

Did Southern Free Men of Color Fight for the Ideals of the South or for Themselves?

Author: K. Wise Whitehead, West Baltimore Middle School, Baltimore City Public School System

Grade Level: Middle

Duration of lesson: 1-2 periods

Overview:

Because of the movie “Glory,” many Americans are familiar with the contribution of African-American soldiers to the Northern war effort. But very few understand how many were involved in the conflict on the side of the Confederacy. This lesson introduces students to the variety of black soldiers participating in the Civil War, both for the North and in the Confederate Army. Resources in the lesson discuss the roles played by enslaved and free men of color in the South. We explore how the Confederate military used enslaved labor, why some free blacks volunteered in the South, and the role of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation during the war. In order to gain a perspective on the variety of black experience, sources from Louisiana and Virginia will be compared to each other, with a focus on the different social and ethnic groups involved within those two states.

Related National History Standards:

Content Standards:

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Standard 2: The course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people

Historical Thinking Standards:

Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

- B.** Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
- C.** Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses.

Standard 3: Historical Research Capabilities

- A.** Formulate historical questions.
- B.** Obtain historical data from a variety of sources.
- C.** Interrogate historical data.
- F.** Support interpretations with historical evidence.

Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

- E.** Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.
- F.** Evaluate the implementation of a decision.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will learn how to read and interpret various primary and secondary sources and how to use them to draw conclusions about motivations of African American soldiers in the Civil War.

- Students will evaluate the quality of primary sources as they relate to drawing historical conclusions.

Topic Background:

In 1861, shortly after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter and the Battle of Bull Run, Frederick Douglass, a former slave and well-known abolitionist, put forth a call for the United States to actively recruit and enlist enslaved¹ and free men of color.² He argued that the man of color ultimately understood that this was “his” war and that because of this understanding “one black regiment alone would be, in such a war, the full equal of two white ones. The very fact of color in this case would be more terrible than powder and balls.”³ Unfortunately, at this time, President Lincoln and the North (as a whole) were not ready to accept an armed, colored man, because to accept him as a soldier, as an equal, meant that he was being accepted as a citizen. Douglass went so far as to state that if America put a uniform on the man of color than “there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to (full) citizenship in the United States.”⁴ In contrast, almost from the start of the war the Confederacy had colored enlisted men, and even though there was an 1863 ban against colored men enlisting, the Confederate Army did it anyway. Usually, they were assigned to the positions of bond-servant (a position which was a natural extension of the master-slave relationship), cooks, blacksmiths and teamsters. In the case of the bond servants, these men were highly valued, trusted and committed to the Confederacy.⁵ It is important to note that although some of these enlistees actually “fought,” they were not considered to be enlisted soldiers, and were not approved for equal wages or equal post-war compensation.

The very idea of allowing colored men to fight in the war as Union soldiers was deemed unacceptable on a number of different levels. The first was the notion that if colored men had a hand in the victory then they naturally had a right to claim the spoils. These “spoils” would (and should) have included issues of equal pay, education, freedom and ultimately equality. Secondly, the insurrections led by Toussaint L’Overture, Nat Turner, and John Brown were viewed by many northern whites as examples of what could happen if you voluntarily armed colored men. The third notion was the tendency to view colored men as “grown-up children” who lacked the intelligence, skills, courage, and discipline needed to become effective soldiers. The fourth notion was that the white soldier was uncomfortable about the potential of fighting

1 I will use the term “enslaved” rather than the generally accepted term of “slave.” The notion is that to be enslaved implies that the state has been forced upon someone rather than being an inherent situation

2 The phrase “men of color” will be used to include blacks (people of African ancestry), Creoles (people of French, Spanish, Native American and African mixed) and mulattoes (people of European and African ancestry).

3 Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 66.

4 James Ciment, *Atlas of African-American History* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 79.

5 Ervin L. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 212.

with and for colored soldiers. These white soldiers were not prepared to sacrifice their lives or their notions of equality for a colored comrade. Finally, if America were to arm colored men, it would make a statement to the world that this war was more about the emancipation of the enslaved African, rather than about either uniting the Union, defining states rights, or clarifying the different interpretations of the Constitution.

Lincoln's decision not to arm colored men only worked when the Union was confident that it would quell the insurrection quickly and without much bloodshed or excessive casualties. As the war began to drag into its third year and a decisive victory seemed to be more of an elusive goal, the Union slowly began to support the idea that colored men needed to enlist and should do it as quickly as possible.⁶ The newly accepted idea was that "if blacks were going to benefit by the war, they ought to share in the fighting *and* the dying." (italics mine)⁷ The acceptance of this idea came shortly after Northerners began to accept (and understand) that the war had become a war of emancipation. Since the freedom of the colored man was at stake, then the war was no longer a "white's men's war" against themselves, rather it was about larger, broader, and in some ways more important ideas.

In 1862, four months after Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia, the War Department authorized the recruitment of slave regiments.⁸ This authorization was released a month before Lincoln issued his Preliminary Proclamation of Emancipation, which essentially stated that all slaves living in rebellious states or rebellious areas within Union states would be "forever free" on January 1, 1863.⁹ Lincoln announced his Proclamation at precisely the right time to aid the Union. At that moment, the Union Army was suffering military setbacks (the Confederacy, despite its obvious shortcomings was not giving up or giving in); mounting casualty lists (in addition to actual combat injuries, soldiers suffered from exposure to diseases, germs, malnutrition and harsh weather conditions); unfulfilled recruitment quotas (Northerners, after the initial excitement wore off, were not rushing to volunteer or reenlist) and the high number of deserters (statistics put the total number somewhere around 200,000 Union soldiers). Simply put, the Emancipation Proclamation was not just about freeing the enslaved masses; it was also a carefully designed war measure to enlist more able bodies so that the Union could win the war. Lincoln's primary goal was to win the war and save the Union. He wrote that if he could save the Union without freeing any

6 At this time, Ciment argues that the Civil War had become a "war of attrition," which means that the North realized that the only way to win was to stop the South's ability to wage war. Victory could only be accomplished by sacrificing large numbers of soldiers and materials. Ciment, *Atlas*, 79.

7 Ibid., 79.

8 This authorization was a direct result of increasing public pressure and the fact that both the Navy and Army were actively employing contraband (although the usage of the term "contraband" to describe people is an extremely problematic one - the fact is, at this time, the Union readily adopted this notion so that the South would not be able to stake any claims on their former slaves).

9 The Emancipation Proclamation excluded slaves living in Tennessee, the Union-controlled areas within Louisiana, Virginia and West Virginia, and all of the Union border slave states.

slaves, he would do it or if he could win the war only by freeing all the slaves, he would do it.¹⁰

Once issued, the Emancipation Proclamation, along with Douglass' appeal, prompted thousands of enslaved and free men of color to enlist and fight for the Union and for their freedom. Douglass essentially convinced colored men that "liberty won by white men would lose half its luster," and that the better plan was for them to gain liberty for themselves, their families, and their brethren by their own hands.¹¹ This opportunity to "free themselves" explains why colored men were so quick to fight for the Union, but it raises some serious questions about why other colored men chose to enlist in or pledge their support to the Confederacy.

In 1861, while Douglass was making his appeal, Southerners were organizing themselves as a new nation. The election of Lincoln, who won without winning a single state south of the Mason Dixon Line, was enough to convince Southerners that it was finally time to move forward with their secession plan. Over the years, Southerners had debated and discussed the issue but had never seriously considered doing it until after the election of 1860. The primary issue was slavery and Southerners were not ready to either have it banned or limited in anyway. At this time, there were over four million enslaved and free colored people making up nearly forty percent of the population in the South. This unrestricted access to slave labor during the war helped Southerners to maintain both their agricultural economy and their military laborers. This situation placed enslaved people in a contradictory situation, as they were actually helping to maintain a system that was created to keep them enslaved. Enslaved men worked as Confederate cooks, teamsters, hospital attendants, musicians and body servants, having either been volunteered by their owners or impressed into service. In this way, the stability of the Confederate's wartime effort largely depended upon their slaves. Regardless of how they were pressed into service, the decision to assist the Confederacy was not made by choice. Because of this, the issue of black volunteers in the Confederate Army really only applies to the free colored population. Since it is not possible to generalize about all free men, it is easier to narrow the scope and look at two states that boasted colored Confederate volunteers early in the war.

The first state to actually organize a colored Confederate regiment was Louisiana. In April 1861, shortly after Southerners attacked Fort Sumter, approximately 1,500 free men of color, the *gens de couleur*, organized and volunteered to fight for the Confederacy and defend New Orleans.¹² They called themselves the Native Guards and they were accepted into the Louisiana Militia by May of that year. Louisianans truly believed that these free men of color would "fight the Black Republicans with as much

10 Abraham Lincoln's letter to Horace Greeley in 1862 stated, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." See an 1862 transcription of the letter on the Library of Congress Web site at http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:1:/temp/~ammem_kXaA:: (3 Nov. 2006).

11 Ciment, *Atlas*, 72.

12 The *gens de couleur*, or Creoles, were a separate, free, educated, wealthy, and light-skinned caste who were descendants of French and Spanish colonists and enslaved African women. As a result of this intermingling, there were distinct color, social, and economic lines between darker and lighter-skinned Africans.

determination and gallantry as any body of white men,” because they were “as much attached to the land of their birth as their white brethren.”¹³ Louisiana, at this time, boasted more financially successfully free-born men of color than anywhere else in the South.¹⁴ They were Creoles, and as a result they were in a slightly lower social class than whites but a much higher social class than blacks or mulattoes. They were well-educated, as well as land, property and slave-owners. They were also able to testify in court and move in and throughout the white social circles with ease. Many of them were descendants of men who had fought with the French in 1727 and 1735; with the Spanish army in 1779; and with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.¹⁵ As a result, they were considered to be a part of the general society because they had a direct hand in helping to establish and maintain it.

The first and most obvious reason why they volunteered was out of fear. Even though they were a part of New Orleans’ society, they were still men of color living within the boundaries of a Southern state. They did not want the soldiers to think that they were disloyal to the Confederacy or to them. The second reason was purely based upon economics. These men were property owners whose very livelihoods depended upon them maintaining the economic system to which they had become accustomed. They knew that if the Union won, then they stood to lose much more than just their property and their slaves, they would also lose their social privileges. The third reason was because of their color. Free men of color in New Orleans considered themselves to be more closely aligned with their white ancestry than their African ancestry. They were not pure Africans, therefore they believed they were exempt from the social chains that bound the African to the hoe. In addition, they had, after years of intermingling, completely assimilated themselves into the white community. Even though they were not considered to be equal to whites, they were afforded more social privileges than the African community. The fourth reason was the belief that an outward display of loyalty could be exchanged for better treatment. Within the Creole population, because of the stigma of their African ancestry, there was a lot of jockeying for social privileges and status. By aligning themselves so closely with the Confederacy, they believed they were placing themselves in a position to trade loyalty for equality.¹⁶ Finally, there was the element of uncertainty. They were not sure that the Union would win the war and decided it was better to align themselves with Southerners (their neighbors and in some cases relatives) rather than align themselves with the Yankees. Of course, none of these reasons were enough to convince the Confederacy to truly accept and arm them as soldiers. As a result, in 1862, when the Union marched into Louisiana, took control of the city, and issued an appeal for free men of color to join the Union army, over 1,000

13 James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., *The Louisiana Native Guards* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 2.

14 The term “free-born” is used to denote people who were not first generation freemen.

15 Hollandsworth, *Louisiana*, 3.

16 *Ibid.*, 6.

former Native Guards enlisted.¹⁷ These soldiers became the 1st Regiment of the Native Guards and the first officially sanctioned regiment of colored Union soldiers.¹⁸

The other state where free colored men enlisted in the Confederacy as early as 1861 was Virginia. In 1860, Virginia had close to half a million slaves, over a million white residents and less than 60,000 free persons of color. These figures made Virginia the largest slave state in the United States. In 1861, after Lincoln's call to ready 75,000 men for service, Virginia seceded from the Union and Richmond became the capital of the Confederacy. Unlike Louisiana, the free Afro-Virginians did not have a higher social status than the enslaved population. In fact, they walked a very tight line. The racial tension in Virginia forced them to always be very cognizant of their position and their limitations. The first reason that they volunteered was similar to the position held by Louisiana Creoles, which was simply to make an inward move for "self-preservation" and an outward move to "embellish their Confederate allegiance."¹⁹ The second reason was that their loyalty put them in the position to receive limited gratitude and small pensions from the Confederacy.²⁰ Even though it was not a lot of money, the fact was that after the war and after everything had settled down, it would be the stable income that their families would need to rebuild and restore their livelihoods. The third reason was the mistreatment of colored people by Union soldiers as the war went on. The soldiers were known to destroy and pillage both the big houses and the slave quarters, burn the fields (which were planted and tilled by the enslaved population), and sometimes rape the colored women. This behavior led to a type of "black disillusionment" with the soldiers who they believed had come to save them. The enslaved population, which had believed that the soldiers were fighting for them, discovered the reality of thousands of Union soldiers fighting for \$14 a month and the Union.²¹ The final reason for black volunteerism was that despite their apparent mistreatment, they felt a loyalty and a love for the South that compelled them to join the Confederacy and fight for its right to secede. This love, which in a lot of ways was entangled with fear, was different from the love Creoles had for Louisiana. Because of

17 Ibid., 17.

18 The *Official Army Registry* shows that the 54th Massachusetts Regiment was not completely organized until May, 1863 - some eight months after the Native Guards.

19 Jordan, *Black Confederates*, 186.

20 "Limited" in the sense that this gratitude would not mean that they would be seen as equals or citizens.

21 Jordan, *Black Confederates*, 125.

22 There is substantial evidence to show arguments for both sides: that they enlisted or were recruited and fought in battle and that they enlisted or were recruited and didn't fight.

the social, educational, and economic history of the Creole population, they believed that they had a natural stake in helping to sustain the current political climate.

Although the story of colored Confederate soldiers has become very controversial, it is important to study some of the reasons why they chose to volunteer. It is clear why colored men fought for the Union but it is not as clear-cut on the other side. All the answers may never be known, but it is good for young people to look equally at the role of colored soldiers on both sides of this “civil” war.

Annotated Bibliography:

Primary Sources:

Brothers in Gray: War Letters of the Pierson Family, ed. Thomas Cutrer. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

This is a collection of letters written by three brothers of the Pierson family who enlisted and fought in the Confederate Army. The detailed letters provide insight into the Civil War from the perspective of young men with varying degrees of commitment to the war and to their fellow soldiers.

Daniels, Nathan W. Thank God My Regiment An African One: The Civil War Diary of Colonel Nathan W. Daniels, ed. C.P. Weaver. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998.

Colonel Daniel was the white commanding Officer of the 2nd Regiment Louisiana Native Guard Volunteers, the first Black Union regiment. (They were originally enlisted as Confederate soldiers but joined the Union once they captured New Orleans). Daniels and his men were stationed off the coast of Mississippi during the Civil War. This book is a transcript of his personal daily diary which provides an insight into how white commanding officers viewed their “colored” soldiers, how the “colored” soldiers responded to this treatment and what it was like to train and fight under these conditions.

Free At Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War, eds. Ira Berlin, Barbara Fields, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, 435-537. New York: The New Press, 1992.

Free At Last is a collection of original papers, documents and letters from former slaves detailing their lives leading up to and through the Civil War years. It provides a unique insight into the complications of the war as seen through the eyes of the enslaved population.

Wilson, Joseph T. The Black Phalanx: African American Soldiers in the War of Independence, The War of 1812 & The Civil War. New York: Da Capo Press, 1994.

Written and compiled by a black Civil War veteran, The Black Phalanx describes the experiences of black men fighting in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War (for the Confederacy and the Union). It details their lives, their battles and their struggle to “fight for a freedom that they could not enjoy.”

Secondary Sources:

Buchanan, Lamont. A Pictorial History of the Confederacy. New York: Crown Publishers, 1951.

This is written primarily for the laymen Civil War enthusiast. The text is over-simplified and as a result it completely overlooks some very key points that led to the beginning and ending of the war. The pictures and sketches are very-detailed and provide a visual perspective of the Confederate government and military.

Durden, Robert F. The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, (year TBD)

This book provides extensive information on the internal struggles that went on within the Confederacy around the issues of a) Emancipation, b) Negro Union soldiers and 3) enlisting Negroes to fight for the Confederacy. It provides insight into the politics of the organization and their agenda setting procedures.

Jordan, Ervin L. Jr. Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Jordan's book details the lives and experiences of Black enslaved and free persons in Virginia. The book begins in 1855, discussing the social and emotional experiences on the plantations and traces all the way up to the secessionist movement and through the Civil War. Along the way, it talks about everything in the life of Black people during the Civil War from sex, marriage, miscegenation, the role(s) of black soldiers and bondservants.

Vocabulary:

The Confederate States of America: Formed on February 4, 1861, it was the alliance formed by the southern states that seceded from the United States during the period leading up to the American Civil War. There were eleven Confederate states, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and two states in dispute, Missouri and Kentucky. (The two latter states had two separate governments, one Union and one Confederate.)

The Louisiana Native Guards: Consisting of three separate regiments, this was the first organized unit of black soldiers fighting during the Civil War. The members were Creole free people of color.

Creoles: They are generally known as a people of mixed French, African, Spanish, and Native American

ancestry, most of who reside in or have familial ties to Louisiana. Because of their unique cultural background, their social status was much higher than enslaved Africans but lower than whites. They were usually land-owners, slave holders and educated.

Massachusetts 54th Regiment:

Immortalized in the movie *Glory*, they are considered to be the first African-American infantry unit in the Union Army. They staged a major protest against the disparity in wages paid to white and black soldiers and as a result they chose to fight without pay rather than receive lower wages. **Both of Fredrick Douglas' sons were members of this unit.

Term Distinctions:

Enslaved Africans vs. Slaves: Being “enslaved” rather than a “slave” implies that this is a situation that is forced upon someone rather than a natural inherent situation.

Black vs. Afric-Americans: At this time in history, people of African ancestry (based only in the North) had been feverishly debating what to call themselves and they had agreed (somewhat) on the term “Afric-American.” Since it is used interchangeably with the terms “colored,” “Negro” and Afro-American, I chose to use the more recently (within the last 30 years or so) adopted term of Black.

Free-born vs. Free(d): In this lesson, as an added distinction, the term “free-born” will be used to help students understand the differences between women who have never been enslaved nor were they first-generation “free” women and women who are less than one generation removed from bondage.

Teaching Procedures:

1. Prior to beginning the lesson students should have studied the events that led up to the Civil War, specifically the Slave Debate, the Election of 1860 and the formation of the Confederate States of America.
2. As a motivational activity, students should walk into the room with the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” playing in the background, while written on the overhead is the following prompt:

What three things immediately come to mind when you hear this song?

When song ends, instruct the students not to talk but to listen to the second song, which is “Dixie,” and then answer the same question again. (If necessary,

print out a copy of the words so that students can read while the songs are playing.)

When the songs have concluded ask students to share their answers.

3. Provided that the resources exist, show students a clip from the film 1989 *Glory*, which highlights the experiences of enslaved and freed African-Americans who fought for the Union (review definition of Massachusetts 54th Infantry) during the Civil War. Tell the students to take notes during the movie. (Suggested clips include Morgan Freeman's speech that was given the night before they went into battle or Denzel Washington's decision during the battle to carry the Union flag.) Ask:

Name three reasons why they think free African-Americans chose to fight for the Union.

Name three reasons why they think free African-Americans would have chosen to fight for the Confederacy. (This will be much more difficult – see historiography for background information).

4. Inform students that for the next two days they will be working in groups of four to conduct a historical investigation to determine why free-born African-Americans in the south may have chosen to enlist as a Confederate soldier.

The investigation will conclude with a mock debate to state their group's conclusion and findings to the class. They should be instructed to choose a group recorder (to take all notes in the group journal) and a group reporter (to present during the debate). They should be told that they will be looking for one of four reasons to determine their conclusion:

- A) **Color:** They considered themselves to be Creoles and not Africans and that distinction placed them in a higher socio-economic class.
- B) **Economics:** They were generally educated, well-off land owners.
- C) **Social Status:** They were free-born and lived and traveled in social circles that were closed to enslaved or newly freed Africans.
- D) **Uncertainty:** They were uncertain of who would win the war and they wanted to align themselves with the South.

Distribute and debrief Resource Sheet #1, "Investigating Primary Sources."

Distribute Resource Sheet #2, "Fighting for the Confederates or For Themselves," and instruct students to use the organizer to record their notes for the ensuing debate.

5. Distribute Resource Sheet #3, "Primary and Secondary Excerpts on Black Confederate Soldiers." Instruct students to complete Resource Sheet #2 under the following conditions:

- A) Provide students 30 minutes to go through each of their primary and secondary sources
 - B) Using Resource Sheet #1, they should discuss all of their sources;
 - C) The recorder should highlight and write down the key information from the excerpts on the “Predictions” row of Resource Sheet #2.
6. Five minutes before the historical investigation period ends, tell the students to begin concluding their debate notes. Remind them that this is a good time to review their position to determine whether their reporter is covering all of the key points they have gathered.
- Have students post their chart paper onto the wall.
- Student reporters will present their groups findings to the class. The rest of the class should be encouraged to take notes and ask questions.
7. When every group has presented, instruct students that they will have to 10 minutes to do the following:
- A) Discuss whether any group made a point that would change their position? If so, this point (stress that they can only add one point) should be added as an addendum to their findings and written on Resource Sheet #2.
 - B) They should go back to the prediction sheet and fill in the “Actual Findings” row. If needed, this should be modeled with the students so that it is understood.
8. Using Resource Sheet #4, “10-Point Model for Teaching Controversial Issues,” inform the students that the notion of Men of Color (African or Creole) fighting for the Confederacy is a controversial topic and a major point of debate between historians and descendants of Union and Confederate soldiers. Ask them why they think this is so controversial and discuss ways in which historians could use their primary and secondary sources to either defend or refute the two positions.
9. When the class discussion ends, students should reflect on the current controversy on the topic. They should then write three-five sentences in their personal journals discussing three things:
- A) Do they think the controversy is valid or not (and why)?;
 - B) What is their current position on the topic?;
 - C) Which primary source made the biggest impact on their position?
10. To assess student understanding students should create a war-journal depicting one-week in the life of an African-American Confederate Soldier. Their journal

should include an entry about:

- A) their decision to go to war;
- B) how they prepared to go to battle;
- C) their battle experiences;
- D) what it was like to surrender to the Union.

Students should be encouraged to be as creative as possible.

11. Extension activities may include:

- A) Have students rate the primary sources used from most effective to least effective in supporting the four reasons why African-Americans fought for the Confederacy. They should explain all of the ratings in their group journal.
- B) Show the entire *Glory* film (or another clip) and ask students to write a 3-5 minute script from the Black Confederates perspective. The students should then stage the film, complete with props and music.
- C) Let the students stage a mock press conference with ½ of the class working as reporters and the other ½ depicting African-American Union and Confederate Soldiers on the day that the war ends.

Primary Source Annotation:

Berlin, Ira; Fields, B.; Miller, S.; Reidy, J.; and Rowland, L.S., eds. Free At Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War. New York: The New Press, 1992.

This book is a documentary-styled collection of testimonies from soldiers detailing the experiences of Black Union and Confederate soldiers. These testimonies were culled from transcribed oral interviews or hand-written notes or papers. They are easy to read and understand (with some guidance by the teacher). The testimony used is from Major General B.F. Butler which details his experience recruiting and interviewing Louisiana Native Guards.

“The Louisiana Native Guards' Story.” <<http://www2.netdoor.com/~jgh/>>. (accessed July 2004)

This website is designed to give a laymen's history of the Louisiana Native Guards. It offers clear photographs courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, the National Archives and the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University. In addition, they have newspaper articles from 1903 about the regiment and muster rolls of unassigned recruits. It is very detailed and students will be able to use these documents to study historical documents and draw conclusions and inferences.