

Lesson Plans for Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History's Civil War and Reconstruction Online Class, July 31, August 1-2, 7-8, 2012

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Civil War Digital Style

Objectives

1. Competent knowledge of the consequences to runaways and conductors on the Underground Railroad
2. Compare and contrast the Southern and Northern governments allowing Blacks to fight in the Civil War
3. Understanding of the ramifications of the Emancipation Proclamation
4. Competent knowledge of the Massachusetts Fifty-fourth infantry's impact on Black civil rights
5. Comprehension of the effects of the 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments and the Freedmen's Bureau

Day One

Historical background to the day's activity: Black and white abolitionists recognized that not everyone in the United States was for the manumission of slaves. In Washington D.C., an 1828 petition to abolish slavery was ignored, and an 1836 "gag rule" made sure that any new petitions would be summarily treated as such. Blacks also formed abolition societies, such as the Free African Society. By 1850, there were 50 antislavery groups in America.

The president of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1847 was Frederick Douglass. As the most well-known abolitionist speaker, he presented his organized arguments for it to both Black and White audiences. He was said to have the "physical attributes of an orator: a magnificent, tall body, a head crowned with a mass of hair, deep-set, flashing eyes, a firm chin, and a rich, melodious voice."

One of his most stirring speeches, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" was given on July 4, 1852. His speech gave abolitionists precisely the words they needed to demand the end of slavery.

Read this key speech at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927.html>

Now, blog about what you've read. Consider Frederick Douglass's speech as a way to compare and contrast Northern and Southern attitudes towards the peculiar institution of slavery and then use parts of it to support your thoughts.

Day Two

Historical background to the day's activity: It is unclear exactly what year the Underground Railroad movement began, but historians know that by 1804 Quaker abolitionists were assisting runaway slaves to freedom. By 1849, black slaves escaping the South had tried almost any method to leave. One man even shipped himself in a box. Henry "Box" Brown gained his freedom by being packaged as a piece of merchandise. He used Adams Express to ship himself from Richmond, Virginia to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It took 26 hours to earn his freedom, but it worked. Once the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 went into effect, local citizens, particularly in Ohio, the state with the greatest number of "underground roads," were regularly conducting slaves from North Carolina to the North states. The Underground Railroad name was fashioned after the iron railroad, which was popular at the time. The route, which was neither below ground nor a railroad, became the freedom route for approximately 100,000 enslaved people. Levi Coffin, among approximately 3,200 other conductors, escorted over 3,000 slaves to freedom and was considered the unofficial president of the Underground RR. One of the best known conductors was Harriet Tubman. If she needed to raise funds to help free slaves, she would take time off between "train rides" and work as a servant.

Now, go to this interactive website and:

Answer this 20 point Discussion Question: "Design and plan an escape for a group of slaves via the Underground Railroad. Use internet sites to come up with a plausible route showing where you are escaping from and where you are headed for freedom. Explain the obstacles and hazards along the way. To get yourself thinking of ideas, click on the "Escape" website: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>. Plan your original escape by using a Google Map. Show your path from start to finish. Then, document your escape by creating a Word Cloud.

Day Three

Historical background to the day's activity: In 1860, at the beginning of the Civil War, there were 4 million slaves in the US. The Union passed the Second Confiscation Act of 1862, meaning that any slaves of disloyal owners (they were in the Confederacy and therefore involved in the insurrection against the Union) were now "forever free." The question of the black men living in the North enlisting in the Union was decided with the Enlistment Act of 1862.

Black Union troops serving in the Northern army were led by white officers. One of the most famous troops was Robert Gould Shaw's Massachusetts 54th. Watch this clip from the movie, *Glory*, which was based on this famous battalion:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_DEd4q1pS8&feature=relmfu

Now, study this image and consider the Frederick Douglass quote below it:



"Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, 'US,' let him get an eagle on his button and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States"---Frederick Douglass

Write a 2 page essay (worth 30 points) about black soldiers serving in the Civil War. Did Frederick Douglass have it correct?

Day Four

Historical background to the day's activity: It was not a secret that enslaved black men struggled for freedom and dignity. Below is an 1829 newspaper editorial written by David Walker, a free black man:

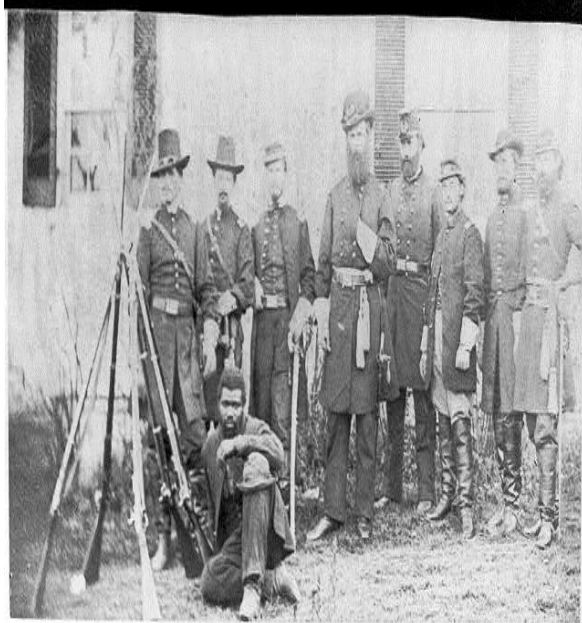
“Are we men!! I ask you...are we MEN?” “Did our creator make us to be slaves to dust and ashes like ourselves? Are they not dying worms as well as we?...How we could so submissive to a gang of men, who we cannot tell whether they are as good as ourselves or not , I never conceive...America is more our country than it is the whites-we have enriched it with our blood and tears. The greatest riches in all America have arisen from our blood and tears: And they will drive us from our property and homes, which we have earned with our blood.”

Walker's question/demand/challenge was somewhat answered by President Lincoln's January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation. It read as follows:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.”

Because of the Emancipation Proclamation, numerous enslaved men, women and children sought out the Union army. The men were officially enlisted by the Union government into the Union army. Others, such as refugee slaves and runaway slaves were also accepted into the military ranks as contraband.

Examine these images (courtesy of the Lllijenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) and analyze if the black man's lifestyle improved or not during this time frame.



Day Five

Historical background to the day's activity: Popular custom has the Civil War ending on April 9, 1865. However, not all high-ranking confederate officers surrendered at this time. Confederate Brigadier General Stand Watie was the last to lay down his arms in June of 1865. Regardless, the almost cease-fire in the bloody four year fight between the North and South made President Lincoln an overjoyed leader. Sadly, he only savored the victory for less than a week. On April 14, he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater. The North, reeling from this event, numbly watched as Vice President Andrew Johnson was sworn in as the 17th president of the United States. Take a moment and read further about the assassination:

<http://members.aol.com/RVSNorton/Lincoln.html>

Lincoln's 13th Amendment quickly passed through Congress and President Johnson signed it late in 1865. Prior to Lincoln's assassination, he and Johnson both felt that the South's secession was the fault of its citizens, and not the individual states. Therefore, when the Amnesty and Reconstruction Act was enforced by Johnson, he prescribed that once ten-percent of a seceding state's population swore allegiance to the United States, the previously rebel state could re-enter the Union. Click on the weblink to read this key document:

<http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/amend13.htm>

The 14th Amendment states that anyone born in the United States automatically becomes a citizen. No state was allowed to deprive any citizen, regardless of color, of their life, liberty, or property. However, if voting rights deprivation occurred, the state faced a possible loss in representation. Take your time and learn more about the 14th Amendment by clicking on this excellent PBS documentary:

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_14th.html

The 15th Amendment, the most important legal piece of power, completed the trio of legislation. It gave the black man the equal right of representation. He could vote as an American citizen. Read about it at:

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/15thamendment.html>

In order to aid the newly freed men, women and children, the American government created the Freedmen's Bureau. Investigate it at the site below and then complete your assignment:

<http://www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen/fbact.htm>

Now, do your assignment worth 20 points by:

Answering this Discussion Question: "In what ways did the Freedmen's Bureau assist ex-slaves in their transition from slavery to freedom?" To assist you, use this awesome digital history website: <http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/freedmen1.html>