

NAME: _____

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Buffalo Soldiers: Background Information for Teachers

Post American Civil War

In 1866, nearly sixteen months after the Civil War congress authorized the formation of six regiments of African Americans to serve in the army. Two all black regiments were the 9th/10th cavalry, and four were the infantry, 24th/25th.

The Name "Buffalo Soldiers"

The reason for the name, Buffalo Soldier, is uncertain. One view is that the Indians saw a resemblance between the black man's hair and the mane of a buffalo. Another view is just like their sacred mighty buffalo, the Buffalo Soldiers fought ferociously to the end. The name was a sign of respect. However, the soldiers themselves did not call each other "Buffalo Soldiers".

The 9th/10th Cavalry Units

The 9th/10th cavalry served on horseback. Their duties included escorting and protecting stagecoaches, mail, forts, and railroads.

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They sent survey parties to scout Indian territories. Overall, their job was to make the country safe for settlers.

The 24th/25th Infantry Units

These men were sent to the most desolated and dangerous frontier outposts. They fought many different tribes of Indians such as the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Apache, and the Sioux in the harshest conditions with the oldest equipment.

Rations

The soldiers were paid \$13.00 per month plus rations. These rations included:

Equipment: musket (3 shots, jammed easily when hot), rope, blanket, sack for food and personal items, canteen-holds about 3 cups of water, tin cup, knife, fork, shoe brush, comb, stencil brush (used to label all items), very small tent, saddle for cavalry only.

Food: rice, grits, army beans, green coffee beans (must be roasted before using), tea, salt/pepper, molasses, vinegar-used to polish buttons, dehydrated vegetables for soup, salted dried pork or beef, bacon or ham (on occasions)

Relationships

White settlers: Did not respect the Buffalo soldiers. Many felt that they were inferior. The thought of African Americans soldiers carrying guns feared them.

Native Americans: viewed the Buffalo soldiers with respect. They were fierce fighters and often fought to the end.

Reasons why African Americans men became Buffalo Soldiers

Many African American felt that by joining the army it was their only opportunity to become lower-middle class. They were now federal employees that gained them some new rights. The Buffalo Soldiers now had an income, some power, medical care, and food. They even received an education by the Chaplain so paper work could be completed. This was an opportunity to better themselves and many jumped at the chance.

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Lesson Plan: Buffalo Soldiers
5th Grade

Objective:

Students will understand that African American soldiers known as "Buffalo Soldiers" played a significant role in the United States military. They will be able to answer the following areas:

- * Why they were named "Buffalo Soldiers"?
- * What were their responsibilities as soldiers?
- * Their daily life-rations
- * How others viewed them?
- * Why they chose to become soldiers?

Material:

Song, Buffalo Soldier, by Bob Marley
Attached Student worksheet
Paper for journaling

Procedure:

1. Play, Buffalo Soldier, by Bob Marley have students brainstorm and write predictions about the meaning of the lyrics in small groups.
2. Review the 5 areas that students will be responsible to know by the end of the lesson
3. Students fill out attached worksheet using small groups predicting followed by teacher discussion of the inform.

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Activity:

Create a journal of a Buffalo Soldier. Students will write 2 entries using the information that was discussed. They must include the type of regiment that they are in, daily happenings, rations, etc.

Students will share their entries with one another.

Closing:

Review the 5 objective areas by asking each small group to share with one another. Review in a whole group setting.

Discuss the meaning of the lyrics from, Buffalo Soldier by Bob Marley.

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Buffalo Soldiers

1. How did "Buffalo Soldiers get their name?

SMALL GROUP PREDICTION: _____

INFORMATION: _____

2. What is the difference between cavalry & infantry? What were their responsibilities?

SMALL GROUP PREDICTION: _____

INFORMATION:

Cavalry: _____

Infantry: _____

3. What were their rations? Make a group list.

SMALL GROUP Prediction/List _____

NAME: _____

INFORMATION: _____

4. How were they viewed by others?

SMALL GROUP Prediction:

Indians: _____

White settlers: _____

INFORMATION

Indians: _____

White settlers: _____

5. Why did African Americans join the
military?

SMALL GROUP PREDICTION: _____

INFORMATION: _____

