



54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry

Finding glory amid turmoil

Overview:

The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was an African-American regiment that saw extensive action fighting for the Union Army during the Civil War. In this lesson, students will learn about its formation, key figures, and most notable battles.

Lesson Prompt:

Have you ever seen the movie “Glory?” Have you ever wondered what the slaves were doing during the war to end slavery?

Share the prepared PowerPoint slide deck with students.

Select from the list of critical thinking and discussion questions to stimulate classroom discussion. There are accompanying recommended short videos for classroom viewing, and original primary source letters from soldiers for students to read and analyze. There is also a poem commemorating the service of the regiment for students to read and interpret, along with some multiple-choice questions to test understanding and retention of key concepts.

Vocabulary:

Integrated, Loyalist, Abolitionist, Regiment, Inciting, Insurrection, Battery, Ambivalent, Infantry, Parapet, Mutiny, Guerilla, Compunction, Contemporaries, Jayhawker, Vigilante, Siege, Barrage, Lauded, Galvanized, Infamously, Captive, Renowned, Valor, Iconic, Composite

Recommended Resources:

<https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/tell-it-with-pride--the-54th-massachusetts-regiment-and-augustus.html>

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war/douglass-sons.html>

<https://www.anb.org/view/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-0401086>

<https://archive.org/details/braveblackregime0000emil/page/22/mode/2up>

<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/19/the-old-flag-never-touched-the-ground/>

https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/hasm_a9088/

<https://web.archive.org/web/20191224163506/http://www.caagri.org/carney.html>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/06/11/civil-war-football-field-weve-been-celebrating-wrong-values/>

<http://lestweforget.hamptonu.edu/page.cfm?uuid=9FEC3871-BCAD-1517-698B543B15C0CFA2>

Numerous online videos are recommended on the Lesson 9 Videos supplement.