

Topic: The Massachusetts 54th Regiment and the Battle of Fort Wagner

Curriculum Framework Addressed: USI.39

Objectives:

Students will be able to explain the role of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment in the Battle for Fort Wagner.

Students will be able to provide examples of the heroism of the men of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment.

Students will gain an understanding of the motivation/desire of black men to participate in the struggle for their freedom.

Students will be able to provide examples of blacks from Worcester, MA who were members of the 54th and describe some of the experiences they had in the Civil War.

Materials:

Story Sergeant Carney's Flag story courtesy of:
http://extlab1.entnem.ufl.edu/olustee/54th_MS_inf.html

54th Massachusetts Regiment (Film from A&E)

Frederick Douglas quote "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 pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States."—Frederick Douglas

Telegram & Gazette articles on Major Alexander Johnson

Introduction:

In studying the Civil War we have discussed some of the reasons why the war was fought. One reason was the debate over state's rights and another was the issue of slavery. We know that in the early years of the Civil War blacks had not been used by either the Confederacy or Union however as war progressed and both sides had difficulty recruiting for their armies the issue of black service arose. Many blacks had expressed their desire to fight in the war. At the same time many whites had begun to state publicly that if black emancipation was the reason for the war, why should blacks not fight for their rights? For blacks participation in the Civil War was an opportunity to show strength, courage, determination, and ability as fighters and men. As a group we will investigate a variety of sources in order to understand the sacrifice made by blacks in the Civil War.

Independent Practice and closure: Quote from Frederick Douglas will be placed on board and students will be asked to think about what reaction blacks would have had to his statement. Students will be then given an overview of the 54th to read and the story of Sergeant Carney. On the second day students will view film and be given T&G articles about Alexander H. Johnson. Students will be asked to answer the following questions in essay format: Discuss the role of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War. Based on the documents provided, what opportunities did war provide for blacks and what gains blacks made? Provide proof for your answer.