

# *Black History and the Civil War*



*Prepared for  
The Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum  
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## **OBJECTIVES, ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

### **Objectives:**

Students will learn about slavery and the Civil War.

### **Academic Standards:**

#### **Social Studies:**

Students will understand the democratic principles of justice, equality, Responsibility, and freedom, and apply them to real-life situations. Students will be able to describe various forms of government and analyze issues that relate to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

#### **Language Arts:**

Reading Comprehension – use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes.

Writing Application – Write for different purposes, narrative, information, and persuasion.

Listening and speaking – ask thoughtful questions and respond orally, make an informal presentation, develop clear, organized speech delivery.

#### **Mathematics:**

Math – estimate and measure using customary units; collect, organize, analyze, and interpret data.

#### **Fine Arts:**

Arts – Draw a portrait or illustration.

### **Standards of Learning:**

#### **Kentucky:**

**2.0.9; 4.0.6; 4.0.7; 5.1.2; 5.1.3; 5.2.4**

#### **Tennessee:**

**4.0; 5.15; 5.16; 5.19; 1.2; 1.3h; 1.3i; 5.9; 5.10; 5.11; 6.5**

#### **Virginia:**

**USI 3.d; USI 9.d; VUS 7a; 2.11; 3.11 VS.7a**

**\*Underlined words in the text are defined in the vocabulary section.**

### **Historical Background of Slavery**

The ancestors of many African Americans were forced into slavery. Most came to this country from diverse areas in Africa. The first Africans came to America in 1619 – to the English colony of Virginia. Later, in the southern states, slavery was a major component of the economy. Slaves provided a labor force for cotton (and other) plantations. Between 1787 and 1804, the northern states abolished slavery, while southern states became even more determined to protect the institution. It became the mainstay in the southern plantation system. In the years preceding the Civil War, slavery became a primary problem in the economic issues between Northern and Southern states.

Any way you attempt to describe slaves, the fact is that they were property – men, women, or children were owned by another individual. Their status was primarily determined because of their color – black. As property, their standing in society was strictly enforced, quite often by violence. Slaves, even if treated well by their owners, were never allowed to forget that they were slaves. It was against the law to teach a slave to read or write; slaves could be sold or given away. Many slaves and owners truly cared about each other; yet, each recognized the limitations of their relationship.

When one thinks of slavery, one usually visualizes a large plantation with many slaves. However, a large percentage of Southerners (whites) were not slave owners. Of the Southerners who owned slaves, most owned only a few. The population of the South was made up of a large number of small farmers who owned no slaves. Many of these individuals were very poor; yet, a large number supported the institution of slavery. Slavery may have given them an opportunity to feel superior to a slave. In the lower tier of Southern states, cotton was the primary crop; however, tobacco, corn, rice and other crops were grown. These were considered cash crops. Slaves had to work in all conditions, primarily from daylight until dark; some were “field hands”; others were domestic laborers – cooks, maids, coachmen, etc. Women had an additional burden: following the numerous hours each day spent laboring for their master, they were also responsible for taking care of their own family. Children were taught to hide their feelings (to avoid punishment) and to not believe everything white people said. Some slaves turned to religion to help alleviate the anguish of their existence. Strangely, the religion of the slave owners justified slavery and provided an outward form of vindication for Southern slave owners.

All slaves could be punished severely for the smallest of infractions. Slaves never really received adequate clothing and food: living conditions were very unhealthy, and their health was incredibly poor. Mortality rates were high, especially for children, and many slaves faced the constant threat of sale. Slaves could be sold for a myriad of reasons – lack of ready cash, death of an owner, misbehavior, etc. Slave families were often separated by sale of one or more members: Sometimes they never saw each other again. In addition to the strict regulation enforced by each slave owner, the Southern states maintained Slave Codes that regulated what slaves could do and how they had to behave – the Slave Codes reinforced the premise that slaves were property. Many slaves,

faced with imminent sale or merely overwhelmed by the system, tried to escape. Thousands were successful in reaching freedom in the North; however, as many, if not more, were returned to the South and a miserable existence – if they survived the punishment inflicted for running away.

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The Civil War brought dramatic changes to the lives of slaves. Many slaves recognized that the war offered opportunities for freedom long before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, signed January 1, 1863, freed slaves in Confederate controlled territory. Almost 200,000 African-American soldiers fought and around 40,000 died during the Civil War. Several African American soldiers received the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery. Following the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation was reinforced by the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868), and Fifteenth (1870) Amendments to the Constitution.

## **African American ABOLITIONISTS**

### **Frederick Douglass**

Born a slave (Frederick Bailey) in Maryland (1817 or 1818) and secretly taught to read and write as a young boy, Douglass escaped in 1838, changed his name to avoid slave hunters, and traveled to Britain to avoid re-enslavement. He returned to the United States only after he had obtained sufficient funds to purchase his freedom. Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, published in 1846, helped arouse support for slavery's abolition. An outspoken opponent of slavery, he campaigned against slavery throughout the Northeast by making speeches and through the editorship of his *North Star* newspaper. Douglass also helped dozens of fugitive slaves escape through his Underground Railroad activities.

When the Civil War began, Douglass encouraged Abraham Lincoln to act on freeing the slaves and to use blacks in the army. Although Lincoln hated slavery, he feared losing the border states to the Confederacy if African Americans were soldiers. In 1862, as the war continued, Lincoln realized the time was near to emancipate the slaves in rebellious states and announced that he would sign a proclamation on January 1, 1863. After Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863), Douglass challenged Blacks to take up arms against the seceded Southern states and actively helped in raising two black regiments. Two of his sons, Lewis N. Douglass and Charles Douglass, served in the famous 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry.

Following the Civil War, Douglass held several government posts, including serving as the United States Minister to Haiti (1889-1891). He worked tirelessly for full civil rights for blacks and campaigned for women's suffrage.

### **Harriet Tubman**

Harriet Tubman was born the slave, Ariminta Ross, in Dorchester County, Maryland. At some time in her life she adopted her mother's name – Harriet. Put

to work at the age of five, she was transferred to field work at age twelve. Approximately a year later, she was hit on the head and suffered from that neurological damage throughout the remainder of her life. Unfortunately, the death of her master and then the subsequent death of his son (heir to the plantation property, including slaves) left Harriet's future uncertain. After rumors circulated that the slaves would be sold to settle the plantation's debts, Harriet escaped to freedom in the North and lived in Pennsylvania.

During her stay in Pennsylvania, she became acquainted with the abolitionist movement and worked to eliminate slavery. Deciding to become a conductor on the Underground Railroad, Tubman made an estimated 19 expeditions to the South and escorted several hundred slaves to freedom. The Fugitive Slave Laws provided for serious punishments for those helping slaves escape. To escape capture and punishment, Tubman moved to Canada, returning to the United States only after several Northern states passed personal liberty laws protecting the rights of escaped slaves. She purchased land and moved with her parents to Auburn, New York.

When the Civil War began in 1861, Tubman served as a spy, scout, and nurse for the Union Army in South Carolina. She received a commendation for her services to the Union Army; however, Tubman received no payment for her services. Following the war, she married an African-American war veteran, Nelson Davis, who died in 1890. After the Civil War, she worked to improve the lives of black people; raised funds to assist with food, clothing, and education; and eventually developed a facility for elderly at her home in Auburn, New York. Though unable to read and write, Tubman was also active in women's rights circles.

## **The Civil War**

The Civil War, a conflict between northern states (the Union) and southern states that seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America, was fought between the years 1861-1865. Slavery lay at the base of the conflict and divided not only country, but churches and families.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century began, sectionalism grew as the North turned increasingly to industrial efforts while the South remained almost completely agricultural. The South's economy was based primarily on slavery and the plantation system. By 1820, the Missouri Compromise was reached, and expected to end the problems between the two sections of the country. Unfortunately, tariff difficulties and the South's increasingly extreme views of states rights, northern moral indignation at the system of slavery (abolitionists), along with the South's fear of being unable to maintain an equal status in Congress led to continual problems. The period of compromise between the sections basically ended with the Compromise of 1850. Passage of the Fugitive Slave Laws and the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854) only increased problems between the North and South. A crucial period was reached with the formation of the Republican Party and the election of 1860. Lincoln's (Republican) victory over three other opponents – Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat), John C.

Breckenridge (Southern Democrat), and John Bell (Constitution Union Party) – began the Southern states' move toward secession.

In April, 1861, war began when General P.G.T. Beauregard, on instructions from the Confederate States' President, Jefferson Davis, fired on Fort Sumter in the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina. Both Davis and Lincoln called for troops. Hundreds of thousands became soldiers in the armies and had to be supplied with the necessities of life and warfare. At times, both the North and especially the South had to deal with supply issues. In July of 1861, the South won a major victory over Northern forces at the Battle of Bull Run. The North went to war to preserve the Union but increasingly the Civil War became a struggle to end slavery and free African Americans from the bonds of slavery. The South went to war to “defend” their homeland or territory. Initially, both the North and South thought the war would be over quickly: both soon realized that the war would be a long, bloody time in the nation's history.

In 1862, heavy fighting along all fronts and large numbers of killed and injured marked the war efforts. The Confederacy enacted their first conscription act and Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation warning Southern states still in rebellion that their slaves would be freed on January 1, 1863, unless they ceased fighting and returned to the Union.

Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, ushering in a new moral cause to continue fighting the war. The Emancipation Proclamation also authorized enlistment of black soldiers in the Union Army. The Union had also instituted a conscription act which resulted in widespread opposition and some violence in major cities. Major engagements at Gettysburg and at Chattanooga combined with the fall of Vicksburg appeared to toll the death knell for the Confederacy. By this time, providing food and material necessities for the armies as well as civilians became a serious problem for the Confederacy: bread riots erupted in several areas of the Confederate states. Yet the war would continue.

When Abraham Lincoln named General U. S. Grant as the Chief General of the Union armies, the Northern people were optimistic about a speedy end to the war. Unfortunately, Grant and the Army of the Potomac became involved in a long siege at Petersburg and along the Richmond rail lines. Union victories in other areas of the Confederacy ensured Lincoln's re-election in the 1864 fall presidential election, and support for the war in the South flagged as obtaining the necessities of life became even more difficult. Inflation skyrocketed in the South, and by this time, the South could field less than half the soldiers needed to oppose well-supplied and re-enforced Union forces. Unlike the North, the South had no true male population reserves and had conscripted both the very young and older males.

After months under siege at Petersburg, Virginia, General Robert E. Lee would begin the capitulation of the Confederate Armies by surrendering his Army of Northern Virginia to General U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. Unfortunately, the North's victory celebrations following Lee's surrender were cut short by the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the greatest figure of the war, at Ford's Theatre on the evening of April 14, 1865. Mortally wounded, Lincoln died at 7:22 a.m. on April 15, 1865. The death of the

compassionate Lincoln ushered in a harsh period of Reconstruction of the Southern states prior to their being readmitted to the Union. There were far-reaching changes in Southern society; over one-fifth of the South's adult male population was casualties of the war (approximately 260,000).

New war-time technologies, new ideas generated, destruction in the South, and economic changes throughout the nation dramatically changed the lives of the Civil War generation and impacted future generations of Americans. The war continued for four traumatic years, entire regions of the South were devastated, and thousands of Americans were killed (over 620,000) or maimed. By the end of the war, around 180,000 African Americans had served in the Union Army and Navy.

### **Black Soldiers in the Civil War**

“ 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 that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.”

■ **Frederick Douglass**

These words, spoken by Frederick Douglass, refer to the pride that military service and the symbols of the United States instill in men. His speech moved many African-Americans to enlist in the Union Army and fight for their freedom. When President Abraham Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, the Civil War became a war to save the Union and to abolish slavery.

The issues of emancipation and military service were linked from the onset of the Civil War news from Fort Sumter and set off a rush by free black men to enlist in U. S. military units. They hoped that by proving themselves in battle a grateful nation would grant them full citizenship. They were turned away, however, because a Federal law dating from 1792 barred blacks from bearing arms for the U. S. Army (although they had served in the American Revolution and in the War of 1812). In Boston, disappointed would-be volunteers met and passed a resolution requesting that the Government modify its laws to permit their enlistment.

The Lincoln administration wrestled with the idea of authorizing the use of black troops, concerned that such a move would prompt the loyal slave states of Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware to secede. When General John C. Fremont in Missouri and General David Hunter in South Carolina issued proclamations that emancipated slaves in their military regions and permitted them to enlist, Lincoln himself stepped in and sternly revoked their orders. By mid-1862, however, the growing number of former slaves (contrabands) and the declining number of white volunteers created a need for the Union Army to push the Government into reconsidering the ban on blacks in the military.



On July 17, 1862, Congress passed two acts allowing the enlistment of African-Americans, but official enrollment occurred only after the September, 1862 issuance of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. In general, white soldiers and officers believed that black men lacked the courage to fight and fight well. Volunteers from South Carolina, Tennessee, and Massachusetts filled the first authorized black regiments. Recruitment was slow until black leaders such as Frederick Douglass encouraged black men to become soldiers to ensure eventual full citizenship. (Two of Douglass's own sons contributed to the war effort.) Volunteers began to respond, and in May, 1863, the government established the Bureau of Colored Troops to manage the growing numbers of black soldiers. No draft was ever conducted for black soldiers.

In October 1862, African-American soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored volunteers silenced their critics by repulsing attacking Confederates at the Battle of Island Mound, Missouri. By August, 1863, fourteen Negro regiments were in the field and ready for service. At the Battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana, May 27, 1863, the African-American soldiers bravely advanced over open ground in the face of deadly artillery fire. Although the attack failed, the black soldiers proved their capability to withstand the heat of battle.

On July 17, 1863, at Honey Springs, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored fought again. Union troops under General James Blunt ran into a strong Confederate force under General Douglas Cooper. After a two-hour bloody engagement, Cooper's soldiers retreated. The courageous 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas, which had held the center of the Union line, advanced to within fifty paces of the Confederate line. They exchanged fire for some twenty minutes until the Confederates broke and ran. General Blunt wrote after the battle, "I never saw such fighting as was done by the Negro regiment. . . The question that negroes will fight is settled; besides they make better soldiers in every respect than any troops I have ever had under my command."

The most widely known battle fought by African-Americans was the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, by the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts on July 18, 1863. The 54<sup>th</sup> volunteered to lead the assault on the strongly-fortified Confederate positions. The soldiers of the 54<sup>th</sup> scaled the fort's parapet, and were only driven back after brutal hand-to-hand combat.

In addition to the dangers of war faced by all Civil War soldiers, black soldiers faced additional problems stemming from racial prejudice. Racial discrimination was common even in the North, and discriminatory practices permeated the U. S. military. Segregated units were formed with black enlisted men typically commanded by white officers and black noncommissioned officers. The 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts was commanded by Robert Shaw and the 1<sup>st</sup> South Carolina by Thomas Wentworth Higginson – both white.

Black soldiers were initially paid \$10.00 per month from which \$3.00 was automatically deducted for clothing, resulting in a net pay of \$7.00. In contrast, white soldiers received \$13.00 per month from which no clothing allowance was drawn. In June 1864, Congress granted equal pay to the U.S. Colored troops and made the action retroactive. Black soldiers received the same rations and supplies. In addition, they received equal medical care.

The black troops, however, faced greater peril than white troops when captured by the Confederate Army. In 1863, the Confederate Congress threatened to severely punish officers of black troops and to enslave black soldiers. As a result, President Lincoln issued General Order 233, threatening reprisal on Confederate prisoners of war (POWs) for any mistreatment of black troops. Although the threat generally restrained the Confederates, black captives were usually treated more harshly than white captives.

African-American soldiers participated in every major campaign of 1864-1865 except Sherman's invasion of Georgia. The year 1864 was especially eventful for African-American troops. On April 12, 1864, at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest led his 2,500 men against the Union-held fortification, occupied by 292 black and 285 white soldiers. After driving in the Union pickets and giving the garrison an opportunity to surrender, Forrest's men swarmed into the fort with little difficulty and drove the Federals down the river's bluff into a deadly crossfire. Casualties were high and only sixty-two of the U. S. Colored troops survived the fight. Many accused the Confederates of allowing and even encouraging a massacre of black troops, and the controversy continues today. The battle cry for the Negro soldier east of the Mississippi River became "Remember Fort Pillow!"

The Battle of New Market Heights, Virginia (Chaffin's Farm) became one of the most heroic engagements involving African-Americans. On September, 29, 1864, the African-American division of the Eighteenth Corps, after being pinned down by Confederate artillery fire for about 30 minutes, charged the earthworks and rushed up the slopes of the heights. During the hour-long engagement, the division suffered tremendous casualties. Of the sixteen African-Americans who were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Civil War, fourteen received the honor as a result of their actions at New Market Heights.

In January 1864, General Patrick Cleburne and several other Confederate officers in the Army of the Tennessee proposed using slaves as soldiers since the Union was using black troops. Cleburne recommended offering slaves their freedom if they fought and survived. Confederate President Jefferson Davis refused to consider Cleburne's proposal and forbade further discussion of the idea. The concept, however, did not die. By the Fall of 1864, the South was losing more and more ground, and some believed that only by arming the slaves could defeat be averted. On March 13, 1865, just one month before the surrender at Appomattox, the Confederate Congress passed General Order 14,

and President Davis signed the order into law. The order was issued March 23, 1865: only a few African-American companies were raised, and the war ended before they could be used in battle.

By the end of the Civil War, roughly 179,000 black men (10% of the Union Army) served as soldiers in the U.S. Army and another 19,000 – 30,000 (research is still being done) served in the Navy. Nearly 40,000 black soldiers died over the course of the war – 30,000 of infection or disease. Black soldiers served in both artillery and infantry units and performed all non-combat support functions that sustain an army. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, laborers, nurses, scouts, spies, steamboat pilots, surgeons, and teamsters also contributed to the war cause. There were nearly 80 black commissioned officers. Black women, who could not formally join the Army, nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman who scouted for the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina Volunteers. By war's end, 16 black soldiers and one sailor had been awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor.

## **Timeline of Events leading to the Civil War and the End of Slavery in the United States**

1619	Africans arrive in America.
1793	Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin.
1820	The Missouri Compromise is reached
1845	Texas is admitted as a slave state.
1850	The Compromise of 1850 is reached.
1852	Uncle Tom's Cabin is published.
1854	The Kansas-Nebraska Act passes in Congress leading to bloody events in Kansas that foreshadowed the Civil War.
1854	The Republican Party is founded.
1857	The Dred Scott decision is made by the Supreme Court.
1858	Lincoln and Douglas debates take place during the Illinois Senatorial Race.
1859	Abolitionist John Brown conducts raid on Harper's Ferry.
1860	Abraham Lincoln is elected the nation's 16 <sup>th</sup> President.
1860	South Carolina secedes from the Union.
1861	The South forms the Confederate States of America.
1861	Confederate forces fire the first shots of the Civil War at Fort Sumter in South Carolina.
1861-65	The Civil War is fought.
September, 1862	Abraham Lincoln issues the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation warning southern states still in rebellion that their slaves will be freed on January 1, 1863, unless they return to the Union.
January 1, 1863	Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation.
April 9, 1865	General Robert E. Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia.
April 14, 1865	Abraham Lincoln is shot by the actor, John Wilkes Booth.
April 15, 1865	Abraham Lincoln dies at 7:22 a.m. Secretary Stanton, at the deathbed, states "Now he belongs to the ages."
1865-1877	Reconstruction of the Southern states.

## **Vocabulary**

**Abolitionists** – Abolitionists were individuals who tried to gain emancipation for slaves and end slavery in the United States. They were opposed to slavery.

**African-Americans** – Most African Americans worked as unskilled laborers; although, some were skilled artisans with valuable talents. In the South, most were slaves.

**Artillery** – Weapons used for discharging missiles; and the branch of an army associated with artillery.

**Avert** – To see coming and ward off.

**Blouse** – An unlined military coat.

**Blue-Belly** – An insulting term for a Union soldier.

**Bluff** – A cheater.

**Bully Soup** – A hot soup often served in Civil War hospitals.

Camp life – Union and Confederate soldiers spent a great deal of time in camp. Camp life was made up of routine tasks such as guard duty and drill. Time in camp also provided soldiers with more time to write loved ones at home, opportunities to make friends, enjoy church services, and opportunities for recreation.

**Cash Crop** – Cash crops are an agricultural product grown by farmers in large quantities specifically to sell at market.

**Casualty** – A military person lost through death, injury, sickness, or capture.

**Civil War** – A four-year war fought between North and South (1861-1865). The fighting was between states that remained in the Union and the Southern states that seceded from the Union.

**Commissioned** – Having military rank and authority; Second lieutenant was the lowest grade.

**Compromise of 1850** – Connected to the spread of slavery, this compromise between northern and southern factions centered on new territory acquired by the United States. It organized southwestern areas as possible slave states, added California as a free state, abolished the slave trade in the District of Columbia (although slavery would be permitted), and passed the Fugitive Slave Act which required citizens to help in the recovery of fugitive slaves.

This series of five legislative actions passed by the United States Congress during August and September 1850 were designed to alleviate the political difficulties dividing the anti- and pro-slavery factions within the nation and Congress.

**Confederate States of America** – a group of southern states that left the Union and formed their own government and country.

**Contraband** – A slave who escaped to or was brought within Union lines.

**Controversy** – A discussion marked by the expression of opposing views.

**Coosh** – A meal of cornmeal and bacon grease fried together.

**Cotton Gin** – In 1793, Eli Whitney invented a machine that separates seeds and plant particles from the cotton bolls. This invention dramatically increased the growth and harvesting of southern cotton in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The successful growth of cotton planting further entrenched the South's institution of slavery.

**Courier** – Someone who travels and delivers messages for officers in the army.

**Desert** – To abandon your post or duty with no intention of returning.

**Discrimination** – A prejudiced outlook, action, or treatment.

**Douglass, Frederick** – An ex-slave, abolitionist, self-educated public speaker and author, and publisher of the *North Star*.

**Dred Scott v. Sanford** – This important 1857 decision by the United States Supreme Court added to the hostilities between the north and south regarding slavery. Part of the court's ruling said that Scott, as an African-American, could not be a citizen and, therefore, could not sue for his freedom.

**Earthworks** – Field fortifications made of earth.

**Emancipation** – Freedom from bondage/enslavement.

**Emancipation Proclamation** – A formal announcement by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, that the slaves who remained in the states that had seceded from the Union would be considered “forever free.”

**Engagement** – A battle or other conflict involving opposing military forces.

**Enlistment** – Enrollment in the armed forces.

**Enslaved** – The state of being owned by someone (another person).

**Fit to be tied** – A person who is angry.

**Fortified** – made strong and secure with forts or batteries.

**Fresh Fish** – A new recruit.

**Fugitive Slave Law** – A law passed by Congress as part of the Compromise of 1850. This law made it illegal for citizens to protect fugitive slaves.

**Furlough** – A leave of absence from duty granted to a member of the armed services.

**Garrison** – The troops stationed at a military post.

**Goobers** – Peanuts.

**Grayback** – A Union nickname for a Confederate soldier.

**Greenbacks** – Union paper money.

**Hardtack** – a hard biscuit made of flour, salt, and water given to soldiers as part of their daily food ration.

**Haversack** – A small canvas sack carried by soldiers to store food and personal items. Many haversacks were coated with tar to make them waterproof.

**Hornets** – A soldier's term for bullets.

**Housewife** – A small sewing kit with needles, thread, buttons, clothing patches, etc. given to soldiers to take with them to war.

**Infantry** – Soldiers trained, armed, and equipped to fight on foot.

**Kansas-Nebraska Act** – Passed by Congress in 1854, this controversial law allowed the residents of Kansas and Nebraska to decide whether or not slavery would be allowed in their states.

**Legislature** – A group of leaders who help make laws (both state and country).

**Lice** – Small parasitic bugs.

**Massacre** – The killing of a number of unresisting people.

**Medal of Honor** – A U. S. military decoration awarded for bravery in action with an enemy, first issued in the Civil War.

**Military campaigns** – The armies' actions were called military campaigns and usually took place seasonally. Battles were usually fought in late spring, summer, and early fall with the soldiers settling into an encampment for the late fall, winter, and early spring months.

**Missouri Compromise** – An agreement, formulated in 1820, between northern and southern states that attempted to maintain a balance between free and slave states in the United States. As part of this compromise, Missouri was admitted as a slave state; Maine was admitted as a free state. This legislative measure, enacted by the United States Congress in 1820, was designed to regulate the extension of slavery in the United States.

**Moral** – An issue regarded in terms of what is known to be right or just as opposed to what is officially or outwardly declared to be right or just.

**Paper Collar Soldier** – another name for a new recruit.

**Parapet** – A wall of earth or stone built to protect soldiers.

**Picket** – A body of soldiers serving to guard an army from surprise attack.

**Plantation** – A plantation was a very large farm where a single main crop was usually grown (such as cotton) and sold for cash.

**Planters** – Individuals who owned 20 or more slaves were considered planters. The area they lived in had to support large scale farming. Although a minority, planters had a lot of political influence. Planters were usually well-educated men – doctors, lawyers, merchants.

**Pony** – A boy soldier or someone underage or small in size.

**Possum** – A buddy.

**Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation** – This announcement, made by President Lincoln, warned the Southern states still in rebellion that he would sign a formal Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freeing slaves if the seceded states did not lay down their arms and rejoin the Union.

**Proclamation** – An official formal announcement.

**Ration** – A soldier's food allowance for one day.

**Recruitment** – The process of adding enlisted or drafted men into the armed forces.

**Reprisal** – An act committed to repay a wrong.



**Repulsing** – The act of driving or beating back an opposing force.

**Resolution** – A formal expression of intent by an official body.

**Retreat** – Withdrawal of military forces from a dangerous position or enemy attack.

**Retroactive** – Made effective to an earlier time.

**Revoke** – To take back.

**Sawbones** – A surgeon.

**Secede** – The act of withdrawing from an organization – in the Civil War years, the act of withdrawing from the United States.

**Sectionalism** -- This term represents an excessive concern for the interests of one particular area to the detriment of the whole area.

**Segregate** – The act of separating someone or something from the general public.

**Side knife** – a large fighting and utility knife carried by some enlisted men.

**Siege** -- A military operation in which an army surrounds a place and cuts off all outside access to force surrender.

**Skedaddle** – To run away from battle or retreat.

**Slave Codes** -- Laws in force in the Southern states that stated how slaves were to behave.

**Slaves** – Individuals who are forcibly held in servitude or enslaved by another human being and entirely subject to the owner(s) will.

**Slavery** – The practice (or system) of someone owning another person and making them work.

**Sutler** – A civilian who followed the army selling food, toiletry items, tobacco, and clothing items.

**The Union** – The remaining states loyal to the federal government during the Civil War.

**Troop** – a group of soldiers.

**Tubman, Harriet** – A runaway slave, spy, and “conductor” on the Underground Railroad.

***Uncle Tom’s Cabin*** – This book, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1852), influenced many Americans about the evils of slavery.

**Underground Railroad** – The Underground Railroad was a secret network of safe places run by people who were against slavery and helped slaves escape from the South. They risked imprisonment, and sometimes their lives, to help fugitive slaves escape slavery by moving them north or to Canada. It was an illegal network of Black and white individuals determined to strike a blow against slavery, but it had no literal connection to railroads although railroad terminology was used – conductors, passengers, cargoes, stations, packages, etc.

**Up the Spout** – To be in trouble or to have a problem.

**Valor** – Personal bravery.

**Vermin** – Small animals or insects that are destructive, annoying, or bad for the health.

**Winter Quarters** – A camp where soldiers live all winter.

**Yankee** – A native or inhabitant of a Northern state.

**Yeoman farmer** – Many individuals were subsistence farmers who worked small farms and, in the South, owned less than 20 or no slaves. They were concerned with their crops, rainfall, and produced most of what they consumed.

## Discussion and Activities:

### Civil War

- Help your students discover the regional differences between the north and south during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1860, the United States was divided into two very different sections. Southern people used slaves to produce crops, thus, slavery supported the South's economy. In the North, slavery was illegal; yet, only a few Northerners were active opponents of slavery. The primary cause of the Civil War was slavery and its extension into Western territories. Suggest that your students research agricultural methods in the South, new industrial and banking developments in the North, and the past compromises that held the Union together until the winter of 1860-61. After determining the differences, i.e., population, industry, public education, etc., lead a discussion to decide if another compromise would have healed the void between the sections and prevented the Civil War.
- Plan a debate concerning whether or not a state has the right to secede. **Side One** should have as their thesis: "Citizens of a country or state have the right to self-determination (choosing one's political status) even if it means separating from the Union, disavowing a national election result, and forming a new nation. **Side Two** should have as their thesis: Citizens of a country or state must follow the majority in a nationally held election.
- What was the Civil War? Encourage your students to share their thoughts and opinions about the causes of the Civil War and whether or not they think the Civil War was avoidable.
- Ask your students to discuss what it might have been like to have been a Confederate, Union, or African American soldier during the Civil War. For instance, being away from home for the first time; not having sufficient clothing, shoes, shelter, and food; and, actually having to shoot at (and possibly kill) someone – since the Civil War is known as "the brother's war," -- maybe someone as close to you as your brother, father or uncle.
- When fighting the Civil War, President Lincoln wanted to preserve the Union of all the states. Why was it important to keep the states together? Some people in the North were willing to let the southern states go. Generate a discussion with your students about why Lincoln and many soldiers wanted to keep the states together.
- In the fall of 1862, Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. This was a warning to the seceded states that their slaves would be freed on January 1, 1863, unless they laid down their arms and returned to the Union. He signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, adding a moral reason for the North to continue fighting and opening the way for African Americans to serve in the Union Army.

Many slaves “emancipated” themselves by leaving the plantations and seeking shelter with the Union Army. Some of those former slaves served in the Union’s Colored Troops after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Suggest that your students research African American services to the Union Army and the ways African American soldiers were treated differently from white soldiers.

- Ask your students to research, write, and report to the class about important people (both North and South) during the Civil War.
- Many Civil War soldiers traveled to camp with a “housewife” made by loving hands at home. A “housewife” contained items necessary to keep a soldier’s clothes in order, i.e., buttons, cloth pieces for patches, thread, needle, and perhaps a small pair of scissors. Plan a crafts session and help your students make small housewives. (instructions included)
- The Civil War was the first war to be captured on film, and thus, the first war people left at home (other than those near a battlefield) were able to visualize. Provide suitable (for young students) photos of people, soldiers, ambulances, etc. from the Internet; let your students spend a few minutes studying the photos, ask your students what hardships they think soldiers in the field and people on the home front had to endure during the war.

#### **Civil War Aftermath:**

- Many families had to “refugee” from areas controlled by Union soldiers. Some went to other areas of the South less endangered by Union forces. Would Lee’s soldiers have wondered where in the South their families might be? Do you think the soldier might be thinking as he walked home that he might arrive home to find no one there? Would they also wonder how they were going to support their families? And, since many of the South’s horses and mules had been confiscated by the Confederate Army, and it was now springtime, did the soldier wonder how he was going to plow his fields and plant a garden to feed his family during the summer and prepare for the coming winter?
- Suggest that your students imagine they are newly freed African Americans right after the end of the Civil War. Start a discussion of what these newly freed slaves might be thinking about – their emotions, fears, goals, and the problems they faced. How would they find jobs, and where would they live? Remember, it had been against the law to teach a slave to read and write. The students can also research and write about what life was like for the freedmen right after the Civil War and during Reconstruction. Your students might like to look at the Black Codes many southern states instituted.

- An exercise might include your students imagining they are a victorious Union soldier. After the Grand Review of the Armies in Washington, many Union soldiers were discharged from the Army and could return home. Most had been away from home four long years. Can your students think of any changes a soldier might find when he returned home, i.e., children and parents are older and many soldiers lost (through death) wives, children or parents during the war; newly invented farming machinery was available to increase the yield on family farms; many soldiers had never married, do you think they would want to marry and have a family? As a segment of this activity, lead your students in a discussion of what happened to the lives of single women due to the large numbers of soldiers' deaths in both the North and South.
- In addition to the victorious Union soldiers and the sad and hungry Southern soldiers returning home, many injured from both armies remained in hospitals. How long might it take for them to recover from their injuries? If the soldiers had suffered amputated limbs, how might they travel home? When they were able to return home, how could they support their families? Ask your students to think about and discuss the thoughts, emotions, and fears of the hospitalized Union soldiers? The Southern soldiers?

### **Homefront:**

- How did the Civil War affect the lives of women and children? Ask your students to speculate about the lives of soldiers' wives, children, and parents. Do your students think the children might have worried about their fathers (or brothers) being injured or killed? How did women in the North and South support their family? Did children have to work? How did women in the South keep plantations in order? Did people at home in the South have enough food? In the North, did soldiers' families have homes and enough food? If a soldier worked in a Northern factory, how did he support his family while he was in the army?
- Ask your students to find out what kinds of things women did (nurses, factory workers, teachers, government clerks, etc.) during the Civil War years? How are the jobs available to women during the Civil War years different from jobs available to women today? How were women who HAD to work outside the home during the Civil War treated? Did they sometimes have to work in dangerous occupations?
- Over 600,000 men were killed during the Civil War and over a million left crippled from war injuries. Many of those men had wives and children. Talk with your students about what might have happened to those families? Did the United States government have insurance plans for the soldiers? Since the Southern states lost the war, what happened to southern women and children left widowed and orphaned by the war?

**Math:**

- Suggest that your students imagine they are a soldier in General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. After Lee surrendered his army to General Grant, the Southern soldiers were pardoned and allowed to return home. Many were shoeless, had no money, and no food. The soldiers were issued railroad passes that allowed them to ride on trains (for areas where railroads were still in operation) but most Southern railroads (except in areas under Union control for a while prior to Lee's surrender) were not in working order.
  - Provide a map of the Southern states and designate each student to be a soldier from a seceded state. Ask them to estimate how long it will take the soldier to return home – remind them that most of the soldiers returning home had to walk and beg for food all the way.
  - Questions students might be asked to think about while his/her soldier is walking all the way home – Did Sherman's men destroy our home while marching across Georgia? Are my parents, brothers, sisters, children all okay?

**Recruiting Poster:**

Ask your students to study the recruitment poster (shown on page 24). After they have had an opportunity to read the poster, ask them to answer the following questions.

What is the purpose of this recruitment poster?

What does it promise to blacks who enlist in the Union Army?

What does it say about the treatment of black prisoners of war?

Do you think black men fought for different reasons than white men?

According to the poster, what were those reasons,?

**Slavery**

- Before you begin some of the activities, suggest that your students write down what they know about slavery, the Civil War and the end of slavery.
- Prior to the invention of the cotton gin, the cost of buying and keeping slaves was high in proportion to their value in producing agricultural products. As a result, slavery was dying out. The invention of the cotton gin, designed to separate seeds from the cotton fibers, opened the way to producing more cotton. Ask your students what they think would have happened if Eli Whitney had not invented the cotton gin?

- Talk with your students about the hardships slaves had to endure – lack of freedom; separation from family members; hard work; punishment; not being able to learn to read, the possibility of being sold, etc. – and ask the students what they think would have been the hardest part about being a slave.

## APPENDICES



From Abraham Lincoln Online (Source *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler): The Emancipation Proclamation

*By the President of the United States of America:*

*A Proclamation.*

*Whereas, on the twentysecond day of September, in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:*

*“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 par 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.*

*“That the executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid; by proclamation, designate the States and parts of states, if any in which the people thereof, respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.”*

*Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do on this first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:*

*Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. Johns, St Chalres, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terreboone, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South-Carolina, North-Carolina, and*

*Virginia, (except the fortyeight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkely, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth-City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[)], and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.*

*And, by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.*

*And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self defense; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.*

*And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.*

*And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.*

*In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.*

*Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.*

*By the President: Abraham Lincoln*

*William H. Seward, Secretary of State*

# TO COLORED MEN!

## FREEDOM, Protection, Pay, and a Call to Military Duty!

On the 1 st day of January, 1863, the president of the United-States proclaimed FREEDOM to over THREE MILLIONS OF SLAVES. This decree is to be enforced by all the power of the Nation. On the 21st of July last he issued the following order:

### PROTECTION OF COLORED TROOPS.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, July 21

"General Order, .No- 233

"The following order of the President is published for the information and government of all concerned:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, JULY 3D

"It is the duty of every Government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition, and especially to those who are duly organized as soldiers in the public service. The law of nations, and the images and customs of war, as carried on by civilized powers, permit no distinction as to color in the treatment of prisoners of war as public enemies. To sell or enslave any captured person on account of his color, is a relapse into barbarism, and a crime against the civilization of the age.

"The Government of the United States will give the same protection to all its soldiers, and if the enemy shall sell or enslave any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in our possession. It is therefore ordered, for every soldier of the United States, killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every one. enslaved by the enemy, or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and continued at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to prisoners of war

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN'."

"By order of the Secretary of War.

"E. D. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant General."

That the President is in earnest the rebels soon began to find out, as witness the following order from his Secretary of War:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, August 8, 1863.

"SIR: Your letter of the 3d last, calling the attention of this Department to the cases of Orin H. Brown, William H. Johnston, and Wm. Wilson, three colored men captured on the gunboat Isaac Smith, has received consideration. The Department has directed that three rebel prisoners of South Carolina, if there be any such in our possession, and if not, three others, be confined in close custody and held as hostages for Brown, Johnston, and, Wilson, and that the fact be communicated to the rebel authorities at Richmond.

"Very respectfully your obedient servant,

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War

"THE HON. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy."

And retaliation will be our practice now - man for man - to the bitter end.

## LETTER OF CHARLES SUMNER,

Written with reference to the Convention held at Poughkeepsie, July 15th and 16th, to promote Colored Enlistments.

BOSTON, July 13th, 1863.

"I doubt if, in times past, our country could have expected from colored men any patriotic service. Such service is the return for protection. But now that protection has begun, the service should begin also. Nor should relative rights and duties be weighed with nicety. It is enough that our country, aroused at last to a sense of justice, seeks to enrol colored men among its defenders.

"If my counsels should reach such persons, I would say, enlist at once. Now is the day and now is the hour. Help to overcome your cruel enemies now battling against your country, and in this way you will surely overcome those other enemies hardly less cruel, here at home, who will still seek to degrade you. This is not the time to hesitate. Do your duty to our country, and you will set an example of generous self-sacrifice which will conquer prejudice and open all hearts

"Very faithfully yours," CHARLES SUMNER"

*The Colored Soldiers* (1896) by Paul Laurence Dunbar

If the muse were mine to tempt it  
    And my feeble voice were strong,  
If my tongue were trained to measures,  
    I would sing a stirring song.  
I would sing a song heroic  
    Of those noble sons of Ham,\*  
Of the gallant colored soldiers  
    Who fought for Uncle Sam!

In the early days you scorned them,  
    And with many a flip and flout  
Said "these battles are the white man's,  
    And the whites will fight them out."  
Up the hills you fought and faltered,  
    In the vales you strove and bled,  
While your ears still heard the thunder  
    Of the foes' advancing tread.

Then distress fell on the nation,  
    And the flag was drooping low;  
Should the dust pollute your banner?  
    No! the nation shouted, No!  
So when the War, in savage triumph,  
    Spread abroad his funeral pall –  
Then you called the colored soldiers,  
    And they answered to your call.

And like the hounds unleashed and eager  
    For the lifeblood of the prey,  
Sprung they forth and bore them bravely  
    In the thickest of the fray.  
And where'er the fight was hottest,  
    Where the bullets fastest fell,  
There they pressed unbalanced and fearless  
    At the very mouth of hell.

Ah, they rallied to the standard  
    To uphold it by their might;  
None were stronger in the labors,  
    None were braver in the fight.  
From the blazing breach of Wagner  
    To the plains of Olustee,  
They were foremost in the fight  
    Of the battles of the free.

And at Pillow! God have mercy  
    On the deeds committed there.  
And the souls of those poor victims  
    Sent to Thee without a prayer.  
Let the fullness of Thy pit  
    O'er the hot wrought spirits sway  
Of the gallant colored soldiers  
    Who fell fighting on that day!

Yes, the Blacks enjoy their freedom,  
    And they won it dearly too;  
Fore the life blood of their thousands  
    Did the southern fields bedew.  
In the darkness of their bondage,  
    In the depths of slavery's night,  
Their muskets flashed the dawning,  
    And they fought their way to light.

They were comrades then and brothers,  
    Are they more or less today?  
They were good to stop a bullet  
    And to front the fearful fray.  
They were citizens and soldiers,  
    When rebellion raised its head'  
And the traits that made them worthy, --  
    Ah! Those virtues are not dead.

They have shared your nightly vigils,  
    They have shared your daily toil;  
And their blood with yours commingling  
    Has enriched the Southern soil.  
They have met as fierce a foeman,  
    And have been as brave and true.

And their deeds shall find a record  
    In the registry of Fame;  
For their blood has cleansed completely  
    Every blot of Slavery's shame.

So all honor and all glory  
    To those noble sons of Ham\* --  
The gallant colored soldiers  
    Who fought for Uncle Sam!

*\*Biblical reference to a son of Noah.*

No 11

Camp Fremont

March the last 1864

Dear Bro.

I am well and in just as good spirits as I have been for the last year, and things around the camp present quite an interesting scene this evening as it appears like a nice cloudy warm evening in sugar-making time and the boys have just now come off of Battalion Drill, and my knees are very tired, for I have marched, on double quick, command times &c. but still I hope I am not so tired as some of our convicts who were just now released.

Three of our ~~neighboring~~ boys went over to a neighboring Irishman's and stole about  $\frac{15}{1}$  of his chickens last night, and this morning the Irishman came and complained, and we found the boys and one of them was Jarden White, and the Adjutant had me to paint some letters about 4 inches long **THIEF**, and pinned it on their backs, and made them stand upon a barrel a piece, right in front of my office, where every body passes, and there they

had to stand from 9 A.M. till 5 P.M., without any intermission whatever, except one fellow was so heavy he broke in the head of his barrel and went up to his button in it, and fell over & you may know there was a laugh; it did look bad indeed to see them standing up where citizens and soldiers could see it, all, but as luck would have it they had not cooked the ~~the~~ chickens & the Irishman carried them out like an arm full of stoverwood, and the whole camp gave him 3 cheers, for his picked chickens.

Some of <sup>you</sup> ought to come now and if you or Jim either would come when it is nice you would say you didn't see anything at all. I am not dressed anything like I was when you saw me last.

I would be glad to know how sister is and all the rest of you are and the things in general about home, and when you heard from (dark last night), or Dark Co. Ohio,

I have written so much that it hurts my breast a little to write a great while, and I hope the time will soon come when I can be

Address

B. F. Trail Sergt. Maj:  
28<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf.  
Indianapolis

Care of Col. Russell) Ind.

R



One

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6924112



Mr. David Trail  
Knightstown  
Henry Co. Ind.

Following are excerpted typescripts from some of Benjamin Trail's letters to use with activities listed above.

Camp Fremont [Indiana]  
Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1864

Dear Brother:

I left Charlottesvill on the noon train Thursday and found Milton Winslow on board, and we came to the city and we were accommodated very well as the people gave us our supper free of charge, and we slept in the old Court House very comfortable . . . .I am well and so far very well pleased but I don't know how long it will last so. I was examined on New Years morning and passed a bully examination, and am good for 90 years if I don't die in less time. Although some of the coons did frost bite it was remarked that the[y] stood the cold better than the white people and our captain gave 3 cheers for their ability to stand the cold. . . .

You ought to come sometime and see . . . all our boys, in their suit "dres[s] parade" dancing, with their countless number of shining buttons which diffuses a magnificent luster over the gloomy aspect of the camp.

. . .Sunday a coon was arrested here for persuading our boys to go with him to Rhode Island and they were about to put him through double quick, and every man better mind how he talks these war times for it is rather critical . . . . We will be here till warm weather I think and if we do stay, you all ought to honor you own states 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of coons, to come and visit it once before we leave. Some say we will take charge of a gunboat, but no one knows what we will do save the Father who is in Heaven . . . .I have my doubts whither I ever come home after I leave Camp because it sometimes looks a little bad here, and this is a heaven compared to our expected future. One year ago today I had no idea that at this time I would be a U.S. soldier. . . .

Ben

\* \* \* \* \*

Camp Fremont  
March the last 1964

Dear Bro.

I am well and in just as good spirits as I have been for the last year . . . . the boys have just now come off of Battallion Drill, and my knees are very tired, for I have marched, on double quick, common time & c. but still I hope I am not so tired as some of our convicts who were just now released.

Three of our boys went over to a neighboring Irishmans and stole about 15 of his chickens last night. . .the Adjutant had me to paint some letters about 4 inches long THIEF, and pined it on their backs, and made them stand up on a barrel a piece, right in front of my office, where every body passes, and there they had to stand from 9 A.M. till 5 P.M., without any intermission whatever

except one fellow was so heavy he broke in the head of his barrel and went up to his bottom in it, and fell over & you may know there was a laugh; it did look bad indeed to see them standing up where citizens and soldiers could see it. . . .

We have about 530 men in camp now, but if we stay here till the regiment is filled it will be till the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, but I am ready to go now and would be glad if we had marching orders. . . .

I will try to write you once a week all the time I am gone if I can, but if I don't you may know I cant, and the truth is I would like to be with you boys and talk as we used to about things in general, but I have strayed off from you all , and it may be that we will not see each other till we meet in the Kingdom. . .

B. F. Trail Sergt. Maj.  
28<sup>th</sup> U.S. C. Infy.  
Indianapolis  
Ind.

Care of Col. Russell

\* \* \* \* \*

Camp Fremont  
Sunday April 10<sup>th</sup> '64

Dear Bro.

. . .Yesterday morning we received a dispatch from the War Department at Washington ordering us to Anapolis Maryland and if we had 8 companies we would have left . . .but we have only a little mor than six companies, so the Governor says, we ill have 30 days to fill out the 8 companies in . . . as no regiment can have a commissioned Colonel in a Regiment of less than 8 companies. . . .

But I do wish to god that our regiment had a Colonel, so that I might now have been on the banks of the Susquehanna instead of sitting here writing, as I do want to get as near to Washington as I can, so that there will be a chance for me to go to Washington, as it will be my glory to visit the capital of this great Republic before I am covered with the sod, and I can say that I have much more respect for my country now, than I had before I enlisted . . . .

Your Brother  
Ben

\* \* \* \* \*

Camp Fremont  
April 27<sup>th</sup> 1864

Dear Sir:

It is just now two o'clock P.M. and I am getting my 3 days rations cooked to take with me on my trip to Anapolis, as I intend to leave as the rest did this evening at 8:15 P.M. on the Bellfountaine R.R.

. . . We were offered \$7.50 per month but there was not one of us that took a cent; but I was willing to take mine as I knew that was all we were going to get at the present, but as long as no one else would take it, and I being the Sergt. Major of the regiment , I thought I would not come down lower than anyone else, but I hope the time will come when we will be payed the same as other Soldiers. .

. . . I'm in some hurry because I have to superintend the transport of about 20 men, and have them ready by this P.M. – but I can tell you in a few words what I want you to do . . . . Send . . .all my books that may be of any use to ellie, and anything else that will do her any good . . . .You may do as you think best about the mortgage better let it stand just as it is . . . although I do feel perfectly willing that she should have all that is mine at my death. . . .

And if you and mother don't take all my money give it to my wife. . . .

Nothing more, only remember  
Your Brother  
Ben in the army

\* \* \* \* \*

**Directions to make a housewife:**

Items needed for each housewife:

- A piece of cotton fabric approximately 6" by 12"
- A strip of fabric (or ribbon) approximately 1/2" by 16"
- A needle
- Thread to match fabric
- Pins
- Buttons and small pieces of fabric for patches

Fold the top and bottom edges (the narrow 6" edges) over about 1/4 inch to form a hem and pin in place, then stitch the hem with needle and thread.

Fold the top and bottom (the hemmed edges) toward the middle so they make a pocket about 2" or 2 1/2" deep. Then fold the sides (the widest edges) over about 1/4" to make the side hems, pin in place, and then stitch the hem. On one of the pockets, sew two seams to make two smaller pockets. Turn the housewife over, on the back side place the center of the long strip of fabric or ribbon (1/2" by 16") at the center of the housewife and then stitch in place. You are now ready to place small pieces of fabric, some buttons, extra thread, and maybe a small pair of scissors into the housewife before rolling it up and tying with the long strip of fabric or ribbon.

