



*United States Colored Troops  
Public Sculpture*

Lesson Plans Booklet



Artists have always played an important role in society as our storytellers and history keepers. While we look at the story of the United States Colored Troops through the site-specific sculpture *Boundless*, we are also exploring works in our permanent collection that can help you bring the stories of the soldiers into your classroom.

CAM is located in Wilmington where the Battle of Forks Road took place, but as we continue to develop these lessons, we hope that they will reflect the stories of all the counties we serve. Many of the soldiers who fought in Wilmington would settle in the area after the war and help shape the cities that surround us. The Battle of Forks Road documentary, available on our YouTube channel, brings to life the intensity of the hours of battle fighting for the possession of Wilmington.

To fully experience Stephen Hayes' work *Boundless*, you can schedule a tour and lesson with our education team. Details on virtual or in person visits can be found on our School Tour Information page. You can also contact me at [lifelonglearning@cameronartmuseum.org](mailto:lifelonglearning@cameronartmuseum.org), or our education team at [education@cameronartmuseum.org](mailto:education@cameronartmuseum.org).

September Krueger  
Director of Lifelong Learning



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# The Soldier's Uniform



*Unidentified African American Soldier in Union infantry sergeant's uniform and black mourning ribbon with bayonet in front of painted backdrop.* United States, None. [Between 1863 and 1865] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012650006/>

## Objectives

Students will understand how the service of African Americans in the Civil War changed their status as citizens.

Students will think about uniforms and their purpose in the service and in society.

## Focus Questions

Were uniforms important for how African American soldiers were seen in society?

Could the camera change the way the public felt about African American soldiers?

## Grade Levels

4-5

## North Carolina Standard Course of Study

### Social Studies

4.H.1.3 Explain how people, events, and developments brought about changes to communities in various regions of North Carolina.

4.C & G.2.2 Give examples of rights and responsibilities of citizens according to North Carolina Constitution.

4.G.1.4 Explain the impact of technology (communication, transportation, and inventions) on North Carolina's citizens, past and present.

5.H.2.3 Compare the changing roles of women and minorities on American society from Pre-Colonial through Reconstruction.

EX.5.C & G.2 Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

### Visual Art

4.V.1.3 Infer meaning from art.

4.CX.1.4 Explain how place and time influence ideas, issues, and themes found in art.

5.V.2.2 Use ideas and imagery from the global environment as sources for creating art.

### Vocabulary

Arts and Non-Arts: right, responsibility, uniform, enslaved, portrait, *carte de visite*, mourning, leadership.

### Materials

- Pencil
- Blank newsprint or roll paper
- Tape
- Flashlights
- Tools for writing and coloring

## Activities

1. Ask students to begin with a free write on the word “uniform”. What is a uniform? Who wears a uniform? Why wear a uniform? Are uniforms desirable? Would you wear a uniform? Why or why not? Discuss “uniform” as an adjective. Does wearing a uniform help with uniform *behavior*? Does wearing a uniform affect uniform *treatment*?
2. Have students look closely at images of the *Boundless* sculpture. Look carefully at their bodies, their clothing, and their faces. Make a list of details that can be seen from head to toe on the figures, paying close attention to the uniforms. How old are the men? What are they holding? Describe their posture; how are they holding their bodies? Did the sculptor make any differences among the soldiers?

During the Civil War, as many as 5,000 African American joined the Union Army in North Carolina. The majority of the recruits were escaping a life of enslavement. Since 1831, African Americans were not allowed by law to read or write. Most recruits had been working in agriculture as laborers on farms and plantations, but they also worked in the pine forest industry or on the coast in shipping and fishing. Military service not only allowed them to participate in helping bring an end to slavery, but also to open doors to new opportunities and to earn the rights of citizenship. In a letter from the 4th USCT, we can get a glimpse of the transformation through service. A soldier recorded the words of a mother who welcomed her son as he returned from war: “He had left his home a slave, but he returned in the garb of a Union soldier, free, a man.”<sup>1</sup>

3. Have students research the different groups living in North Carolina before and after the Civil War. Divided into small groups, students should examine the rights of the different populations before 1860 and after 1865. Students should list the rights that were granted to citizens, and then consider how the Civil War did or did not change these rights for African Americans. Have students work in mixed groups to diagram the information for each population. Summarize some of the big ideas.
4. How could the advent of photography affect the lives of African American soldiers? Ask students to examine the photograph of the Union soldier. Students will find similarities to the sculpture and they should also list new observations made in the photograph. Explain that the photograph was a recent invention, and the *carte de visite* was a more affordable type of photograph that made it possible for average people to have a portrait made and shared. It was also a truthful image. Seeing a man in uniform - a man of any color - held some of the same meanings for the public. Soldiers could send home an image to family, showing the uniform they wore in service for their country. What were they fighting for? How were these images different from other ways African Americans were portrayed at this time? A photograph offered a very different image of African Americans from some of the illustrations that appeared in publications of the era.
5. Students will create portraits that embody the physical gesture of the soldiers in *Boundless* and display symbolically ideas their service represented. Group students in trios. One student will serve as photographer and interviewer, one as the assistant and one as the subject. The photographer should interview the subject to understand what the subject wants in their image helping them to think about props, clothing, and symbols that will help convey that message. The subject should assume the posture of the figures in the *Boundless* sculpture. Use a bright flashlight to project a shadow on paper (using a hallway, door, or an open wall in the classroom). The photographer and assistant can work together to trace the subject, and the group can take turns to do interviews and draw images. Each student should complete their portrait with a detailed uniform. Students should consider what they have learned about the reasons African Americans served in the Civil War, and the rights they earned by enlisting. Students might consider family, city, fellow soldiers, or the nation when designing the uniform and backdrop for their image. Students can combine text from their free write and key words from their research in completing their portraits.

## Resources

### [African Americans Get the Vote in Eastern North Carolina](#)

Life before the Civil War: [Farms and Plantations](#)

### [Antebellum North Carolina](#)

### [What is a “carte de visite”? From the Art Gallery NSW](#)

[Davis-Marks, Isis, “The Black Soldiers of the Civil War: a new book by scholar Deborah Willis features more than 70 photos, as well as letters, journal entries and posters.”](#)

### [Uniforms Insignia and Flags](#)

<sup>1</sup>Richard M. Reid, *Freedom for Themselves: North Carolina’s Black Soldiers in the Civil War Era*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 391

# The Soldier's Uniform

## Reading 1

Excerpts from *Recollections of My Slavery Days* by William Henry Singleton, pages 48-49

Introductions and Annotations by Katherine Mellon Charron and David S. Cecelski, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1999

### Introduction

William Henry Singleton was born in 1843 in New Bern, N.C. to an enslaved woman, Lettice Nelson, in Craven County. They lived on the John Nelson plantation at Garbacon Creek. He was sold at age 5 to a slave trader and was taken to Georgia. Henry worked for three years on a plantation near Atlanta. Then, he ran away and managed to get to Wilmington. He avoided capture by pretending to be the slave of a white woman who was traveling alone. From Wilmington he walked to New Bern to return to the plantation where he was born.

Henry would continue to run and hide from the overseer to avoid being sold again. When the landowner dies in 1856, he freed his 32 enslaved workers. Afterwards, Henry found work in New Bern until the outbreak of war in 1861. He entered the war as the manservant of Samuel O. Hyman Jr. in the Confederate army in April of '61 and they were stationed in Virginia. In March of 1862, he ran one more time, escaping to the Union lines in New Bern. Henry became very involved in recruiting other black soldiers.

"I spoke to General Burnside about getting my regiment into the federal service but he said he could do nothing about it. It was to General Burnside, however, and my later association with him, when I was with him for a time as his servant, that I owe what I now regard as one of the greatest experiences of my life. It was one day at the General's headquarters. His adjutant pointed to a man who was talking to the general in an inner room and said, 'Do you know that man in there?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'That is our President, Mr. Lincoln.' In a few minutes the conference in the inner room apparently ended and Mr. Lincoln and General Burnside came out. I do not know whether they had told President Lincoln about me before or not, but the general pointed to me and said, 'This is the little fellow who got up a colored regiment.' President Lincoln shook hands with me and said, 'It is a good thing. What do you want?' I said, 'I have a thousand men. We want to help fight to free our race. We want to know if you will take us in the service?' He said, 'You have got good pluck. But I can't take you now because you are contraband of war and not American citizens yet. But hold onto your society and there may be a chance for you.' So saying he passed on. The only recollection I have of him is that of a tall, dark complexioned raw boned man, with a pleasant face. I looked at him as he passed on in company with General Burnside and I never saw him again."

"On January 1, 1863, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which made me and the rest of my race free. We could not be bought and sold any more or whipped or made to work without pay. We were not to be treated as things without souls any more, but human beings. Of course I do not remember that I thought it all out this way when I learned what President Lincoln had done. I had gone back to New Bern then. The thing we expected was that we would be taken into federal service at once. It was not until May 28, 1863, however, that the thing we had hoped for so long came to pass, when Colonel James C. Beecher, came and took command of the regiment. I was appointed Sergeant of Company G, being the first colored man to be accepted into federal service and the only colored man that furnished the government with a thousand men in the Civil War. The regiment was first called the First North Carolina Colored Regiment. It later became know as the 35th Regiment, United States Colored Troops."

# The Soldier's Uniform

## Reading 2

Excerpts from *Recollections of My Slavery Days* by William Henry Singleton, pages 52-53

Introductions and Annotations by Katherine Mellon Charron and David S. Cecelski, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1999

### Introduction

William Henry Singleton was born in 1843 in New Bern, N.C. to an enslaved woman, Lettice Nelson, in Craven County. They lived on the John Nelson plantation at Garbacon Creek. He was sold at age 5 to a slave trader and was taken to Georgia. Henry worked for three years on a plantation near Atlanta. Then, he ran away and managed to get to Wilmington. He avoided capture by pretending to be the slave of a white woman who was traveling alone. From Wilmington he walked to New Bern to return to the plantation where he was born.

Henry would continue to run and hide from the overseer to avoid being sold again. When the landowner dies in 1856, he freed his 32 enslaved workers. Afterwards, Henry found work in New Bern until the outbreak of war in 1861. He entered the war as the manservant of Samuel O. Hyman Jr. in the Confederate army in April of '61 and they were stationed in Virginia. In March of 1862, he ran one more time, escaping to the Union lines in New Bern. Henry became very involved in recruiting other black soldiers.

“ ‘And I am a citizen of this great country and have a part in directing its affairs. When election day comes I go to the polls and vote, and my vote counts as much as the vote of the richest and best educated man in the land. Think of it! I, who was once bought and sold, and whipped simply because it was thought I had opened a book. And it is not only I who have this privilege, but millions of other men of my race. Ah, we can truly say, ‘Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.’ “

“ ‘I feel I am greatly indebted to the government and to the American people for what they have done for me and for my race. I can not find words to express properly what I feel. But my heart is overflowing with gratitude, when I think of my situation and the situation of my race now, and think of all the blessings we enjoy, compared with our former situation. I feel that as long as I live an honest life, do my work and conduct myself properly, I have the respect and good wishes of the community. And this is true, I believe, not only for myself but of every man of my race. As long as we are honest and obey the law, seek to educate ourselves and to show ourselves worthy of freedom, we will have the respect of the American people and fair treatment from them.’ “

“ ‘It is a great thing to have lived to see this day come. It is great to feel that people of my race understand something of the debt they owe this great country and are showing the appreciation by trying to be good citizens.’ “

# Regimental Colors

## Objectives

Students will understand the function of regimental colors in the Civil War. Students will compare flag designs from two regiments.

## Focus Questions

What was the purpose of regimental colors in the civil war?

What were some of the symbols used for the USCT flags? Do these motifs offer inspiration or ideas of freedom that are particular to the colored troops?

## North Carolina Standard Course of Study

### Social Studies

8.H.1.3 Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.

8.H.2.2 Summarize how leadership and citizen actions influenced the outcome of key conflicts in North Carolina and the United States.

AH1.H.5.1 Summarize how the philosophical, ideological, and/or religious views on freedom and equality contributed to the development of American political and economic systems through reconstruction.

### Visual Art

8.V.2.1 Create art that uses the best solutions to identified problems.

8.CX.1.1 Understand the role of visual arts in North Carolina and in the United States in relation to history and geography.

8.CX.1.2 Analyze art from various historical periods in terms of style, subject matter, and movements.

8.CX.2.1 Compare personal interests and abilities to those needed to succeed in a variety of art careers.

### Project

Students will examine three works of art. The images could be posted in the room together, offering them an opportunity to respond independently to each one.

Students will read about David Bustill Bowser, an African American artist who designed USCT flags in Pennsylvania, and students will read from Milton M. Holland to grasp the role of regimental colors in battle.

Students will discuss the different symbols created in each image and then design their own flag.

Image 1: *Regimental Colors of the 5th USCT*, 1860s

Image 2: David Bustill Bowser, *We will prove ourselves men - 127th Regt. U.S. Colored Troops*, between 1860 and 1870.

Image 3: Juan Logan (American, b. 1946), *The Original Thirteen*, 1996, acrylic, rubber stamping on paper.



## Activities

1. Look at the work of Juan Logan, created about 130 years after the end of the Civil War.
  - What details do you notice?
  - What is familiar and how has he altered familiar motifs?
  - What was your first response to the work?
  - What are three questions you would ask the artist?
2. Look at the two examples of USCT flags. Discuss the symbols. Ask students to consider the differences between the USCT flags:
  - Who are the figures on Bustill's flag?
  - Why would he choose these symbols in his design?
  - What do their actions communicate?
  - How might this image inspire the troops?
  - How might a Confederate soldier interpret the design?

Students should consider the flag in the context of battle as well as its use in civilian settings. How did regimental flags serve a practical purpose, and how did these flags play a role in the larger community? For whom did they offer a symbolic image/object of a unified nation?

## Background

Battle flags were used to identify a regiment. They had a practical and psychological role for the men, representing patriotism and interdependency. Carried into the chaos of a battle, they were used as a means of cohesion in the Civil War, but they also stood for family and community where the flag may have been made; flags were often stitched by mothers, daughters, wives and sisters, reinforcing the connection to home.<sup>1</sup>

Men followed two different flags into battle: one flag displayed national colors and the second flag was the regimental flag, which carried the regiment's history inscribed on the flag. The idea of losing a battle has been expressed as a "loss of colors". Casualty rates were high in the color guard. It was common for a captured flag to be displayed like a trophy in a public venue. A soldier in the Civil War could earn the Medal of Honor for defending their flag, and men followed their unit colors with great pride. Color bearers did not carry a weapon, so they were in danger of being killed or wounded. In a letter home, from September 1861, Lewis Warlick of the 1st North Carolina Infantry wrote that he had "to protect that flag in a time of battle, if the color bearer should be shot down it is my duty to seize the colors and again let them flout to the breeze, and so on if I should be shot another of the guard has to take hold and never let it be out of sight of the men who fight under it."<sup>2</sup>

There are stories of men tearing the unit colors into pieces to be shared among the troops before capture. This symbol of unity on the field was also a symbol of home and family. Men could face capture and imprisonment, holding a scrap of the flag, with a reminder of their goals and dreams. For colored soldiers - who suffered even greater abuse if captured - the flag was a symbol of freedom, equality, and citizenship in their future within a union these soldiers were fighting to preserve.

Recruitment of black troops was not universally accepted. Equality and the right of suffrage were seen as dangerous to some. Yet the work of Bowser was widely viewed in the east. It showed proud and dignified men, dismissing the negative caricatures of lazy or violent black men that were the norm.

Men of the 6th USCT who had trained in PA traveled to North Carolina in early January 1865. After a difficult journey in rough seas, they joined other forces in the assault at Ft. Fisher. They would muster out in September 1865, having been victorious in NC but suffering 40% of casualties of the men who had enlisted just two years before. They would receive praise from Lt. Joseph H. Golding for their bravery:

*"What did it matter that his face was black? What more could he have done to prove himself a man, as true as any who walks the earth?" The men had served "to the utmost, even to the laying down of life for us, for the flag, [and] for the perpetuation of the grandest nationality the sun shines upon."<sup>3</sup>*

The Battle of Forks Road ensued between Union and Confederate forces February 20-21, 1865 for the occupation of Wilmington, North Carolina. This was the Confederacy's last major city and "lifeline of supplies" for its army, which had been severed when the Union army took Fort Fisher, thus stopping the blockade runners from delivering supplies to Confederate Troops.<sup>4</sup>

The battle caused numerous casualties, and the heaviest losses were suffered by the 1st, 5th, and 27th US Colored Troops.<sup>5</sup>

Amongst the largest casualty rates were the 5th USCT regiment, who led the attack and represent 74% of all Union losses in the battle (39 wounded soldiers).<sup>6</sup>

Colonel Elias Wright led the 2,000 African American soldiers of the 1st, 5th, 27th, and 37th USCT who fought at the Battle of Forks Road.<sup>7</sup> Of these men, two from the 5th USCT received the Medal of Honor: Powhatan Beaty and Milton M. Holland.<sup>8</sup>

Letters from Milton Holland were published in the *Athens Messenger* in 1865. He was 16 when he first tried to enlist, but at the beginning of the war, blacks were not permitted to serve. He would later enlist in the 5th US Colored Infantry in 1863, along with 149 men he had recruited.<sup>9</sup> Holland would earn the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service at the Battle of New Market Heights near Richmond in September 1864. Four black sergeants would take command when the regular officers had been killed or wounded. Milton was one of those men. The names Petersburg and New Market Heights - a decisive battle for access to Richmond - were added to the regimental flag. In February 1864, the *Athens Messenger* published correspondence from Holland, who already wrote with great pride in his service. Read a portion of his letter:

*Norfolk, VA. Jan. 19, 1864*

*You will be reminded of the company of colored soldiers raised by myself in the county of Athens, [Ohio], and taken to Camp Delaware, 25 miles north of Columbus, on the Olentangy. It has been mustered into the service in the 5th Regt. U.S. Colored Troops. The regiment is organized, and has been in active service for three months. Our company is C - the color company - in which you many remember of the flag presentation, made by the kind citizens of Athens, through Mr. Moore, at which Mr. [John Mercer] Langston was present and received it, pledging in behalf of the company, that they would ever be true to the flag, though it might be tattered or torn by hard service, it should never be disgraced. I am happy to say that those colors have been used as the regimental colors for several months, and we had the honor of forming the first line of battle under their floating stars. We now have new regimental colors, and the old ones are laid away in my cabin and I am sitting now beneath them writing.*

*The regiment though young, has been in one engagement. The men stood nobly and faced the cowardly foe when they were hid in the swamp firing upon them. They stood like men, and when ordered to charge, went in with a yell, and came out victorious, losing four killed and several wounded. The rebel loss is large, as compared with ours. As for company C she played her part admirably in the charge. Our 4th sergeant, Charles G. Stark, is said to have been killed in the picket guard while in the act of running away.*

*I must say of the 5th, that after twenty days of hard scouting, without overcoats or blankets, they returned home to camp, which the soldiers term their home, making twenty-five and thirty miles per day. Several of the white cavalry told me that no soldiers have ever done as hard marching through swamps and marshes as cheerfully as we did, and that if they had to follow up for any length of time it would kill their horses, During that raid, thousands of slaves belonging to rebel masters were liberated. You are aware that the colored man makes no distinction in regard to persons, so I may say all belonging to slaveholders were liberated.*

Read [A Biographical Sketch of Master Sergeant Milton Holland](#) for his full biography.

3. What do we learn about the mindset of soldiers from Holland's letter? What was the flag to a soldier at war? How did Holland's actions contribute to his standing as a citizen and freeman after the war?

### **David Bustill Bowser (1820-1900)**

David Bustill Bowser was a noted artist in his time. Born free in Philadelphia of a fugitive from slavery, David was active among a community of African American artists and artisans along with his wife, Elizabeth Bowser. For two decades he sustained a business as a painter for different voluntary organizations. These projects included things like signs, banners, uniform hats, and equipment, but he was also commissioned to paint a number of regimental flags for the United States Colored Troops organized in PA. Over 10,000 men were recruited to the USCT in Philadelphia, organized into eleven USCT regiments. They trained at Camp William Penn, and Bowser was commissioned to make unique flags for each troop. The picture on this flag distinguishes it from other regimental flags that draw from the American flag for motifs. Here, Columbia, in white, is a personification of America. USCT flags were not issued by the state. They were made by supporters because the colored troops did not hold the same status as state or federal troops. Photographs of four out of the eleven flag designs remain.

Bowser was actively involved in the recruitment of troops and he supported efforts to challenge segregation in the city. An active abolitionist, his family home is identified as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Bowser was also a painter of landscapes and portraits through his business. Two notable subjects are works of John Brown and several portraits of Abraham Lincoln.

David and his wife were active in the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows and he attended the state's Equal Rights Convention. When asked to speak at the convention, he was very hopeful:

*"On a motion of Mr. A.M. Green, Mr. David B. Bowser of Philadelphia was called upon to address the Convention while the Committee on Credentials were preparing their report.*

*Mr. Bowser proceeded to show the bright promises for the future which are everywhere now evident, and urged the importance of a strong and united effort for the purpose of securing our political rights throughout this Commonwealth. He hoped that from the proceedings of this Convention, the white citizens of the whole state would be made acquainted with the noble deeds and heroism of the Colored American; that we would make prominent the facts upon which we base our claims for equal and exact justice. The speaker enforced the necessity for organized action - such that when we return to our homes, every man shall feel it to be his duty to work earnestly and persistently for the furtherance of the great and glorious objects for which this Convention has been convened."*

From: State Equal Rights' Convention Of The Colored People Of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, Pa., 1865, and African American Pamphlet Collection. Proceedings of the State Equal Rights' Convention, of the Colored People of Pennsylvania, held in the city of Harrisburg, February 8th, 9th, and 10th,: together with a few of the arguments

presented suggesting the necessity for holding the Convention, and an Address of the Colored State Convention to the people of Pennsylvania. [Philadelphia: Printed for and by order of the Convention, 1865] Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/92838830/>.

4. David Bustill Bowser did not serve in the Civil War, but his actions played a role in the lives of the troops and the future of African American in society. Explain. How would you compare the life of an African American artist then and now? What risks did Bowser take in his era?
5. What is your personification of liberty? Create an image in the style of Bowser using your own images for freedom, equality, and justice. Consider his use of foreground and background, figures, and text. Students could work in small groups and design a work on paper or posterboard to the same scale of an actual regimental flag.

## Extensions

Look at the U.S. Flag Code and the guidelines that have been established as etiquette for maintaining respect for the flag: <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title4/chapter1&edition=prelim>

## Resources

Bowser, David Bustill, Artist. We will prove ourselves men - 127th Regt. U.S. Colored Troops. United States, Non. [Between 1860 and 1870] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/98506793/>

Making money and doing good: The story of an African American power couple from the 1800s By Amanda B. Moniz, February 9, 2018: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/bowser>

United States Colored Troops, by Lucien Holness. The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia. <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/united-states-colored-troops/#header-biblio>

Battle flag carried by black union troops hits auction block, by Lristen de Groot. June 10, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/f549d4034fc642258a5349791374146e>

David Bustill Bowser Historical Marker: <http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-18D>  
<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/flags/id/565/>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Shaw, Madelyn and Lynne Bassett. Homefront and Battlefield: Quilts and Context in the Civil War, 48

<sup>2</sup> Shaw, 57

<sup>3</sup> Zollars, Candice. "They Laid Down their Lives for the Flag." Military Images, vol. 33, no. 3, 2015, pp. 25-28. ProQuest, <https://login.proxy.128.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/they-laid-down-their-lives-flag/docview/1691653350/se-2?accountid=12779>.

<sup>4</sup> Fonvielle, Chris. Last Stand At Wilmington: The Battle of Forks Road. (Wilmington, NC: 2007.)

<sup>5</sup> Fonvielle, Chris. The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books; 2001.) 398

<sup>6</sup> Fonvielle, The Wilmington Campaign. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Fonvielle, The Wilmington Campaign. 481

<sup>8</sup> Battle of Forks Road Short Film, Cameron Art Museum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnOPQB12tSE&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>9</sup> Battle of Forks Road Short Film, Cameron Art Museum.

<sup>10</sup> Perdreau, Connie. "A Biographical Sketch of Master Sergeant Milton Holland" <https://grosvenor-cwrt.org/our-moh-recipients/more-about-master-sergeant-milton-holland/>

Regimental Colors of the 5th USCT, 1860s



**David Bustill Bowser, *We will prove ourselves men* -  
127th Regt. U.S. Colored Troops, between 1860 and 1870.**



**Juan Logan (American, b. 1946), *The Original Thirteen*, 1996, acrylic and rubber stamping on paper.**



# Battle of Forks Road

## Life in Wilmington



### Objectives

Students will understand the economy of North Carolina in the 1800s, including the economic role of enslaved people. Students will compare the different social conditions of people in North Carolina.

### Focus Questions

What were the natural resources of North Carolina?

What was life like in Wilmington in the mid-nineteenth century and what type of employment was available?

How were different jobs and social roles affected by the Civil War?

### Grade Levels

5

### North Carolina Standard Course of Study

#### Social Studies

5.H.2.3 Compare the changing roles of women and minorities on American society from Pre-Colonial through Reconstruction.

5.E.1.2 Explain the impact of production, specialization, technology, and division of labor on the economic growth of the United States.

#### Visual Art

5.CX.1.1 Understand how the visual arts have affected, and are reflected in, the culture, traditions, and history of the United States.

5.CX.1.2 Recognize key contributions of North American artists in history.

5.CX.2.4 Interpret visual images from media sources and the immediate environment.

### Reading

RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

RI.5.6 Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

### Materials

- Paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue

### Vocabulary

Emancipation, Abolition, Peninsula, Census, Seamstress, Ration, Remnant

## Project

Students will examine the Tulip Quilt. This object will be used to compare different lives in the mid 1800s. Students will read an article from the 1850s describing the city of Wilmington and eastern part of the state. Students will also read about natural resources and labor from this time.

Using the Tulip Quilt Graphic Organizer, students will organize details about social and economic life in North Carolina. Students will understand sewing as a skill and example of labor. Students will also understand that sewing could be an advantage for freedom for an enslaved person.

Students will make a quilt square for a Wilmington resident in the 1850s determining who it is for (race, gender, class, civil or military, etc.) and what symbols would represent their life and livelihood.

## Activities

1. Invite students to join you for a Quilting Party! Young girls and boys could learn to help in the making of large quilts in the past. Explain that you are working on a quilt that will show the lives of people in North Carolina in the 19th Century. First, look at the image of the Tulip Quilt. What do you see? What details do you notice? Students may be invited to share information about a quilt they have at home. Zoom in on the image (or bring in a quilt) and allow the students to discover the stitching that is visible in the quilt. Encourage discussion on how the quilt was constructed: a quilt is like a "fabric sandwich" with a top and bottom layer, plus a layer in the middle for warmth. The picture shows the top layer of the quilt.
  - How was sewing done in the 1800s? Who was the maker of this quilt?
  - What are the materials needed for making a quilt? Where are these materials found?

Explain that we know this quilt was made in North Carolina in the mid 1800s and that we will look at the lives of different people from that time period. We will research what Wilmington life was at the time.

2. Listen to the **Introduction of Battle of Forks Road** (0:00-3:49) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_GvnOAN\\_8NQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GvnOAN_8NQ)

Questions to students during the film:

- What did you notice about the landscape?
- What is an earthwork?
- What were some of the things that Dr. Fonvielle discovered on the site he investigated?
- What were these researchers trying to determine?

Explain that in the film, we are at a location just 3 miles away from downtown Wilmington, but Wilmington looked very different in the 1800s.

After the War of Independence, emigration to North Carolina continued into the early 1800s. NC was isolated and many people would move on to free lands when they found difficulty in growing crops in soil that was worn-out. They also lacked opportunities to sell their crops. Transportation was difficult without proper roads, developed waterways, or railroads. People who did not farm were still connected to farming merchants, mill workers, or repairmen for farm equipment. The economy struggled between 1815 and 1850. Many people were common farmers, but some people were landowning planters with more wealth. Planters kept enslaved Africans and African Americans for cheap labor.

Farming improved as settlers learned to rotate their crops and to add fertilizer. The state also added journals for farmers and an annual fair. In 1833, the Wilmington Weldon Railroad was founded. This connected the coast to the center of the state. More railroads would connect North Carolina to the northeast.

Cotton planting began to grow rapidly after 1820. It became one of the largest crops along with tobacco. Rice was grown in large quantities in Brunswick County. The Cape Fear region was also known for naval stores that could be produced from the stands of long leaf pine trees. These products (tar, pitch, and turpentine) were important for the shipping industry in the era. The trees grew in abundance in North Carolina, and they grew on land that was not good for other crops. The labor of men and women enslaved for life made the production of great amounts of rice and naval stores possible.

3. To explain the different circumstances and quality of life for enslaved men and women, give an introduction to the life and conditions through the story of two women - the quilt owner and maker - and the lens of fabric and sewing. We know that the quilt in our collection was made in Goldsboro. We know that it was made for a woman's dowry. A pieced quilt top was less common and more precious at this time. It is possible that the enslaved worker who sewed the quilt was a domestic worker. The stitches, at about twelve per inch, show great skill and detail.

Here is a story about Harriet Powers. Her ability to sew was important for her freedom:

*Sewing Stories: Harriet Powers' Journey From Slave to Artist* by Barbara Herkert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXGaMxi8CI>

This map shows the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States. Compiled from the census of 1860: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3861e.cw0013200/?r=0.657,0.538,0.456,0.236,0>

- Use the Tulip Quilt Graphic Organizer (or have students create their own motif) to define the different topics in this introduction to North Carolina. What is life like for the people living in North Carolina at this time, just before the start of the Civil War?

**People:** Who lives here? What brought them to North Carolina? What role does slavery play in Wilmington?

**Natural Resources:** What materials are found here? What is the landscape like?

**Jobs:** How do people make a living? How do the natural resources help the economy? How did African Americans contribute to the economy in North Carolina?

**Transportation:** What kind of travel was available? What happened with the growth of railroads?

Have students begin to think about a color-coding system to group the different jobs in this 19th century economy.

- Using the additional resources, students should research a job in agriculture, forestry, crafts, professional jobs, and trade. What changes could occur with this job after the outbreak of war?
- Designing your quilt: Look at the example of the tulip quilt, noting the shapes and colors and the open and closed spaces. Students create a motif or simply use a square for their communal quilt. Students should think about the positive and negative areas of the design, such as the tulips and the white pathways in between. Each student will contribute a square for a member of this 19th century community. Color can be used to indicate the type of job. Words and images can be used to create a picture of the occupation.

## Background Readings

- A View of Wilmington, NC

Wilmington is the chief town of North Carolina. It is located at the coming-together of the two main branches of the Cape Fear River, 148 miles southeast from the capital, Raleigh, and twice as far from Washington. It replaced Brunswick as the most important town and seaport of North Carolina. Nothing remains in Brunswick except the ruins of the church and the foundation of the palace built by (William) Tryon while colonial governor. There is nothing attractive to the tourist traveling through the State of North Carolina; it has sandy soil and the scenery is mostly pine forests.

When traveling from the west coast, there seems to be only pine forests and cypress swamps. Here and there a log cabin is found or a settlement with a collection of huts with a water tank. However, this land provides the main products of the State: tar, pitch, turpentine, and lumber. Wilmington is growing quickly, and its turpentine distilleries have helped the economy although the land is close to swamps.

The harbor of Wilmington has a dangerous shoal at its entrance, but will admit vessels of two hundred tons. Across from the town, there are two islands in the river, surrounded by different channels. Here you find some of the finest rice fields of the south. Wilmington is at the end of the great series of southern railroads reaching from New York, and branching in various directions from the main route.

Adapted from *Wilmington: Waterfront, circa 1850s*, Page from Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion.

[https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/P0001/#folder\\_1021#1](https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/P0001/#folder_1021#1)

- Labor

The labor of enslaved men and women in the south went hand in hand with the development of agriculture. They would work in the cotton fields to grow and gather the fiber, and then wait for an annual ration of coarse fabric for making a few changes of clothing. Often this fabric would be in tatters by the end of the year. Those who worked in fields were usually given shoes. Cast-off clothing was reused as well as remnants from material that was intact.

Durable, plain-woven cloth was made for sale to slave holders. The fabric used shorter fibers and the quality could be compared through samples when being purchased. White laborers in the south also needed strong, inexpensive cloth. Some weaving and spinning mills were in the south, but much of the fabric came from northern or European mills. Some plantations set up equipment for spinning and weaving on site.

An enslaved worker might help with the sewing of clothes for all workers and sometimes the master's family as well. Sewing was a valuable skill and would even be advertised in the sale of a slave. While the mistress might sew the top of a quilt, the backing and quilting might be completed by slaves in the house. Sewing was also a skill that could help a fugitive survive during the Civil War. Payment for sewing or mending could provide money for survival in the north.

From *Slave Cloth and Clothing Slaves: Craftsmanship, Commerce, and Industry*, by Madelyn Shaw.

<https://www.mesdajournal.org/2012/slave-cloth-clothing-slaves-craftsmanship-commerce-industry/>

Additional reading on sewing and labor: *Negro Folklore of the Piedmont. Fieldworker Esther S. Pinnix*, pages 169-170, from *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States* prepared by the Federal Writers' Project 1936-38.

<https://memory.loc.gov/mss/mesn/111/111.pdf>



**Wilmington: Waterfront, circa 1850s**, pages from Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion  
[https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/P0001/#folder\\_1021#1](https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/P0001/#folder_1021#1)

### Additional Resources

[The Cape Fear](#) from NCpedia

*Life of a Slave on a Southern Plantation*, by BirdBrain History

<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/life-of-a-slave-on-a-southern-plantation>

*A Picture of Wilmington in 1861*, by Ben Steelman

<https://www.starnewsonline.com/article/NC/20110520/News/605045336/WM>

Occupations in North Carolina in 1860

<https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/occupations-1860>

### Extensions

Pictorial Map of NC: <https://davidrumsey.georeferencer.com/maps/8ea0be3d-1bae-5a18-a68c-61c134bee4bd/>

### Teacher Resources About North Carolina

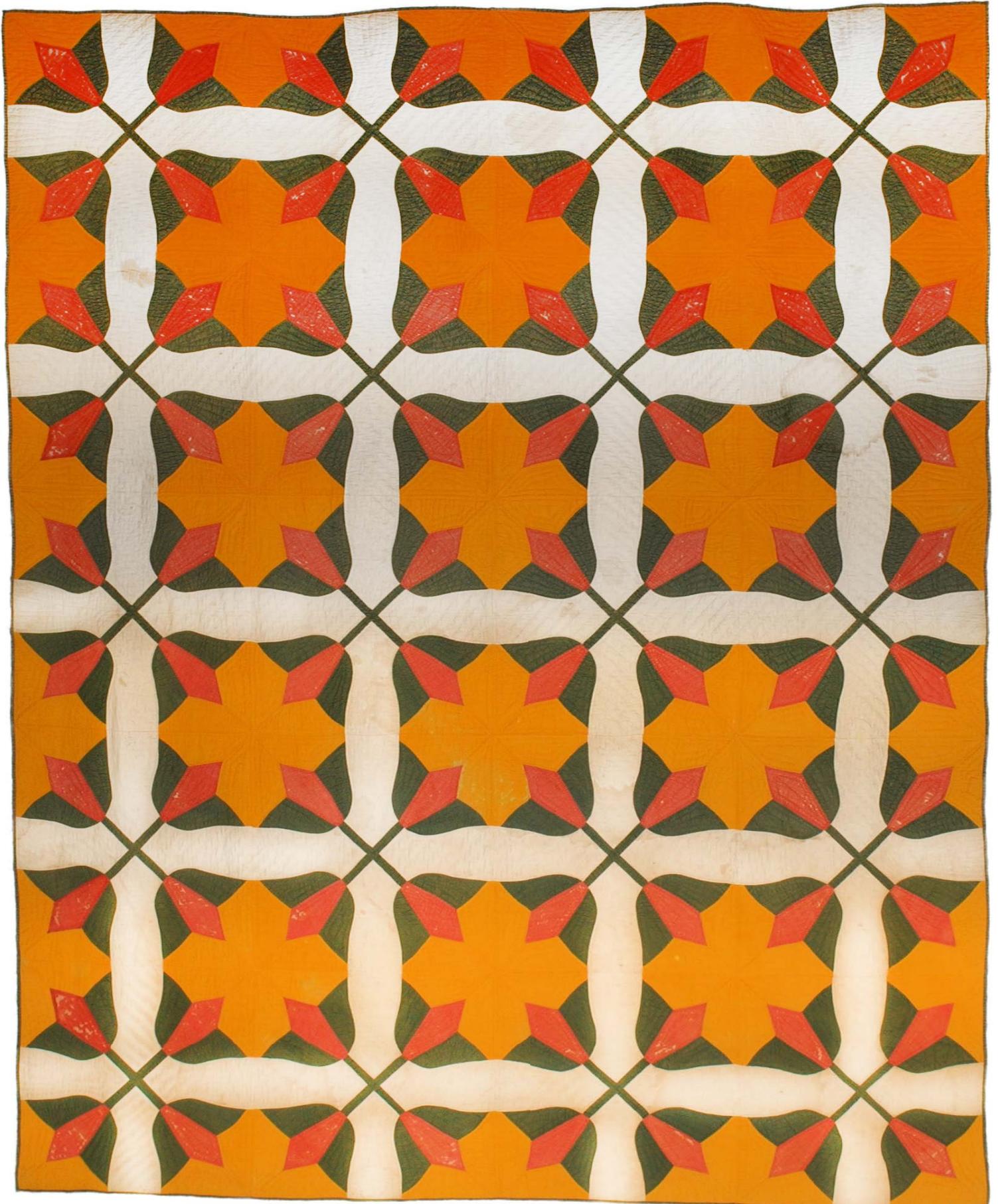
History of North Carolina, Vol. II, William K. Boyd. Chapter 17: Agriculture, Manufactures, Mining, Transportation:

[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United\\_States/North\\_Carolina/\\_Texts/CBHHNC/2/17\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United_States/North_Carolina/_Texts/CBHHNC/2/17*.html)

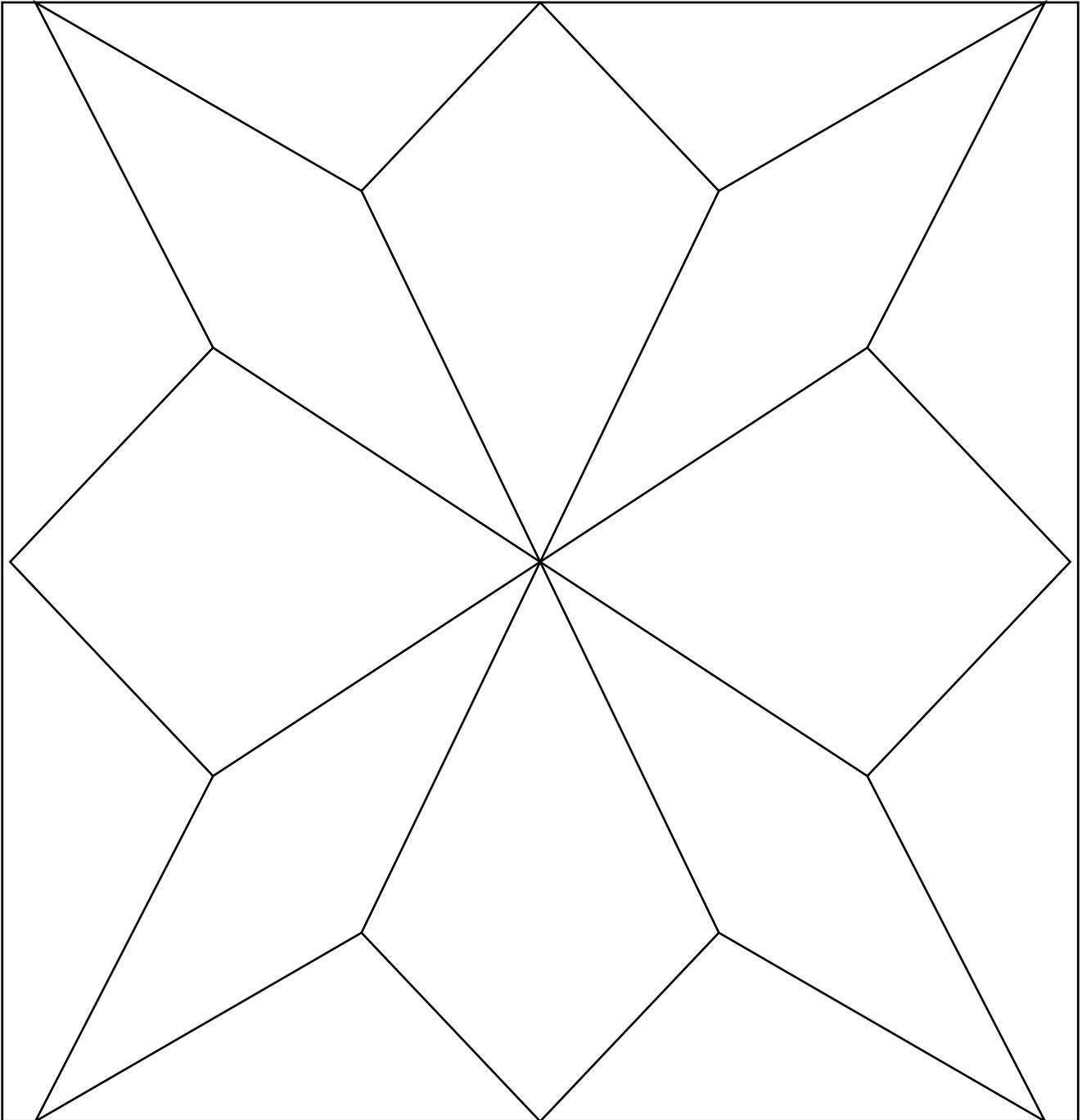
*Naval Stores and the Longleaf Pine*, Written by David Walbert: <https://dev.ncpedia.org/anchor/naval-stores-and-longleaf>

The Colonial Cape Fear: From Pine Forests to Plantations: <https://ncpedia.org/waywelived/colonial-cape-fear>

Unknown Artist, *Slave-Made Quilt (Tulip Design)*, c. 1850, cotton



# Tulip Quilt Graphic Organizer



## **PEOPLE**

Value & Beliefs  
Influences  
Identity

## **ECONOMICS**

Needs/Wants  
Scarcity  
Resources

## **CIVICS & GOVERNMENT**

Power  
Freedom  
Authority

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Rural/Urban  
Resources

## **HISTORY**

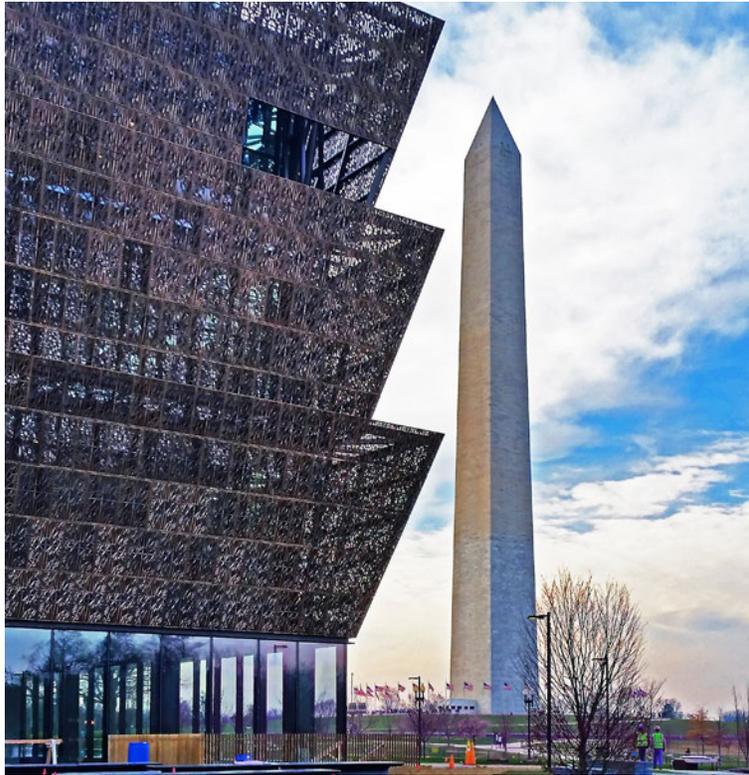
Change  
War  
Nationalism

Wilmington: Waterfront, circa 1850s,  
pages from Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion  
[https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/P0001/#folder\\_1021#1](https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/P0001/#folder_1021#1)



# Parallel Monuments

## Equal Rights in Military Service



Phil Freelon (American 1953-2019), Parallel Monuments, 2016, color inkjet print. Cameron Art Museum. Gift of Frances Goodman in honor of Scott Sullivan and the Bruce Barclay Cameron Foundation. Artwork © estate of Phil Freelon

### Overview

Despite their proven record as effective, courageous combat troops, African American men still faced a long struggle for equal treatment in military service. During the Civil War, black troops were often assigned tough, dirty jobs like digging trenches. Black regiments were commonly issued inferior equipment and were sometimes given inadequate medical treatment in racially segregated hospitals. African American troops were paid less than white soldiers. Some black units, such as the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, refused to accept any pay as long as the rate remained unequal. The Lincoln administration and Congress were very slow in resolving this matter until they finally established equal pay near the war's end.

Combat for both black soldiers and their white officers was doubly dangerous. When captured by the Confederates, black captives could be returned to their previous owners, sold into slavery, or even hanged. Their white officers were considered "outlaws" and might be executed upon capture, rather than kept and treated as prisoners of war.

Other inequalities plagued black troops. Few African American were commissioned as officers and black troops remained in segregated units throughout the Civil War. In fact, African American troops were not integrated with their fellow Americans until the Korean War nearly 100 years later.

### Project

Students will look at the history of the treatment of African American soldiers during the Civil War. Students will look for parallels that existed between black and white servicemen in Union troops. "Parallel" as an idea begins with the work of architect Phil Freelon and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a structure built on the last buildable area of land on the National Mall and less than a mile away from the National Monument, one of the earliest objects to be built on the landscape. The building of a museum dedicated to black veterans was first proposed in 1915. Just as the integration of troops was a century long transition, it was 2016 before the NMAAHC would open its doors to the public.

### Objectives

Students will investigate the experience of African American soldiers in the Civil War.

Students will look for the parallels in the service of black and white troops.

### Focus Questions

When did African American soldiers enter the Civil War?

Did black soldiers have the same experience in war as white soldiers?

What were the expectations of African American soldiers after emancipation?

### North Carolina Standard Course of Study

#### Social Studies

AH1.H.5.1 Summarize how the philosophical, ideological, and/or religious views on freedom and equality contributed to the development of American political and economic systems through Reconstruction.

RI.8.1 Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

#### Visual Art

8.V.2 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.

8.CX.2.2 Analyze skills and information needed from visual arts to solve problems in art and other disciplines.

## Activities

1. Investigate the artwork.
  - Begin by looking at the image. What do you see in the composition? Are you familiar with the location?
  - What details do you notice in the buildings? Compare the lines, shapes, and textures of the buildings. What do you wonder about the surface of each structure?
  - What material do you think was chosen and why?
  - How is scale conveyed between the two structures? Consider where the photographer is standing and how the structures have been framed. What ideas come to mind with the size and placement of the building in the composition?
  - How does each building make you feel and why? What do you think the architects wanted you to feel?
  - The work is called *Parallel Monuments*. Are there any parallel qualities in the structures? Do they represent parallel ideals?
  - What could be the motivation for the architects to work on these projects? What question would you ask Phil Freelon or Robert Mills?

2. Offer students sticky notes in three colors: green, yellow, and pink. Ask students to share what they know about the experience of African American soldiers in the Civil War. Use green to share positive thoughts on the experience of black soldiers. Use pink notes as "stop" lights; these are negative thoughts on the experience of black soldiers. Yellow notes are neutral or parallel experiences of servicemen.

Gather the notes on a wall and divide the class into three groups. For each color, a group of students will look for overlapping comments and develop a statement on the experience of black soldiers before reading from the text.

- Give students an additional color of sticky note and ask them to write about their sources. Do they know a veteran? Have they discussed this topic at home? Do their ideas come from music or popular movies?
  - Invite students to write one sentence imagining whether the military could be a place of equality in the 19th century.
3. Divide the class into three groups and assign readings that will provide different perspectives on black soldiers in the war.
    - From a contemporary historian: Excerpt from *Raising the African Brigade: Early Black Recruitment in the Civil War North Carolina*, by Richard Reid. <http://www.ncgenweb.us/hyde/military/ncusct/brigade4.htm>
    - From our National Archives: Freeman, Elsie, Wynell Burroughs Schamel, and Jean West. *Black Soldiers in the U.S. Military During the Civil War*. <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war>
    - Excerpt from "The Negro as a Soldier" by Christian A. Fleetwood, *Late Sergeant-Major 4th U.S. Colored Troops, 1895*. Fleetwood served with the 4th Colored Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army in the Civil War. He was active in Washington, D.C. after the war, holding different roles in government and business. Read from the attached file, or explore the full text online. <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/rbc/lcrbmrp/t1909/t1909.pdf>

Students could consider the following:

- What did the black soldiers expect from their military service?
- How did the northern (white) soldiers respond to African American recruitment?
- What was service like for black soldier before and after emancipation? There are physical, financial, social, and emotional aspects to military service. How does the African American soldier's experience compare with white soldiers?
- How did Union officers respond to the black troops? Who was considered a suitable candidate to lead the black volunteer troops? Why?

Have students revisit their "spotlight" comments on the experience of African American soldiers. Collectively, have students add specific data gathered from the readings to support their ideas about the experiences of the troops.

4. Commission the students to create banners that will be hung for their fellow students. These banners will tell the experience of black soldiers, and they will also reflect design and spirit of the NMAAHC, which serves as a monument as well as a museum. Look at the brochure about the museum and determine where the banners will hang: inside on the stairwell, outside leading up to the entry, on a walking path between the museum and the National Monument, etc. Students should recall their observations about the photograph by Freelon. Consider how they can combine the building elements in new ways to make an infographic about the soldiers.

Students can read about the design of the National Museum of African American History and Culture: [The Building: Learn about this historic building and its unique architectural features](#) and [Mission of African-American Museum Writ Large in Its Very Design](#), By Ari Shapiro and Maureen Pao.

Students can read about the [Washington Monument: History and Culture](#).

To begin thinking about the banner design, create a simple sketch of the contour lines in the photograph. Play with the scale and repetition of different components. For example, multiply the levels of the Museum or repeat the shape of the pyramid 10 times. Change the orientation of any object that we expect to be upright. Use a line of symmetry in your composition to design a comparison of the positive and negative facts from research.

## Additional Resources

NMAAHC Brochure: <https://www.aiadc.com/sites/default/files/048%20-%20SmithsonianInstitution-NationalMuseumofAfricanAmericanHistoryandCulture.pdf>

Map of the Mall in Washington D.C.: <https://www.si.edu/content/ovs/mallmap.pdf>

Read about the symbolism of the Washington Monument: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/washington-monument-mobile>

Original design of the Washington Monument: <http://mallhistory.org/items/show/280>

Overview on Slavery and the Civil War: Cimprich, John. Slavery and the Civil War. The American Mosaic: The African American Experience, ABC-CLIO, 2021, [africanamerican-abc-clio-com.proxy128.nclive.org/Search/Display/1455923](http://africanamerican-abc-clio-com.proxy128.nclive.org/Search/Display/1455923). Accessed 16 Aug. 2021

## Extensions

Students can research the lives of the architects, Phil Freelon and Robert Mills. Consider what these structures meant to culture in America when they were built. Ask what the projects meant for the careers of the architects. Compare the symbolism behind the design choices, and discuss the integration of historical elements in the design of the NMAAHC.

## Background Reading

***The Negro as a Soldier* by Christian A. Fleetwood, Late Sergeant-Major 4th U.S. Colored Troops**

**THE NEGRO CONGRESS, at the Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta, GA, November 11 to November 23, 1895**

**THE WAR FOR THE UNION (p 5-9)**

It seems a little singular that in the tremendous struggle between the States in 1861-1865, the south should have been the first to take steps toward the enlistment of Negroes. Yet such is the fact. Two weeks after the fall of Fort Sumter, the "Charleston Mercury" records the passing through Augusta of several companies of the 3rd and 4th Georgia Regt., and of sixteen well-drilled companies and one Negro company from Nashville, Tenn. "The Memphis Avalanche" and "The Memphis Appeal" of May 9, 10, and 11, 1861, give notice of the appointment by the "Committee of Safety" of a committee of three persons "to organize a volunteer company composed of our patriotic freemen of color of the city of Memphis, for the service of our common defense."

A telegram from New Orleans dated November 23, 1861, notes the review by Gov. Moore of over 28,000 troops, and that one regiment comprised 111,400 colored men." "The New Orleans Picayune," referring to a review held February 9, 1862, says: "We must also pay a deserved compliment to the companies of free colored men, all very well drilled and comfortably equipped."

It is a little odd, too, that in the evacuation of New Orleans a little later, in April, 1862, all of the troops succeeded in getting away except the Negroes. They "got left."

It is not in the line of this paper to speculate upon what would have been the result of the war had the South kept up this policy, enlisted the freemen, and emancipated the enlisting slaves and their families. The immense addition to their fighting force, the quick recognition of them by Great Britain, to which slavery was the greatest bar, and the fact that the heart of the Negro was with the South but for slavery, and the case stands clear. But the primary successes of the South closed its eyes to its only chance of salvation, while at the same time the eyes of the North were opened.

In 1865, the South saw, and endeavored to remedy its error. On March 9, 1865, the Confederate Congress passed a bill, recommended by Gen. Lee, authorizing the enlistment of 200,000 Negroes; but it was then too late.

The North came slowly and reluctantly to recognize the Negro as a factor for good in the war. "This is a white man's war," met the Negroes at every step of their first efforts to gain admission to the armies of the Union.

To General David Hunter more than to any other one man, is due the credit for the successful entry upon the stage of the Negro as a soldier in this war.

In the spring of 1862, he raised and equipped a regiment of Negroes in South Carolina, and when the fact became known in Washington and throughout the country, such a storm was raised about the ears of the administration that they gracefully stood aside and left the brave general to fight his enemies in the front and rear as best he might. He was quite capable to do both, as it proved.

On the 9th of June, 1862, Mr. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives, which was passed, calling upon the Secretary of War for information as to the fact of these enlistments and by what authority this matter was done. The Secretary of War replied under date June 14, 1862, disavowing any official knowledge of such a regiment and denying that any authority had been given therefore. He referred the resolution to Gen. Hunter. His reply is one of the best things of the war. I quote it entire.

Headquarters, Department of the South, Port Royal, S. C., June 23, 1862.  
Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Washington.

*Sir : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a communication from the Adjutant-General of the Army, dated June 16, 1862, requesting me to furnish you with the information necessary to answer certain resolutions introduced in the House of Representatives June 9, 1862, on motion of the Hon. Mr. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, their substance being to inquire: First, whether I had organized, or was organizing, a regiment of fugitive slaves in this department; Second, whether any authority had been given to me from the War Department for such organization; and Third, whether I had been furnished by order of the War Department with clothing, uniforms,*

arms, equipments, etc., for such a force.

*Only having received the letter conveying the inquiries at a late hour on Saturday night, I urge forward my answer in time for the steamer sailing to-day (Monday), this haste preventing me from entering as minutely as I could wish upon many points of detail, such as the paramount importance the subject calls for. But in view of the near termination of the present session of Congress, and the widespread interest which must have been awakened by Mr. Wickliffe's resolution, I prefer sending even this imperfect answer to waiting the period necessary for the collection of fuller and more comprehensive data.*

*To the first question, therefore, I reply that no regiment of "fugitive slaves" has been or is organized in this department. There is, however, a fine regiment of persons whose late masters are "fugitive rebels," men who everywhere fly before the appearance of the national flag, leaving their servants behind them to shift as best they can for themselves. So far, indeed, are the loyal persons composing this regiment from seeking to avoid the presence of their late owners that they are now, one and all, working with remarkable industry to place themselves in a position to go in full and effective pursuit of their fugacious and traitorous proprietors.*

*To the second question, I have the honor to answer, that the instructions given to Brig.-General W. T. Sherman by the Hon. Simon Cameron, late Secretary of War, and turned over to me by succession for my guidance, do distinctly authorize me to employ all loyal persons offering their services in defense of the Union and for the suppression of this rebellion in any manner I might see fit, or that the circumstances might call for. There is no restriction as to the character or color of the persons who might be employed, or the nature of the employment; whether civil or military, in which their services should be used. I conclude, therefore, that I have been authorized to enlist "fugitive slaves" as soldiers, could any be found in this department.*

*No such characters have, however, yet appeared within our most advanced pickets, the loyal slaves everywhere remaining on their plantations to welcome us, and supply us with food, labor and information. It is the masters who have, in every instance, been the "fugitives"—running away from loyal slaves as well as loyal soldiers, and whom we have only partially been able to see—chiefly their heads over ramparts, or, rifle in hand, dodging behind trees, in the extreme distance. In the absence of any "fugitive master" law, the deserted slaves would be wholly without reined, had not the crime of treason given them the right to pursue, capture, and bring back those persons of whose protection they have been thus suddenly bereft.*

*To the third interrogatory, it is my painful duty to reply, that I never have received any specific authority for issues of clothing, uniforms, arms, equipments, etc., to the troops in question. My general instructions from Mr. Cameron, to employ them in any manner I might find necessary, and the military exigencies of the department and the country being my only, but, in my judgment, sufficient justification. Neither have I had any specific authority for supplying these persons with shovels, spades and pickaxes when employing them as laborers, nor with boats and oars when using them as lightermen; but these are not points included in Mr. Wickliffe's resolution. To me it seemed that liberty to employ men in any particular capacity implied with it liberty also to supply them with the necessary tools; and acting under this faith I have clothed, equipped and armed the only loyal regiment yet raised in South Carolina.*

*I must say in vindication of my conduct that had it not been for the many other diversified and imperative claims on my time, a much more satisfactory result might have been hoped for; and that, in place of only one, as at present, at least five or six well-drilled, brave, and thoroughly acclimated regiments should by this time have been added to the loyal forces of the Union.*

*The experiment of arming the blacks, so far as I have made it, has been a complete and even marvellous success. They are sober, docile, attentive, and enthusiastic, displaying great natural capacities for acquiring the duties of a soldier. They are eager beyond all things to take the field and be led into action; and it is the unanimous opinion of the officers who have had charge of them, that in the peculiarities of this climate and country, they will prove invaluable auxiliaries, fully equal to the similar regiments so long and successfully used by the British authorities in the West Indies.*

*In conclusion I would say it is my hope, there appearing to be no possibility of other reinforcements owing to the exigencies of the campaign in the peninsular, to have organized by the end of next fall and to be able to present to the Government from forty-eight to fifty thousand of these hardy and devoted soldiers. Trusting that this letter may form part of your answer to Mr. Wickliffe's resolution.*

*I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your obedient servant,*

*D. Hunter, Major General Commanding.*

P 11-13

It took three years of war to place the enlisted Negro upon the same ground as the enlisted white man as to pay and emoluments; perhaps six years of war might have given him shoulder straps, but the war ended without authorization of law for that step. At first they were received, under an act of Congress that allowed each one, without regard to rank, ten dollars per month, three dollars thereof to be retained for clothing and equipments. I think it was in May, '64, when the act was passed equalizing the pay, but not opening the doors to promotion.

Under an act of the Confederate Congress, making it a crime punishable with death for any white person to train any Negro or mulatto to arms, or aid them in any military enterprise, and devoting the Negro caught under arms to the tender mercies of the "present or future laws of the State" in which caught, a large number of promotions were made by the way of a rope and a tree along the first year of the Negro's service (I can even recall one instance as late as April

1865, though it had been long before then generally discontinued).

What the Negro did, how he did it, and where, it would take volumes to properly record, I can however give but briefest mention to a few of the many evidences of his fitness for the duties of the war, and his aid to the cause of the Union. The first fighting done by organized Negro troops appears to have been done by Company A, First South Carolina Negro Regiment, at St. Helena Island, November 3-10, 1862, while participating in an expedition along the coast of Georgia and Florida under Lt.-Col. O. T. Beard, of the Forty-eighth New York Infantry, who says in his report:— “The colored men fought with astonishing coolness and bravery. I found them all I could desire, more than I had hoped. They behaved gloriously, and deserve all praise.”

The testimony thus inaugurated runs like a cord of gold through the web and woof of the history of the Negro as a soldier from that date to their final charge, the last made at Clover Hill, Va., April 9, 1865.

Necessarily the first actions in which the Negro bore a part commanded most attention. Friends and enemies were looking eagerly to see how they would acquit themselves, and so it comes to pass that the names of Fort Wagner, Olustee, Millikens Bend, Port Hudson and Fort Pillow are as familiar as Bull Run, Antietam, Shiloh and Gettysburg, and while those first experiences were mostly severe reverses, they were by that very fact splendid exemplifiers of the truth that the Negroes could be relied upon to fight under the most adverse circumstances, against any odds, and could not be discouraged.....

Shall we turn with sadness to Fort Wagner, S. C., in July, 1863, when the Fifty-fourth Mass, won its deathless fame, and its grand young commander, Col. Robert Gould Shaw, passed into the temple of immortality. After a march of all day, under a burning sun, and all night through a tempest of wind and rain, drenched, exhausted, hungry, they wheel into line, without a murmur for that awful charge, that dance of death, the struggle against hopeless odds, and the shattered remnants were hurled back as from the mouth of hell, leaving the dead bodies of their young commander and his noble followers to be buried in a common grave. Its total loss was about one-third of its strength.

Here it was that the gallant Flag-sergeant Carney, though grievously wounded, bore back his flag to safety, and fell fainting and exhausted with loss of blood, saying, “Boys, the old flag never touched the ground!” Or another glance, at ill-starred Olustee, where the gallant 8th U. S. C. T. lost 87 killed of its effective fighting force, the largest loss in any one colored regiment in any one action of the war. And so on, by Fort Pillow, which let us pass in merciful silence, and to Honey Hill, S. C., perhaps the last desperate fight in the far south, in which the 32nd, 35th and 102nd U. S. C. T. and the 54th and 55th Mass. Inf. won fresh and fadeless laurels for splendid fighting against hopeless odds and insurmountable difficulties, and then to Nashville, Tennessee, with its recorded loss of 84 killed in the effectives of the 13th U. S. C. T..

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Or, again, at the terrible mine explosion of July 30, 1864, on the Petersburg line, and at the fearful slaughter of September 29, 1864, at New Market Heights and Fort Harrison. On this last date in the Fourth U. S. Col. Troops, out of a color-guard of twelve men, but one came off the field on his own feet. The gallant Flag-sergeant Hilton, the last to fall, cried out as he went down, “Boys, save the colors;” and they were saved.

After the magnificent fighting of this last date, under date of Oct. 11, 1864, Maj.-General B. F. Butler issued an order, a portion of which I quote, as follows:

“Of the colored soldiers of the third divisions of the 18th and 10th Corps and the officers who led them, the general commanding desires to make special mention. In the charge on the enemy’s works by the colored division of the 18th Corps at New Market, better men were never better led, better officers never led better men. A few more such gallant charges and to command colored troops will be the post of honor in the American armies. The colored soldiers, by coolness, steadiness, determined courage and dash, have silenced every cavil of the doubters of their soldierly capacity, and drawn tokens of admiration from their enemies, have brought their late masters even to the consideration of the question whether they will not employ as soldiers the hitherto despised race.”

Some ten or more years later, in Congress, in the midst of a speech advocating the giving of civil rights to the Negro, Gen. Butler said, referring to this incident :

“There, in a space not wider than the clerk’s desk, and three hundred yards long, lay the dead bodies of 543 of my colored comrades, slain in the defense of their country, who had laid down their lives to uphold its flag and its honor, as a willing sacrifice. And as I rode along, guiding my horse this way and that, lest he should profane with his hoofs what seemed to me the sacred dead, and as I looked at their bronzed faces upturned in the shining sun, as if in mute appeal against the wrongs of the country for which they had given their lives, and whose flag had been to them a flag of stripes, in which no star of glory had ever shone for them. Feeling I had wronged them in the past, and believing what was the future duty of my country to them— I swore, to myself a solemn oath: ‘May my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if ever I fail to defend the rights of the men who have given their blood for me and my country this day and for their race forever. And, God helping me, I will keep that oath.’”

Or another instance : when under Butler first and Terry later, driven by storms and tempestous seas to powerful Fort Fisher, cooperating with our gallant Navy in its capture, and thence starting on the long march that led through Wilmington, and on to Goldsboro, N. C., where Johnson’s army, the last large force of the Confederacy in the field, was caught between the forces under Terry and the forces under Howard; and the war as such was ended with his surrender, April 26, 1865.

**Phil Freelon (American 1953-2019), *Parallel Monuments*, 2016, color inkjet print. Cameron Art Museum. Gift of Frances Goodman in honor of Scott Sullivan and the Bruce Barclay Cameron Foundation. Artwork © estate of Phil Freelon**





*"Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States."*

-Frederick Douglass

*"I feel more inclined daily, to press the army further and further; and let my opposition be in life what it will, I do firmly vow, that I will fight as long as a star can be seen, and if it should be my lot to be cut down in battle, I do believe...that my soul will be forever at rest."*

-Sergeant Charles Brown, USCT



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