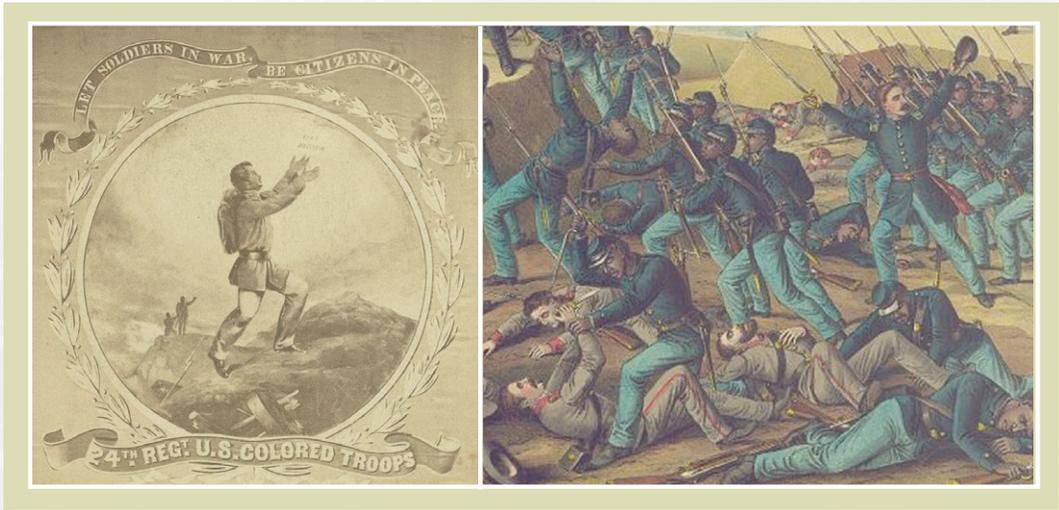




National
Cemetery
Administration
**Veterans
Legacy
Program**



The Battle Cry of Freedom

Honoring African American Military Service in the Civil War

"We hold that a soldier's most appropriate burial place is on the field where he has fallen."

Francis George Shaw

Middle Level Lesson

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

www.cem.va.gov/legacy



*“They say, We leave you our deaths: give them their meaning...”**



Since the Civil War, the United States has maintained national cemeteries to honor its veterans' service. A century and a half later, these cemeteries offer a broad range of resources for study and opportunities to honor those who have served in the nation's wars. Within their walls and records may be found the story of how the nation has met its debt to those who served in its armed forces and how our understanding of that obligation has deepened with time.

Each national cemetery has its own history and unique landscape, with geography, design, and nature worthy of reflection. The cemeteries' manicured lawns reflect the care extended to sacred ground where honored dead lie. The mission of the Veterans Legacy Program is to extend that care beyond the grave to remember veterans' service to the nation by telling their stories. The program draws on the help of educators and students to search out the sources to document these lives and honor their deeds. Accounts of courage and sacrifice, and of competence and service, contribute to our appreciation of what earlier generations have given to the nation and help us understand why this ground is set aside as hallowed.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

www.cem.va.gov/legacy

Welcome, Educators!

The Veterans Legacy Program offers educators an integrated new suite of lesson plans designed to teach students about the service and sacrifice of our nation’s veterans, and to take advantage of our national cemeteries as historic places for teaching and learning — both in the classroom *and* on-site. The educational resources of the Veterans Legacy Program draw on rich stories from national cemeteries to offer teachers a variety of hands-on activities directly connected to national curriculum standards.

- Customized for middle level and high school students, the program’s five lesson plans introduce students to the important roles played by African Americans and women during the Civil War, to heroic Medal of Honor recipients and diverse service men and women of the Second World War, and to the history and traditions of Memorial Day.
- The lesson plans are supplemented online with a variety of additional resources. These include a collection of primary source documents and images, interactive maps, and short videos related to the content of the lesson plans.

As the National Cemetery Administration launches these inaugural components of the new Veterans Legacy Program, educators and students are invited to provide comments, suggestions, and contributions to further develop and enhance these initial materials *and* to develop new resources in the future. Please visit the program website to comment: www.cem.va.gov/legacy.

We appreciate your suggestions and know you will benefit from this exciting new program.

Key Themes of the Veterans Legacy Program’s Lesson Plans

- Honoring African American military service during the Civil War
- How women contributed to the Civil War effort, and memorializing the dead
- Reviewing World War II through Medal of Honor stories
- Diversity and U.S. Forces in World War II
- Memorial Day: its origins, history, and the evolution of its traditions

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PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Library of Congress: Cover (both), page 7

Contemporary photographs are by Thomas Connors except where otherwise indicated.

National Cemeteries Referenced in this Lesson

Beaufort National Cemetery: Site of burial of U.S. Colored Troops

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery: Site of U.S. Colored Troops Grave Marker (1866)

Nashville National Cemetery: Site of U.S. Colored Troops Monument (2006)

Woodlawn National Cemetery: Site of Confederate soldier burials by John W. Jones

EDUCATION STANDARDS

Common Core English Language Arts Standards (ELA)

RI: Reading Informational Text **W:** Writing

- RI.7** Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject.
- W.2** Write informative/explanatory text to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- RI.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
-

Common Core History/Social Studies Standards

RH: Reading History **WHST:** Writing History

- RH 6-8.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- RH 6-8.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- WHST 6-8.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print sources and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard citation format.
- WHST 6-8.9** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
-

NCSS Disciplinary Standards

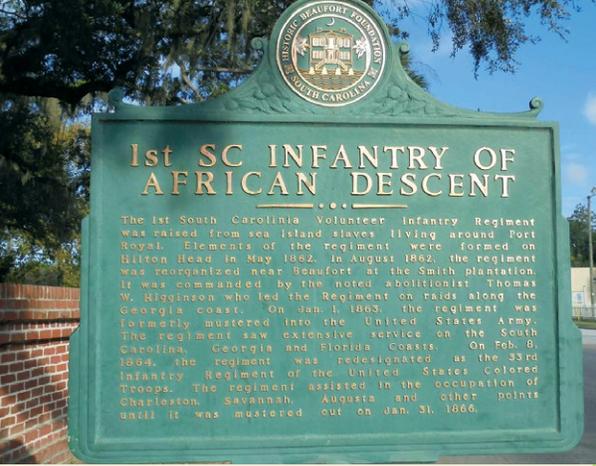
History

Enable learners to develop historical comprehension in order that they might reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage; identify the central questions addressed in historical narrative; draw upon data in historical maps, charts and other graphic organizers; and draw upon visual, literary, or musical sources.

Help learners to identify issues and problems of the past, recognize factors contributing to such problems, identify and analyze alternative courses of action, formulate a position or course of action, and evaluate the implementation of that decision.

Geography

Guide learners in the use of maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.



First SC Infantry Historic Marker

KEY MESSAGES

- African Americans participated in Union military service in significant numbers during the Civil War.
- The federal government provided honorable burials for African Americans who died in service, as it sought scattered Union gravesites during Reconstruction and moved the remains to national cemeteries.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

The 54th Massachusetts & Colonel Shaw

Time Required: 45-minute class period

Activity 2

How has African American Military Service in the Civil War Been Memorialized?

Time Required: 45-minute class period

STUDENT HANDOUTS

- Graphic Organizer: Commemorating African American Military Service
- Resources for Sites Commemorating African American Military Service in the Civil War
- Venn Diagram: Comparing Sites Commemorating African American Military Service

The Battle Cry of Freedom

Honoring African American Military Service in the Civil War

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the U.S. Government's responsibility to fallen soldiers and their families.
2. Discover how African American military service has been memorialized over time.

Lesson Overview

Historians now stress how many African Americans achieved their own emancipation by escaping slavery and fighting for what they knew the war was about: what Lincoln called "a new birth of freedom" and the end of slavery. African Americans were eager to fight for the Union, but they were not officially allowed to enlist in the military until 1862.

This lesson explores how the Confederate burial of African American Union troops and their white officer, Robert Gould Shaw, all killed in battle, helped to ignite a national controversy over race, death, and honor. Students are asked to consider what constitutes an honorable burial and what the country owes to its fallen. Students also look at how African American military service has been memorialized over time. Students will compare grave markers, monuments, and sculptures and examine where, when, and why they were erected.

Primary Sources

- Francis Shaw's letter to General Quincy Gillmore (1863)
- Six memorials to African American Civil War military service (1866-2006)

Essential Questions

1. What military role did African Americans play in the Civil War?
2. How did that role change as the war progressed?
3. How and why do we memorialize African American soldiers' role in the war?

FEATURED INSET

Next to Boundary Street, alongside Beaufort National Cemetery, the marker shown at top left commemorates the first African American military unit comprised of former slaves. At least a dozen men who served in the 1st South Carolina Infantry are buried in Section 30 on the opposite side of the cemetery wall.

Introduction to Activities

Even before the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves fled to join the Union Army as it advanced into the South, effectively emancipating themselves once they had reached Union-occupied Confederate territory. The new freedmen wanted to fight for the Union, but at first they were not allowed to serve in the U.S. Army or Navy.

The first unit recruited from freedmen was the First South Carolina, organized in Hilton Head and Beaufort in 1862. The following year, the most famous African American regiment, the 54th Massachusetts, was recruited from free African Americans living in New England. The regiment was led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and is the subject of the film *Glory*.

During the nineteenth century, the Army used numbered marble posts to mark the graves of unknown servicemen. Since the early 1900s, unknowns have been marked with standard veterans' headstones. In early 1868, the Army removed the remains of Union soldiers buried on Morris Island, including those at Ft. Wagner, and reburied them at Beaufort National Cemetery under unknown markers. (Even a few years after the Civil War, there was no way to determine individual identities for many of those moved to national cemeteries in this effort, particularly those buried in mass graves.) As such, Colonel Shaw and his men must rest somewhere among the 4,500 Civil War unknowns buried in Beaufort National Cemetery.

The moving of remains from Morris Island was part of a larger effort to relocate Union graves from the South Carolina and Georgia coastal areas to Beaufort. By the mid-1880s, Ft. Wagner and the site of the original trench grave on Morris Island had completely washed away into the Atlantic Ocean.

Teachers may obtain additional background prior to teaching the activities by reviewing how Lincoln made emancipation central to the Union cause and how official policy moved from Contraband Acts to the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment. (See Resources on lesson plan website.)

FEATURED INSET

The bravery of the 54th Massachusetts in the assault on Ft. Wagner came to represent the courage of the African Americans who fought in Union forces. The print shown at right was published in Chicago around 1890.



Storming Ft. Wagner

The Battle Cry of Freedom

ACTIVITY 1

The 54th Massachusetts and Colonel Shaw

MATERIALS NEEDED

- DVD of *Glory* (or video clip of last scene)
- Letter from Francis Shaw to General Quincy Gillmore, shown below
- Photo of unknown burial markers in Beaufort National Cemetery
- Video: *Honoring African American Civil War Military Service* (approximately 90 seconds; available for download at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/beaufort.asp>)

PREPARATION

Queue up the last scene of *Glory*, Part 33: "Lost Cause," from 1:52:50 to 1:55:05, showing the trench burial.

Prepare to show the short video, *Honoring African American Civil War Military Service*

Francis Shaw's Letter to General Gillmore

Brigadier General Gillmore,
Commanding Department of The South

Sir,

I take the liberty to address you because I am informed that efforts are to be made to recover the body of my son, Colonel Shaw of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, which was buried at Fort Wagner. My object in writing is to say that such efforts are not authorized by me or any of my family, and are not approved by us. We hold that a soldier's most appropriate burial place is on the field where he has fallen. I shall therefore be much obliged, General, if in case the matter is brought to your cognizance, you will forbid the desecration of my son's grave, and prevent the disturbance of his remains or those buried with him. With most earnest wishes for your success, I am, sir, with respect and esteem,

Your obedient servant,

Francis George Shaw
New York, Aug. 24, 1863

From Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment*, Boston, 1894, pp 102-103

Activity Background

During the Civil War, commonly held standards about the honorable treatment of enemy soldiers led to public controversy over the deaths of U.S. Colored Troops at the hands of Confederates at Ft. Pillow. These standards also affected what happened to the bodies of the men of the 54th Massachusetts who fell at Ft. Wagner near Charleston, SC on July 18, 1863.

After the battle, the fort remained in Confederate hands, and the Confederates took responsibility for burying the dead. Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who was white, was buried in the trench with his African American soldiers.

This burial was widely reported in the North and was interpreted as a Confederate insult to Shaw. It was considered dishonorable for two reasons: (1) Officers were usually separated if they could be identified; and (2) The races were customarily buried separately.

Trench and mass burials for soldiers were common on battlefields during the Civil War. Burial in both the South and the North was almost always in segregated cemeteries until after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s.

Activity Steps

1. Show the final scene of *Glory*, or explain that Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who was white, was buried in the trench with his African American soldiers.
2. After watching the clip, use the information in the Introduction to Activities and Activity Background sections to lead a class discussion using the following questions:
 - What challenges might African Americans have faced from the Union Army after joining, or from the Confederates they met in battle?
 - What happened to the dead at Ft. Wagner?
 - What might have been considered dishonorable about the burial of Shaw and the men of the 54th Massachusetts at that time?
 - When the Union Army took control of Ft. Wagner less than two months after the battle, do you think they should have tried to locate Shaw so that his body could be returned home, as officers' bodies generally were?
4. After the class has discussed these questions, read the letter from Francis Shaw (Robert's father) requesting that his son remain buried with his men. See sidebar on page 8.
3. Introduce the final discussion question: *Do you agree or disagree with Mr. Shaw?* You may wish to have students move to opposite sides of the room for this discussion. Students should discuss the question of the Shaw family's desires and the desires of the families of the soldiers buried with Colonel Shaw.
4. Show students the 90-second video, *Honoring African American Civil War Military Service*.

Activity Closure

Show the image of the marble posts marking unknown Civil War graves in Beaufort National Cemetery (image available at www.cem.va.gov/legacy).

- Invite students to recap what they've learned about the burial of unknown soldiers in Beaufort, and about Colonel Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts. Ask what they think about the decision of Colonel Shaw's family, especially in light of attitudes during the Civil War era. Ask students to also consider whether, in the larger context, a group burial was an honorable or dishonorable burial for the Union soldiers whose remains could not be identified. *Why?* Encourage class discussion.
- Ask students: *What did you find most interesting about this activity, and why?*



Beaufort Post



Beaufort Unknown Posts

FEATURED INSET

Until 1903, the graves of unknown soldiers were marked with numbered marble blocks. These are in Section 54, but similar ones are found throughout Beaufort National Cemetery. About 950 of 4,500 unknown Civil War remains are African American servicemen.

The Battle Cry of Freedom

ACTIVITY 2

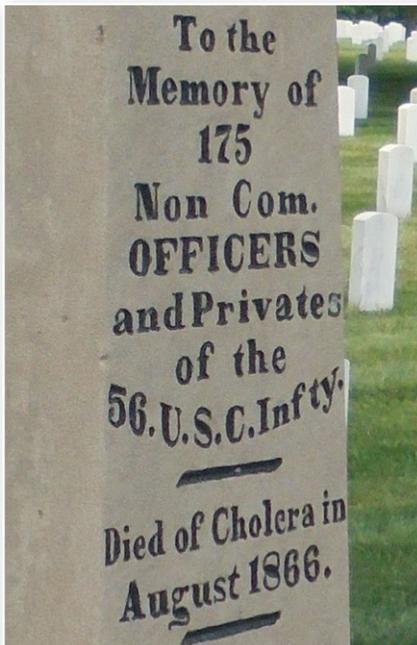
How has African American Military Service in the Civil War Been Memorialized?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handout 1: Graphic Organizer
- Handout 2: Resources (with informational websites)
- Handout 3: Venn Diagram
- Internet access

PREPARATION:

Make copies of Handouts 1, 2, and 3, one per student.



*U.S. Colored Infantry Grave Marker (1866)
Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery
(Section 57)*



*Memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the
54th Massachusetts
Found in the gardens of Saint-Gaudens
National Historic Site in Cornish, NH*

Activity Steps

1. Have students compare up to six sites commemorating African Americans' service in the Civil War: Have groups of students examine memorials from 1866 to 2006 (see Sites list, below). These include group grave markers erected following an epidemic and an archaeological discovery, a local and national monument, and three statues, one of which is considered to be among the greatest memorials in the country. (Note: Student Handout 2 includes links to this information.)

Sites:

- a. U.S. Colored Troops Group Grave Marker (1866), Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO
 - b. Memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts (1897), Boston Common, MA
 - c. West Point/Norfolk African American Civil War Memorial (1920), Norfolk, VA
 - d. 55th Massachusetts/Folly Island Grave Markers (1989), Beaufort National Cemetery, SC
 - e. African American Civil War Memorial (1997) and Museum, Washington, DC
 - f. U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) Monument (2006), Nashville National Cemetery
2. Have students use the graphic organizers to fill in each site's purpose, date, type of landscape, and who erected it. You may wish to model this task using one site as an example. Remind groups that they should complete the graphic organizers as preparation for presenting their information to the class.
 3. After allowing time for research, have each group present its information to the class; remind class members to record the information from other students' presentations on their own graphic organizers.

Discussion

- *Why do these sites differ? What do they have in common?*
 - *Why are so many of the sites relatively recent?*
 - *What forms do the sites take? How is design affected by purpose? What has changed over time in their design?*
4. Have students use the Venn Diagram (Handout 3) to compare information on two or more memorials: Similarities, Differences, Age, Purpose, Location, Form/Design. (Note: This may be done in class or as homework.)

Activity Closure

After students give their presentations, have them reflect on the similarities and differences among the sites they have explored.

- *What did they find to be most interesting about the memorialization of African American soldiers from the Civil War era? What might be done in the same way today, and what might be done differently?*
- Ask students: *What is your biggest “take-away” from this activity, and why?*

Lesson Extensions

- Delve more deeply into the story behind Augustus St. Gaudens’ powerful Shaw and 54th Massachusetts Memorial, the push to ensure it would honor the men of the 54th as well as Shaw himself, and the sculptor’s portrayal of the individual soldiers.
- Compare the stories of John W. Jones, who buried Confederate prisoners at Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira, NY, and Robert Smalls, who became a congressman and owned the home he had worked in as a slave in Beaufort, SC. *How did each of these men become free?* Explore their lives after leaving slavery, and compare their later relations with former owners and Southern whites.

Lesson Resources

- *Blue-Eyed Child of Fortune: Civil War Letters of Robert Gould Shaw*. Russell Duncan, ed., Athens: University of Georgia, 1992
- *Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862-1867*. William Dobak, Washington: Center of Military History, 2011
- John Buescher, “Robert Gould Shaw.” Available at <http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/24185>
- *The Shaw Memorial: A Celebration of an American Masterpiece*. Gregory Schwartz, et al., Cornish, NH: Eastern National, 2002
- *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*. Drew Gilpin Faust, New York: Knopf, 2008
- Copies of or excerpts from the Contraband Acts, Emancipation Proclamation, and 13th Amendment. Available on the NCA Legacy Program website: www.cem.va.gov/legacy.



Robert Smalls Bust
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Beaufort, SC



John W. Jones Memorial
Woodlawn National Cemetery, Elmira, NY

TEACHING TIP

A helpful website that lists and describes USCT monuments is:
<https://jubiloemancipationcentury.wordpress.com/2011/05/30/monuments-to-the-united-states-colored-troops-usct-the-list/>

The Battle Cry of Freedom

HANDOUT 1

Graphic Organizer: Commemorating African American Military Service in the Civil War

Instructions: Use this graphic organizer to prepare for presenting research information to the class, and to record the findings of each student group.

	USCT Marker, Jefferson Barracks	Shaw Monument, Boston Common	West Point African American Civil War Memorial, Norfolk, VA	55th Mass./Folly Island Markers, Beaufort Natl. Cemetery, SC	African American Civil War Memorial, Washington, DC	U.S. Colored Troops Monument, Nashville Natl. Cemetery, TN
Date of Creation or Dedication						
Setting/Location						
Form or Type; Who created it						
Purpose: Who is being honored?						
Who paid for or commissioned it?						

Student Name: _____

Class: _____

The Battle Cry of Freedom

HANDOUT 2

Resources for Sites Commemorating African American Military Service in the Civil War

Instructions: Use these resources to find information about the site that your group is researching. Use the graphic organizer (Handout 1) to record information for your presentation.

1. U.S. Colored Troops Group Grave Marker (1866), Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO
 - <http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/jeffersonbarracks.asp>
 - http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Missouri/Jefferson_Barracks_National_Cemetery.html

Notes: _____

2. Memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts (1897), Boston Common, MA
 - <http://www.nps.gov/saga/learn/historyculture/the-shaw-memorial.htm>
 - <http://www.nga.gov/feature/shaw/>

Notes: _____

3. West Point/Norfolk African American Civil War Memorial (1920), Norfolk, VA
 - <http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM5VYC>
 - <http://www.norfolk.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/52>

Notes: _____

4. 55th Massachusetts/Folly Island Grave Markers (1989), Beaufort National Cemetery, SC
 - <https://reconstructingreconstruction.wordpress.com/2015/05/25/beaufort-national-cemetery-remembering-black-union-troops-and-reconstruction-this-memorial-day/>

Notes: _____

5. African American Civil War Memorial (1997) and Museum, Washington, DC
 - <http://www.afroamcivilwar.org/about-us/memorial-museum-history.html>

Notes: _____

6. U.S. Colored Troops Monument (2006), Nashville National Cemetery
 - <http://www.civilwarnews.com/archive/articles/nvilleusct.htm>
 - http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/tennessee/Nashville_National_Cemetery.html

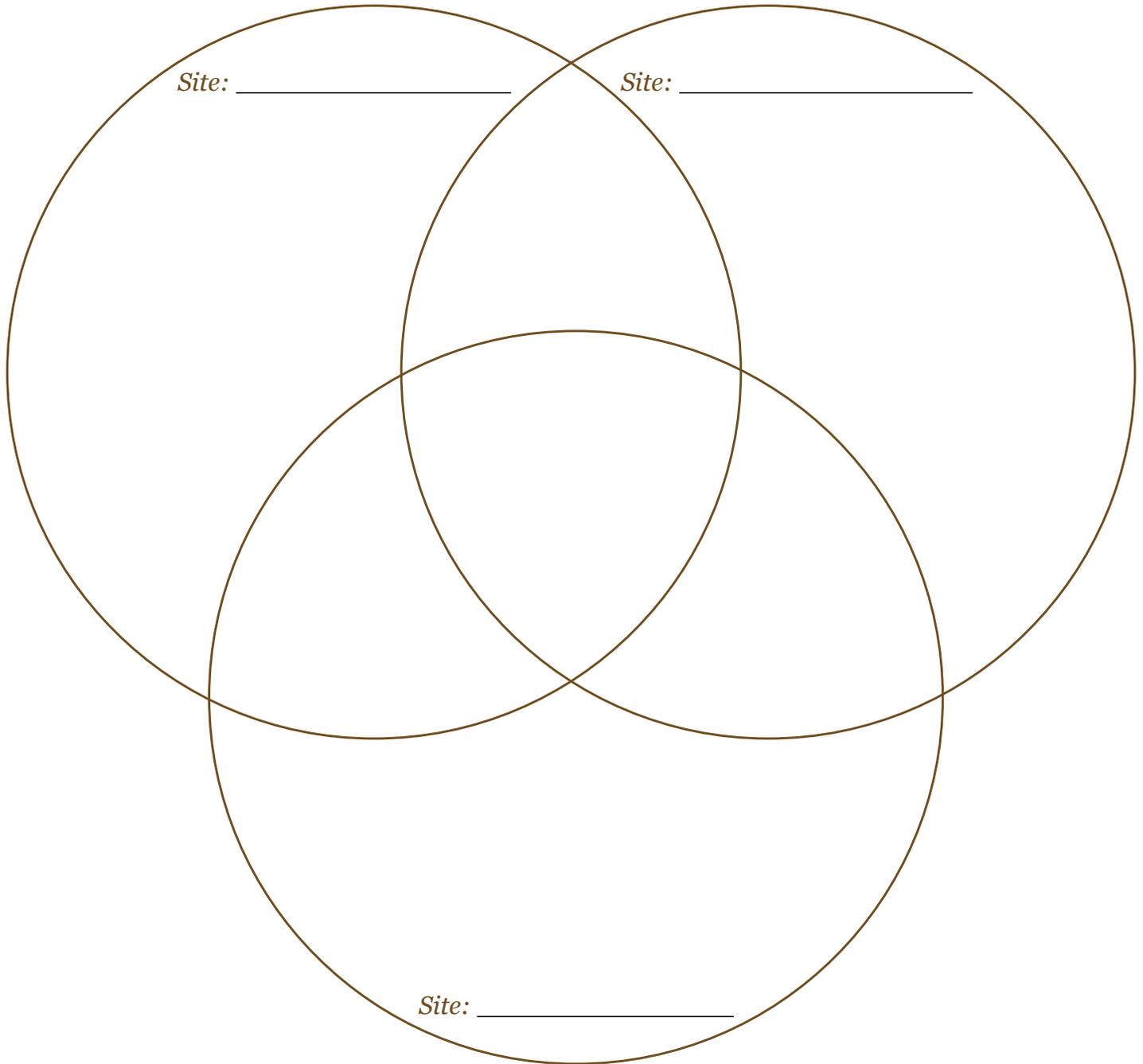
Notes: _____

The Battle Cry of Freedom

HANDOUT 3

Comparing Sites That Commemorate African American Military Service

Instructions: Use the Venn Diagram to compare information about two or more of the sites that commemorate African American military service during the Civil War: Similarities, Differences, Age, Purpose, Location, Form/Design.



Student Name: _____ Class: _____

Curriculum Development Team

Historian

Thomas G. Connors

Thomas Connors is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Illinois. He is a recognized expert on history education with a specialization in the use of cemeteries as teaching tools. Since 2000, he has worked with teachers and led tours of 62 cemeteries in 25 states, from Florida to Alaska. He has published a study of Washington Irving and *Sleepy Hollow*, and his current research focuses on using cemeteries for research and service projects. He is also involved in local historic preservation and education.

Contributing Educators

Lucinda Evans

Lucinda Evans has taught social studies in Topeka Public Schools for 25 years. She has developed curriculum and teaching materials and has written state standards and assessment items for social studies. She has a B.S. in history from St. Mary of the Plains College in Dodge City, Kansas. As a Master Teacher for the National Council for History Education and the American Institute for History Education, Evans has been involved with numerous Teaching American History grants. She is a past president of the Kansas Council for History Education and has participated in Gilder Lehrman Seminars at Oxford and Cambridge.

Gerry R. Kohler

Gerry Kohler taught social studies for three decades in elementary, junior high, and high schools in Parkersburg, West Virginia. She earned her B.A. in Early Childhood Education from West Virginia Wesleyan College and her M.A. in Education Administration from West Virginia University. In 2006, she was selected as the Gilder Lehrman Institute's National History Teacher of the Year. She has frequently presented as a Master Teacher for the National Council for History Education on Teaching American History grants. Other honors have come from the Daughters of the American Revolution and the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2010, she received the James P. Vaughan Award for Historic Preservation.