

Teacher Script:
Who were the 200,000 African American Freedom Fighters?

A.) Suggested uses: (this lesson)

- 1.) Intro to differences North and South
- 2.) Intro use of African American Troops

B.) Background on African American Troops in the Civil War

- 1.) Initially most felt the war would be short, and African American soldiers would only cause controversy.
- 2.) African American sailors had always existed in the Navy; estimates of the number in the Union Navy run from 18,000-30,000.
- 3.) By 1863 adequate manpower in the Union Army was an issue, recruiting of African American soldiers for the Union Army began.
- 4.) By 1865 (178,975) African American soldiers had been recruited for the Union Army (more than 10% of the Union Army in the field)
- 5.) 178,975 soldiers, plus 18,000-30,000 sailors easily puts the number of African American soldiers and sailors at 200,000 in Union Service
- 6.) By 1865 due to drastic manpower needs the Confederate Congress was also debating the use of African American troops. The war ends in April 1865 making the debate moot.

C.) Use of hand-outs: (suggestions)

- 1.) Hand-outs # I and # II show Free and Slave Populations in 1860
 - a.) these can be used for discussion purposes or map and data analysis
 - b.) What states had the largest Free and Slave Populations? What might explain these populations?
 - c.) Students tend to think all African Americans in 1860 were enslaved, note the significant free population
 - d.) Students tend to think all slaves worked in cotton fields, how did slavery in Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee differ from Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi?
- 2.) Hand-outs # III and # IV show USCT Recruits
 - a.) As the Union Army began recruiting, United States Colored Troops (USCT) it is interesting to note the States these men were from.
 - b.) Note Pennsylvania had the most recruits from a free state, yet Maryland and Virginia had much larger free populations
 - c.) Massachusetts in 1860 had a free population of 9,682, and recruited 3,966 USCT soldiers. How is that possible? Answer: They recruited heavily across the north (especially Ohio and New York)
 - d.) The USCT Recruits from slave states were a significant number, note the states with the biggest # of recruits. What river touches 5 or 6 states? What does the recruiting pattern say about the status of the war; and position of Union and CSA Armies?
- 3.) Hand-outs #V and #VI Robert Pinn Letter
 - a.) This is the first (3) and final paragraphs of his letter
 - b.) Students can notice his penmanship (better than most of their penmanship) and discuss why he wrote this with his left hand after losing the use of his right arm in battle.

- c.) Sgt. Pinn is one of 17 USCT Soldiers to earn the Medal of Honor for bravery in battle
- d.) Pinn's injury and Medal of Honor occurred at The Battle of New Market Heights. New Market Heights was part of the larger battle for Richmond, Virginia.
- e.) More USCT soldiers earned the Medal of Honor at New Market Heights than any other engagement; yet this is a relatively unknown battle, why?
- f.) **Important Preservation Note** The current status of the New Market Heights battlefield is relatively safe; due to the Henrico County, Va. Division of Parks and Recreation managing the 200 acre area of the heaviest fighting.
* Does this mean the battlefield is safe forever?
- g.) Following the war Pinn became a prominent attorney and active in veteran organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Photo of Robert Pinn he is wearing the Medal of Honor and the Butler Medal.

D.) Evaluation/Assessment of Students:

- 1.) Maps (Hand-out #I)
 - a.) What state has the largest Free Population?
 - b.) Why do you think they had such a large Free Population?
 - c.) Louisiana had a unique cultural mix: Who were these Free African Americans?
 - d.) Would free African Americans in New York, Penn., Ohio, and Indiana have arrived using the Underground Railroad?
 - e.) What was life like in 1860 for nearly 500,000 African Americans living in the U.S.?
- 2.) Map #II
 - a.) The heaviest concentrations of enslaved people were in what states?
 - b.) What might explain why Texas (a very large state geographically) had a much smaller slave population than South Carolina?
 - c.) Identify states that had both large Free and Slave Populations? What would life have been like for African Americans in these states?
- 3.) Map #3 – Recruits from Free States
 - a.) Which state is geographically separated from the other 5 states? What might explain the high number of recruits from this western state?
 - b.) Massachusetts Free Population in 1860 was 9,682; the number of recruits is unusually high as a % of the population, what might explain this? **See use of Hand-out 2c**
 - c.) What might explain Maryland and Virginia having larger populations of Free African Americans, but lower numbers of USCT recruits than Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio?
- 4.) Map #IV – Recruits From Slave States
 - a.) What about Louisiana's unique culture might explain its high % of recruits?
 - b.) Kentucky and Tennessee also have high % of USCT Recruits, how does the position of the Union Army in 1863 – 1865 influence recruiting patterns?
 - c.) Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina have large slave populations, but relatively low numbers of USCT Recruits, how does the position of the Confederate Army in 1863 – 1865 influence recruiting patterns?
- 5.) Hand-out – V & VI Robert Pinn Letter and Photo
 - a.) Was Pinn born free or as a slave?
 - b.) Why couldn't Pinn enlist in 1861
 - c.) When did he lose the use of his right arm?

- d.) Why didn't he receive a "common school education"?
- e.) In the photo, Robert Pinn is wearing the Medal of Honor and the Butler Medal. Research the Butler Medal (*Note – No exact/complete list of Butler Medal recipients exist*)

E.) Additional Resources

1.) Books

- a.) [The Sable Arm](#) by Dudley Cornish – excellent discussion of enrolling African American troops
- b.) [Men of Color](#) by William Gladstone – outstanding photos and USCT artifacts with text
- c.) [Like Men of War](#) by Noah Trudeau – definitive account of USCT battles
- d.) [The American Past](#) by William Wheeler and Susan Becker – primary source book for High Schools with an excellent section on the debate over African American troops

2.) Internet sources:

- a.) **Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System** (www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html) – The National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System is a database containing facts about Civil War servicemen, lists of Civil War regiments, and descriptions of significant Civil War battles. Also on this site is a descriptive history of African Americans in the Civil War
- b.) **African American Civil War Memorial** –(www.afroamcivilwar.org/) includes a database with the names of African American Civil War Veterans. It also houses an extensive photo gallery, information for teachers hoping to use the information in lesson plans, and the history of the museum.
- c.) **Civil War Preservation Trust** (www.civilwar.org) - America's largest non-profit organization devoted to the preservation of our Nation's endangered Civil War Battlefields.
- d.) **Washington Senior High School** (www.ustcw.org) - This website contains data on United States Colored Troops. This project was built, composed, and maintained by the Research History Classes of Washington Senior High School, Washington Court House.