

African Americans and Citizenship in the Civil War

Created by Clara Webb, Boston Public Schools

Lesson 1 – Document Study – Motivations for joining the military

Objectives: Students will be able to explain the types of persuasive appeals made to Irish, African American, and female volunteers to support the military effort by analyzing the symbols and texts in broadsides. Students will then infer the motivations of each group for joining the war.

Assessment: Notes on sources and discussion

Sources and Materials:

- 1) *Broadside Recruitment of Irish soldiers* (See end of lessons)
- 2) *Broadside – Major General Banks’s Grand Expedition* <http://www.masshist.org/database/2171>
- 3) *Broadside – Recruitment of African American soldiers* <http://www.masshist.org/database/49>
- 4) *Illustration – Harper’s Weekly “Our Women and the War”*
<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=37064>

Activities:

- 1) Do Now – Journal: What are the different reasons that young people join the military today? (5 min)
- 2) Introduce Lesson and Set up Notes (10 min)
 - Have a quick discussion/brainstorm and then connect the Do Now to today’s lesson – recruitment of soldiers during the Civil War.
 - Explain that in the early years of the war, the Union and Confederate Armies relied upon volunteers – the draft did not start until August of 1862.
 - Today we will be investigating what types of appeals and promises were made to entice volunteers, and what we can learn about the reasons that different groups might have been supporting the war effort. Big Question: Why did they serve?
 - Set up notes: Students will create a chart in notebooks and label each box with the station number. In each box students will take notes on the source from that station.

Station 1	Station 2
Station 3	Station 4

- Explain document stations: students will rotate around the room in 8 groups of 3-4 and visit stations that contain a document. Each group will have approx. 5 minutes at each station before they will be asked to rotate to the next one.

- The following questions will be displayed on the overhead to guide students in their note taking.
 - i. Who is the intended audience of the source?
 - ii. What types of persuasive symbols, images, and words are used to appeal to this audience?
 - iii. What can we assume about this group's reason for joining the military effort?

3) Primary Source Station Rotation (25 minutes)

- Divide students into groups by counting off, assign each group to a station, and begin timing. There will be duplicates of each station to accommodate all 8 groups.
- *Station 1: Broadside – Recruitment of Irish soldiers*
- *Station 2: Broadside – Major General Banks's Grand Expedition*
- *Station 3: Broadside – Recruitment of African American soldiers*
- *Station 4: Illustration – Harper's Weekly "Our Women and the War"*

4) Discussion (10 minutes)

- Give students a few minutes to discuss all the sources as a whole. What similarities and differences did they notice?
- As a full class, ask students to begin discussing observations and conclusions from studying the documents. Students will moderate the discussion by calling on peers.
- Take notes on the board as students talk.
- Themes that should come up in discussion:
 - i. Irish – nationalism, Irish-American identity, religious, republicanism, patriotism, economic
 - ii. General recruitment – adventure, patriotism
 - iii. African Americans – Little appeal, mostly economic, no mention of freedom of slavery, African connection implied?
 - iv. Women – traditional gender roles, motherhood, teachers, caretakers

5) Wrap-up and Homework (5 min)

- Conclusions – Money was a major factor in recruitment – poorer soldiers. But also appeals to greater causes – patriotism, duty to country, glory of war.
- **Homework:** Textbook Reading about early recruitment for the Civil War and the early phases of war.

Lesson 2 – Socratic Seminar – Soldiers’ Attitudes towards Slavery and Racial Equality

Objectives: Students will evaluate the attitudes of white soldiers towards racial equality and slavery by analyzing two primary source documents and participating in a Socratic Seminar.

Assessment: Participation in Socratic seminar and written evaluation

Sources and Materials:

1) *Letter from Edward O. Shepard to Charles Bowers, 10 May 1861* (See end of lessons)

2) *Letter from Charles Douglass to Frederick Douglass, July 6, 1862*

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart4.html>

Activities:

1) Do Now (5 min)

2) Introduce lesson and Socratic Seminar (10 min)

- As we have learned, the debate over slavery was the major underlying conflict which resulted in Civil War. But, to what extent were the first union volunteers motivated by the issue of slavery and racial equality? What were they fighting for?
- We don’t have a Gallup Poll to provide us with that information, but we do have letters from soldiers. Today you will investigate this question by examining one letter in depth. You will look for evidence of attitudes about slavery and racial equality, and then you will discuss the what you find with your classmates.
- Remind students about rules of Socratic Seminar (students have already done them in the past)
 - Students will be divided into two large groups.
 - Each group will receive a primary source letter to read and analyze. There will be a 10 minute reading period during which students should read and annotate the source.
 - The first group will sit in the inner circle and have 10 minutes to discuss their source.
 - In the Socratic Seminar, students earn points for making relevant comments, asking clarifying questions, and bringing others into the conversation.
 - The outer circle will take notes on the discussion and they will use these notes to complete a seminar evaluation for homework.

3) Socratic Seminar Preparation (10)

- Distribute the letters to each group.
- Allow them 10 minutes to read and annotate.

4) Seminar (20 min)

- Group 1 – 10 minute discussion
- Rotate
- Group 2 – 10 minute discussion

- THEMES THAT SHOULD COME UP – Shepard’s belief in the sacred cause and direct mention of freedom over slavery; Douglass’s description of tensions between Black and Irish soldier and possible reasons for those tensions; suggests that Irish soldiers may have been less committed to the cause of ending slavery.

5) Debrief (10 min)

- Ask students to share: What went well in terms of the discussion norms? What could be improved? (speaking, taking turns, asking questions, interruptions)
- Explain Homework

Homework: Write a 1 page answer to today’s discussion question. Use arguments and evidence from both the discussion you participated in AND the one you observed.

Lesson 3 – Research and Essay Writing – The 54th Regiment and Equal Citizenship

Objectives: Students will research and synthesize information about the 54th Regiment and write an essay that takes a position about progress towards racial equality in the 1860s.

Assessment: Research notes and in-class essay (tomorrow)

Sources and Materials:

- Computer Lab
- Links to readings about the 54th Regiment on the Massachusetts Historical Society website (http://www.masshist.org/online/54thregiment/essay.php?entry_id=528) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts website (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart4.html>). As context, students will also be provided with a link to information about the 1863 Draft Riots in New York (<http://maap.columbia.edu/place/52.html>).
- Higher level students may also skim through Chapter 3 of Christian Samito's book *Becoming American Under Fire*.

Activities:

- 1) Do Now – Display an image of the Shaw Memorial (<http://www.nps.gov/boaf/historyculture/shaw.htm>) and ask students to describe what they see and either identify or guess the location, purpose, and subject of the statue.
- 2) Intro lesson and research/writing assignment
 - Provide brief notes on the Shaw Memorial and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment.
 - Show and remind students about the broadside that they viewed in the earlier lesson. This broadside was recruiting soldiers for the 54th Regiment which they will learn more about today.
 - Explain that so far we have examined recruitment and motivations to serve. Today students will have the opportunity to research the experiences of the black soldiers who served in this famous regiment. What do their experiences tell us about the progress towards equal citizenship for African Americans who fought in the war?
 - Explain that students will write an in-class essay tomorrow based on the research that they conduct today and tonight. They will be able to write as many notes as they want during the research, but tomorrow's essay will be without notes. Therefore they want to gather as much information as possible, and then organize it into two or three main points that will support an overall answer to the essay question (thesis), as well as responses to counterarguments.
- 3) Research using selected websites (Massachusetts Historical Society, Commonwealth of Massachusetts) with links to the following topics.
 - 54th Regiment
 - Pay controversy
 - New York Draft Riots

Homework: Prepare for tomorrow's essay prompt: Do the experiences of the 54th Regiment illustrate the persistence of racism OR progress towards racial equality in the 1860s? Take a position (even if you're in the middle) and respond to counterarguments.

Bolser
1862?

Q

The Glorious 9th!

IRISHMEN

To the Rescue!

Irish Americans of Massachusetts!

The indomitable valor and bravery which distinguished your ancestors on many a bloody battle-field in past ages, have descended to you untarnished. Your fellow countrymen of the 9th Massachusetts Regiment have proved at "Hanover Court House," at "Mechanicsville," at "Gaines' Mill," and at "Newtonville," that it has not degenerated. They are worthy inheritors of the courage and prowess of the heroes who fought at "Clontarf," at "Beal-an-ath-Buidhe," at "Limerick," at "Landen," at "Cremona" and "Fontenoy."

The Union and future glory of this great sanctuary of freedom is in danger. A host of Southern traitors seek to destroy our free democratic government, and erect upon its ruins a contemptible and Despotic Aristocracy.

Irish valor and bravery, have, to a great extent, thus far, impeded the march of these native Vandals, and driven back their superior numbers in dismay. Wherever the "chivalry" of the South have dared to encounter, on an open field, our Irish braves, they have found to their cost that Irishmen, as of old, are still invincible.

No Regiment in the service of the United States, has earned more imperishable glory than the 9th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, and its late gallant and heroic Colonel. The fortunes of war have thinned its ranks; it must not be allowed to perish for want of brave men to fill up its numbers.—The honors it has earned you can share. The living heroes of the 9th are still "eager for the fray." They pant to be led once more against the enemy—the enemy of human freedom—the enemy of mankind. They long to avenge their brave compatriots.

"We swear to revenge them!—no joy shall be tasted,
The harp shall be silent, the maiden unwed,

Our halls shall be mute, and our fields shall be wasted,
Till vengeance is wreaked on the liberticides' head."

They call upon you from the banks of the James to fill up their ranks, to share with them the laurels of the past and the glory of the future. Will you not respond to their call?

"Our green flag flutters o'er us,
The friends we've tried are by our side,
And the foe we hate, before us!"

The City of Boston has voted a Bounty of \$100!

In addition to thirty-eight dollars allowed by the United States, for every volunteer who joins the 9th Regiment, to defend the best and freest government ever vouchsafed to man. In joining the Ninth, you join your own gallant kith and kin. You will be led to the battle-field by officers of your own ancient race, who have proved themselves inferior to no others of our grand army. Here, too, the

FLAG OF IRELAND!

Is carried side by side with the Starry Banner, and Irish bravery will obtain the credit it deserves. The laurels you win will deck your own brows—others will not obtain the credit which belongs to you. And while your prowess and invincible valor shed additional lustre on

The Stars and Stripes!

They will cast a bright ray of glory on the

GREEN FLAG!

and the unconquerable nationality it represents.

In this Regiment you will have

A CHAPLAIN OF THE OLD FAITH

To minister to your spiritual wants and dispense the priceless blessings of religion.

Your families will be provided for by the BOUNTY OF THE STATE, and you will receive in Pay, Rations and Clothing, an allowance more than that for which many of you toil at laborious drudgery, equally, if not more dangerous, than the field of honor and glory.

The nation provides also a handsome pension for you if disabled, and for your wives and little ones if you fall at the post of duty. What employer, let us ask, does the like?

Our brave countrymen, hitherto, have rushed to the battle-field without bounty, with little hope of reward. Can YOU hesitate NOW, when such ample provision is made for you and yours?

Letter from Edward Shepard to Charles Bowers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Concord, May 10 1861

Friend Bowers,

I wrote you last Monday but did not conclude my story by any means. Today I received another letter from you in which you said nothing of mine, so I infer you had not received it. I am truly thankful for your inspiring letters. Nothing does me more good than to hear directly from the place and the friends that engage so large a share of my thoughts. Every day I reproach myself that I did not join Company A.

Your heroic spirit, breathed in your letters, only augments that feeling and inspired me with new ardor for the sacred cause in which you are enlisted. Had I ever had any military luck or experience, I do not think I should have hesitated for a moment. I should have shouldered my musket with you.

When you went, and after you were gone, I pondered the duties of my present position, as teacher, than which there is none more weighty with responsibility to God and man, with the duty I owed my country and the latter scale went down. Saturday night, the night before you left Boston, I enlisted in the M.V.M with the purpose and expectation of being off before the end of two weeks.

But, as the fates would have it, we are not even an organized company. We have 57 men in all. Most of whom are from Old Concord. A few from Bedford and Carlisle. Pierce and Tarbell of Lincoln. Tarbell you remember was the representative with Legislation last year.

We need eight more men and we shall have them. If we can't get them any other way, for the good of the majority, I think it will be right to "press" a few men that I know of into their boasted Country's defense. We shall have a company ready in a few days. John B. Moore will be our Captain. We have been drilling every night for two weeks without muskets simply in the facings and marchings. When we are able to organize and get our muskets, I expect we shall make rapid progress in the Manuel, The only thing that damps our enthusiasm is the doubtful prospect of our being called into actual service. God only knows what the future will bring forth. One thing, however, must come that is victory to our banners. At whatever cost of blood or treasure, the star spangled banner must wave over the land of the free and the home of the slave.

The intense enthusiasm that prevailed at the time you left has abated somewhat throughout the North, I fear too much. Yet men are forming themselves into companies in almost every town, preparing for any emergency that may arise.

I am afraid we are trusting too much to the brute courage of lawless city "roughs" to fight this noble fight. To my mind it is deserving of a noble courage and better blood. Nothing in history compared with the present struggle unless it be the Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Then the contest was Christianity against Mohamedanism. Now it is freedom against slavery. Christianity conquered then - freedom will now.

Tell the company the young ladies of the High School helped make their uniforms. May day was devoted to that work instead of to a picnic. Tomorrow the older girls of my school will assist the good ladies of our town in making the pants to match the coats. The ladies met in the Town Hall today, and commenced the work. They will be finished in a day or two. 'Many fingers make light work.' Charles B. Davis raised a tall mast and handsome play at the corner of his store today. Speeches were made by Mr Bull, George Heywood and others, and a song was sung by the young ladies. After which Charles B. "thanks".

Mr. Stacy has filled up a regular city looking Post-office. The P.O. has not yet been moved, but will be in a few days. We have no barber to fill Mr. Phelps's place.

Augusta is doing finely in her studies this term. I see others of your family quite often. They seem happy and honestly proud of true heroism of their father.

Gardner Heywood and Hersey Wheeler are members of our Company. What do you advise in regard to carrying out revolvers Can you suggest any desirable style for a uniform -or in regard to any other matters that may be of advantage to us in our arrangements. - I do not give up hope that we may be permitted to show our deep interest in the cause for which you have made sacrifices in some way more earnest than by our sympathies.

Remember me most kindly to Capt. Prescott, Cabot Wheeler, and others. I am glad to hear such brave news of them. We are waiting anxiously for the events which are in preparation by Gen. Butler. May God keep you safe if he will, brave at all events into the end. Let me hear from you often.

Yours Most Truly

Ed. O. Shepard.