



UNDERSTANDING
SACRIFICE

Activity: Duty and Dignity: Black Americans and the 92nd Infantry Division Buffalo Soldiers



Guiding question:

Which liberties and freedoms did African Americans hope to secure in the United States by fighting in World War II?

DEVELOPED BY RAYMOND BROOKER

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Subject(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

Cemetery Connection: Florence American Cemetery

Fallen Hero Connection: Captain Bernard Yolles

Overview

The students will explore documents to understand the realities of segregation in the World War II era. They will explore Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and understand why so many men and women volunteered for service in the war. They will learn the story of the 92nd Infantry Division, one of only two African American infantry divisions to serve in combat. Finally, they will design and construct a textbook feature page to explain the contributions of the 92nd Infantry Division to the war effort in Italy.

Historical Context

African American men had served in all American wars. After the Civil War, the 92nd Infantry Division was an African American unit sent west to fight Native Americans. Known as the Buffalo Soldiers, their emblem was a black buffalo on olive drab. They served in World War I, and the unit was reactivated during World War II. In a segregated military where white officers held rank over black soldiers, the 92nd Infantry Division went to great lengths to illustrate the bravery of African Americans in the time of greatest need for the United States.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Analyze social differences experienced between white and black Americans in the U.S. prior to World War II;
- Recall the Four Freedoms and discuss the limitations on these freedoms for African Americans;
- Research the 92nd Infantry Division and its role in the Mediterranean Theater; and
- Synthesize relevant facts to write an informational text.

"American history is a continuing story of struggle for African Americans. In the 1940s, African Americans faced legal, social, and economic barriers that effectively made them second-class citizens. Despite this, more than one million black men and women served in the U.S. military during World War II. They defended the nation and the world against the forces of fascism despite the glaring inequities of life in the United States."
— Raymond Brookter

Brookter teaches at Laurel High School in Laurel, Mississippi.

Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

Primary Sources

Buffalo Soldiers: The 92nd in Italy

Veterans History Project, Library of Congress

loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-buffalosoldiers.html

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Message to Congress, January 6, 1941 (excerpt)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library

fdrlibrary.org/documents/356632/390886/ww_f.pdf/1b98878f-5f9b-49e0-bcfc-aa6fe2786e7a

Map, *Nonwhite Households, By Blocks, For Birmingham, Ala., 1940*

Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940

Library of Congress

loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/08/0815001r.jpg

Photograph, Company F, 365th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Infantry Division Buffalo Soldiers, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, August 1944

Courtesy of Nina Sugamori

Photograph, John Vachon, *Segregated Facilities*

Manchester, Georgia, 1938

Farm Security Administration

Library of Congress (LC-USF33-001172-M4)

loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/08/0804001r.jpg

Photograph, Marion Post Wolcott, *Negro Man Entering Movie Theatre by "Colored" Entrance*
Belzoni, Mississippi, October 1939

Farm Security Administration

Library of Congress (LC-DIG-ppmsca-12888)

loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/08/0803001r.jpg

Photograph Collection, "Buffalo Soldiers in Combat"

U.S. Army Center of Military History

history.army.mil/html/topics/afam/combat_photos.html

Photograph Collection, "Pictures of African Americans During World War II, U.S. Army"

National Archives and Records Administration

archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures/#army

Poster, "Why Should We March?," 1941
A. Philip Randolph Institute
Library of Congress

Secondary Sources

Bernard Yolles Fallen Hero Profile ★

National History Day

nhsilenthaleroes.org/profiles/bernard-yolles/

Clarence Taylor, "Patriotism Crosses the Color Line: African Americans in World War II"
Civics Renewal Network

civicsrenewalnetwork.org/resources/patriotism-crosses-color-line-african-americans-world-war-ii/

Deeds Not Words: The Buffalo Soldiers in World War II

The Pentagon Channel, February 2011

92nd Infantry Division

youtube.com/watch?v=ZildUeisGqQ

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "What Was Black America's Double War?"

The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross, PBS

pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-was-black-americas-double-war/

Interview, Colin Powell, "The Buffalo Soldiers of the 92nd Infantry Division"

92nd Infantry Division

youtube.com/watch?v=RgSr_bweSsA

John R. Fox

World War II Medal of Honor Recipients, U.S. Army Center of Military History

history.army.mil/moh/wwII-a-f.html#FOX

Michael Lynch, "Bring on the Buffalo"

U.S. Army Military History Institute, October 15, 2010

army.mil/article/46649/Bring_on_the_Buffalo

Robert Hodges, Jr., "African American 92nd Infantry Division Fought in Italy During World War II."
HistoryNet
historynet.com/african-american-92nd-infantry-division-fought-in-italy-during-world-war-ii.htm

Vernon Baker
World War II Medal of Honor Recipients, U.S. Army Center of Military History
history.army.mil/moh/wwII-a-f.html#BAKERV

Materials

- Documents Packet: Segregation in the United States (1938-1941)
- Creating a Textbook Feature Page Handout
- Creating a Textbook Feature Page Rubric
- Student computer access
- U.S. History textbook

Lesson Preparation

- Activity One
 - Divide students into groups of six students each.
 - Make one copy of the Documents Packet: Segregation in the United States (1938-1941) and Franklin Roosevelt's Message to Congress for each group.
- Activity Two
 - Secure computer access for students to research and create the final product.
 - Make one copy of the Creating a Textbook Feature Page Handout and Creating a Textbook Feature Page Rubric for each group.

Procedure

Activity One: Segregated America (30 Minutes)

- Divide students into groups of six students each.
- Distribute (or make available digitally) the Documents Packet: Segregation in the United States (1938-1941) (one copy for each group).
- Direct students to review and analyze the documents.
- Once students have a chance to review the documents, ask them:
 - *How were African Americans segregated socially?*
 - *How were African Americans segregated economically?*
 - *How were African Americans segregated legally?*
- Distribute the excerpt from Franklin D. Roosevelt's January 6, 1941 Message to Congress (one per group). Read the excerpt with students and ask the students to discuss the prompt in their groups and complete the chart.
 - *Teacher Tip:* If desired, audio or video clips of this speech could be used.
- Ask students:
 - *Based on the documents you reviewed, how would an African American man or woman view the Four Freedoms?*
 - *How would these reflect their experiences in the United States prior to World War II?*
 - *What promises might an African American infer from the Four Freedoms?*

Activity Two: Creating a Textbook Feature Page / Research Phase (60 minutes)

- Display a copy of a feature page from a history textbook.
- Explain to students the following common elements of a feature page:
 - The page will often tell a story of a group traditionally left out of the narrative.
 - The page is brief and connects to the larger picture of U.S. history.
 - The page often includes an image or photograph.
 - The page is designed to engage the reader and encourage curiosity to learn more.
- Divide students into groups of six students each. At teacher discretion, these can be the same students from the previous activity or the groups can be re-shuffled.
 - *Teacher Tip:* If a smaller group is desired, a teacher can eliminate some of the roles or allow students to choose their roles from the assignments given.
- Distribute a copy of Creating a Textbook Feature Page Handout to each student group.
- Explain and review the roles with the students.
- Allow each student to choose a role and begin research.
- Circulate among students and monitor research.

Assesment

- Review Creating a Textbook Feature Page Rubric with students.
- Encourage students to work collectively to build their textbook feature page.
- Circulate and assist students as needed.
- Collect and display student work.

Methods for Extension

- Students can explore the stories of other members of the 92nd Infantry Division by using the oral histories and collections digitized through the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.
- Students can contrast the experiences of African Americans with those of Japanese Americans.
- Students can construct a comparative timeline of the 92nd Infantry Division development from the many training facilities around the U.S. to their deployment from Fort Huachuca, Arizona, in 1944.
- The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These cemeteries are permanent memorials to the fallen, but it is important that students know the stories of those who rest here. To learn more about the stories of Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit abmc.gov/education and NHDSilentHeroes.org.
- Teachers can enhance students' interest in World War II in Italy by exploring these related lesson plans:
 - [The Army Engineers: Challenges at Anzio Beachhead](#)
 - [The Bari Incident: Chemical Weapons and World War II](#)
 - [Traveling with the Troop Carriers: An Overview of World War II in Europe and Beyond](#)

Adaptations

- Teachers can adapt the lesson for students by projecting documents and student responses on a Smartboard.
- Teachers can provide students with transcripts of the Veterans History Project audio narratives for students to read along as they listen.

Documents Packet: Segregation in the United States (1938-1941)

Photograph, Marion Post Wolcott, *Negro Man Entering Movie Theatre by "Colored" Entrance*

Belzoni, Mississippi, October 1939

Farm Security Administration

Library of Congress (LC-DIG-ppmsca-12888)



Reflect: Explain how this photograph shows the political, economic, and social factors that influenced segregation.

Photograph, John Vachon, *Segregated Facilities*

Manchester, Georgia, 1938

Farm Security Administration

Library of Congress (LC-USF33-001172-M4)

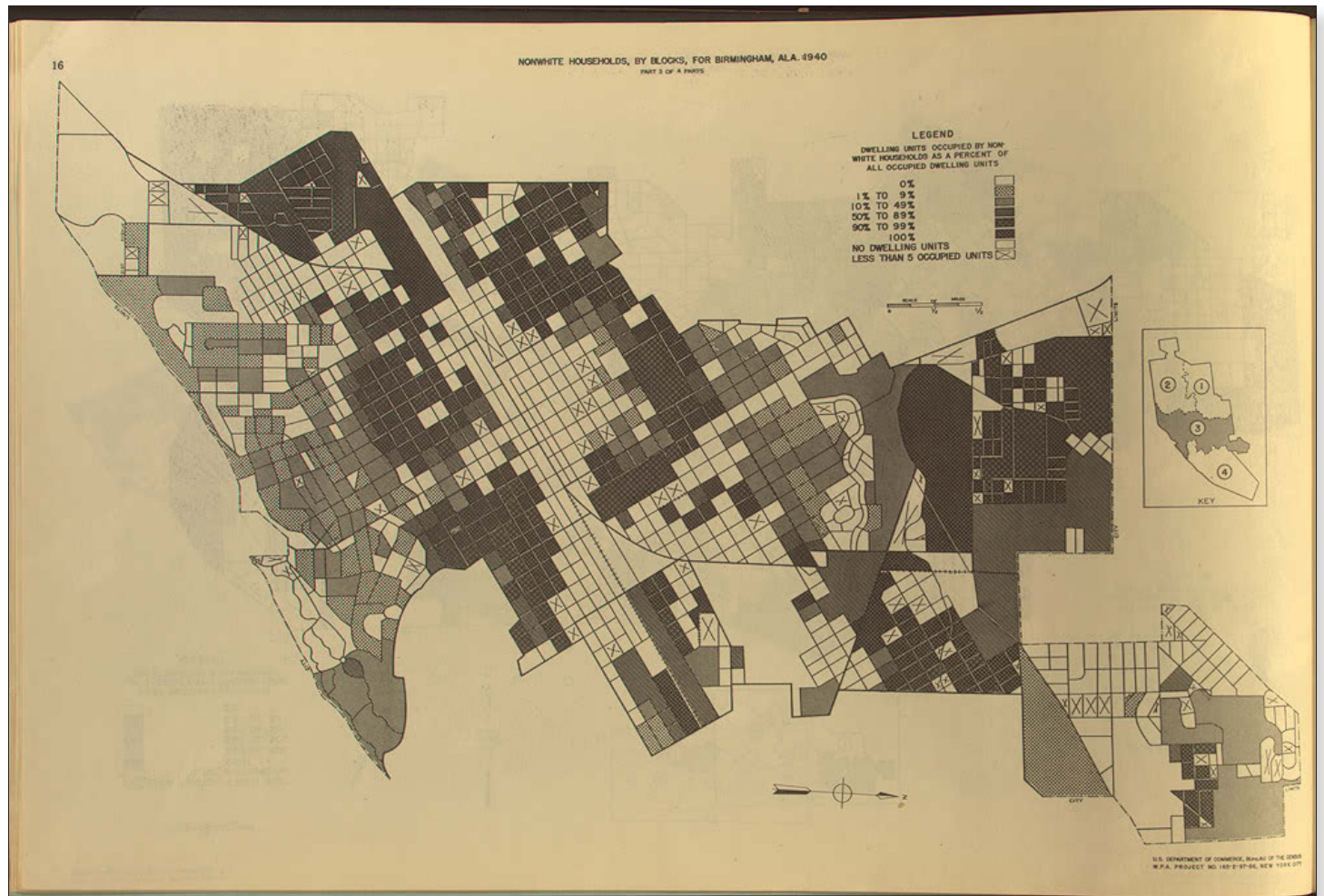


Reflect: Explain how this photograph shows the political, economic, and social factors that influenced segregation.

Map, *Nonwhite Households, By Blocks, For Birmingham, Ala., 1940*

Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940

Library of Congress



Reflect: What does this map show us about segregation in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1940?

Poster, "Why Should We March?," 1941

A. Philip Randolph Institute

Library of Congress (mssmisc ody0808)

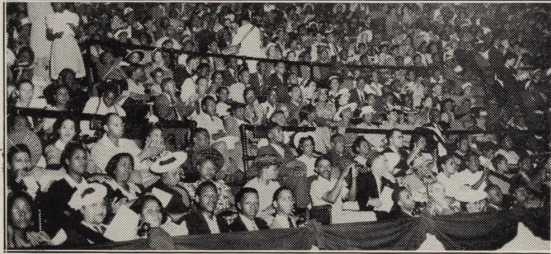
WHY SHOULD WE MARCH?

What Are Our Immediate Goals?

1. To mobilize five million Negroes into one militant mass for pressure.
2. To assemble in Chicago the last week in May, 1943, for the celebration of

"WE ARE AMERICANS - TOO" WEEK

And to ponder the question of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience and Non-Cooperation, and a Mass March On Washington.



15,000 Negroes Assembled at St. Louis, Missouri
20,000 Negroes Assembled at Chicago, Illinois
23,500 Negroes Assembled at New York City
Millions of Negro Americans all Over This Great
Land Claim the Right to be Free!

FREE FROM WANT!
FREE FROM FEAR!
FREE FROM JIM CROW!

"Winning Democracy for the Negro is Winning the War for Democracy!" — A. Philip Randolph

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Reflect: Explain how this poster shows the political, economic, and social factors that influenced segregation.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Message to Congress, January 6, 1941 (excerpt)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library

"In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want — which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants — everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear — which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world."

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For each freedom, list the situations that existed for African Americans in the early 1940's that threatened these freedoms on a daily basis.

Freedom	Situation for African Americans
Freedom of speech and expression	
Freedom to worship as one chooses	
Freedom from want	
Freedom from fear	

Creating a Textbook Feature Page

Today your group will be responsible for creating a textbook feature page to explain the 92nd Infantry Division's contribution to the war in Italy during World War II. Each student will select a role and all students will work collaboratively to complete the page. Remember, the elements of a feature textbook page include:

- The page will often tell a story of a group traditionally left out of the narrative;
- The page is brief and connects to the larger picture of U.S. history;
- The page often includes an image or photograph; and
- The page is design to engage the reader and encourage curiosity to learn more.

Tasks:

Audio Editor: The audio editor will review audio interviews from the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. The job of the audio editor is to select two quotations from the interviews that help demonstrate the life of a member of the 92nd Infantry Division. Both quotes should be transcribed properly, placed in quotation marks, and properly credited to the individual who said them.

Features Editor: The job of the features editor is to learn about some of the individuals who served in the 92nd Infantry Division. This editor will be responsible for choosing one of the individuals to feature and writing a summary paragraph to be included in the overall narrative.

Homefront Editor: The homefront editor will learn about challenges facing African American service members at home. Referred to as the "Double V" Campaign (victory abroad and victory at home), it was a movement to propel civil, political, and economic rights. This editor will be responsible for writing a summary paragraph to be included in the overall narrative.

Image Editor: The job of the image editor is to select two images to be included in the textbook page. The image editor will be responsible for making sure that the images selected go with the text created. Each image should include a caption (one to two sentences) that explains the image. In addition, each photograph needs to be properly credited to its original source.

Military Editor: The military editor will learn about the action of the 92nd Infantry Division in Italy and summarize their major accomplishments in writing. Be careful not to get bogged down in the details — focus on the major obstacles, and how they were able to overcome these challenges. This editor will be responsible for working with the multimedia editor to write two summary paragraphs to be included in the overall narrative.

Multimedia Editor: The multimedia editor will learn about the action of the 92nd Infantry Division in Italy, using a documentary. This editor will be responsible for working with the military editor to write two summary paragraphs to be included in the overall narrative.

Role	Resources
Audio Editor	Buffalo Soldiers: The 92 nd in Italy Veterans History Project, Library of Congress http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-buffalosoldiers.html
Features Editor	Bernard Yolles, Fallen Hero Profile http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/soldier/bernard-yolles John R. Fox World War II Medal of Honor Recipients, U.S. Army Center of Military History http://www.history.army.mil/moh/wwII-a-f.html#FOX Vernon Baker World War II Medal of Honor Recipients, U.S. Army Center of Military History http://www.history.army.mil/moh/wwII-a-f.html#BAKERV
Homefront Editor	Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "What Was Black America's Double War?" <i>The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross</i> , PBS http://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-was-black-americas-double-war/
Image Editor	Photograph Collection, "Buffalo Soldiers in Combat" U.S. Army Center of Military History http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/afam/combat_photos.html Photograph Collection, "Pictures of African Americans During World War II, U.S. Army" National Archives and Records Administration https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures/#army
Military Editor	Robert Hodges, Jr., "African American 92 nd Infantry Division Fought in Italy During World War II" HistoryNet http://www.historynet.com/african-american-92nd-infantry-division-fought-in-italy-during-world-war-ii.htm Michael Lynch, "Bring on the Buffalo" U.S. Army Military History Institute, October 15, 2010 https://www.army.mil/article/46649/Bring_on_the_Buffalo
Multimedia Editor	Interview, Colin Powell, "The Buffalo Soldiers of the 92 nd Infantry Division" 92 nd Infantry Division https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgSr_bweSsA Deeds Not Words: The Buffalo Soldiers in World War II The Pentagon Channel, February 2011 92 nd Infantry Division https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZildUeisGqQ

Creating a Textbook Feature Page Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
Audio Editor	The editor selects two excellent quotes that demonstrate the experience of the 92 nd Infantry Division. Quotes are transcribed properly and attributed correctly.	The editor selects two quotes that demonstrate the experience of the 92 nd Infantry Division. Quotes are transcribed with only minor errors and attributed correctly.	The editor selects quotes that do not demonstrate the experience of the 92 nd Infantry Division. Quotes may be incorrectly transcribed or lack proper attribution.	The editor fails to select quotes to demonstrate the experience of the 92 nd Infantry Division.
Features Editor	The editor features the story of an individual who served in the 92 nd Infantry Division. The paragraph contains specific details and engages the reader.	The editor features the story of an individual who served in the 92 nd Infantry Division. The paragraph contains some detail.	The editor features the story of an individual who served in the 92 nd Infantry Division. The paragraph lacks specific details or does not engage the reader.	The editor fails to feature the story of an individual who served in the 92 nd Infantry Division or includes a paragraph that is plagiarized.
Homefront Editor	The editor clearly explains the "Double V" Campaign. The paragraph contains specific details and engages the reader.	The editor clearly explains the "Double V" Campaign. The paragraph contains some detail.	The editor explains the "Double V" Campaign. The paragraph lacks specific details or does not engage the reader.	The editor fails to explain the "Double V" Campaign or includes a paragraph that is plagiarized.
Image Editor	The editor selects two appropriate images. Credits are included and the caption contains specific details to tie to the text on the page.	The editor selects two appropriate images. Credits are included and the caption contains specific details but fails to tie to the text on the page.	The editor selects one appropriate image. Credits and/or captions may be partially complete.	The editor fails to include images or chooses inappropriate image(s). Credits and/or captions are not included or are incorrect.
Military Editor	The editor clearly explains the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy. The paragraphs contain specific details and engage the reader.	The editor clearly explains the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy. The paragraphs contain some detail.	The editor explains the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy. The paragraphs lack specific details or do not engage the reader.	The editor fails to explain the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy or includes paragraphs that are plagiarized.
Multimedia Editor	The editor clearly explains the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy. The paragraphs contain specific details and engage the reader.	The editor clearly explains the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy. The paragraphs contain some detail.	The editor explains the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy. The paragraphs lack specific details or do not engage the reader.	The editor fails to explain the actions of the 92 nd Infantry Division in Italy or includes paragraphs that are plagiarized.
Mechanics	No grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors.	Almost no grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.	Some grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors.	Many grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors that impede understanding.