftone ; 105 x 71 cm.

Call Number/Physical Location

- POS - WWI - US, no. 38 (C size) [P&P]

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

Digital Id

- cph 3g07379 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3g07379

Image not found
https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

FIRST STEPS TO USEFULNESS

Teaching Notes:

This is 1 of 18 posters from the Institute for the Crippled and Disabled in the LOC collections. All 18 posters are available here:

https://www.loc.gov/photos/?q=Institute+for+the+Crippled+and+Disabled--1910-1920

Reference Link: http://www.loc.gov/item/00651586/

Summary

- Exhibit poster showing two scenes of men in hospitals recovering from war wounds - "simple designing while still in bed" ; "an American soldier begins again to take an interest in life."

Created / Published

- 1919.

Subject Headings

- - Institute for the Crippled and Disabled--1910-1920

Image not found
https://sites.msudenver.edu/tpswesternregion/wp-content/uploads/sites/476/2021/11/tps_logo-1.png

- - World War, 1914-1918--Medical aspects
- - World War, 1914-1918--Casualties
- - Occupational therapy--1910-1920
- - Handicapped persons--Education--1910-1920

Headings

- Exhibit posters--1910-1920.
- Halftone photomechanical prints--1910-1920.
- War posters--American--1910-1920.

Genre

- Exhibit posters--1910-1920
- War posters--American--1910-1920
- Halftone photomechanical prints--1910-1920

Notes

- - Title from item.
- - Poster caption: Bedside and ward occupations serve to interest wounded men and keep their minds active and off their own troubles. Occupation is also one of the best curative agents at the command of the physician, and in most cases it does much to expedite recovery. Gone are the old days when men lay for months in a hospital bed gazing at the ceiling and brooding about the future.
- - Exhibit of the Red Cross Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men and the Red Cross Institute for the Blind.

Medium

- 1 photomechanical print (poster) : halftone.

Call Number/Physical Location

- POS - WWI - US, no. 44 (C size) [P&P]

Repository

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print

Digital Id

- ppmsca 39799 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.39799
- cph 3g07383 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3g07383