

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH BLACK CONFEDERATE HERITAGE

This fact sheet is prepared by the Sons of Confederate Veterans Education Committee for distribution to professors, teachers, librarians, principals, ethnic leaders, members of the press, and others interested in promoting an understanding of Black contributions to United States history. The SCV hopes this information will enrich the celebration of Black History Month during February. This sheet may be freely copied and distributed without permission or notice; if republished in part or whole, please credit the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

"There are at the present moment, many colored men in the Confederate Army doing duty...as real soldiers, having muskets on their shoulders and bullets in their pockets...." Frederick Douglas, former slave & abolitionist (Fall, 1861)

How many? Easily tens of thousands of blacks served the Confederacy as laborers, teamsters, cooks and even as soldiers. Some estimates indicate 25% of free blacks and 15% of slaves actively supported the South during the war.

Why? Blacks served the South because it was their home, and because they hoped for the reward of patriotism; for these reasons they fought in every war through Korea, even though it meant defending a segregated United States.

Emancipation? President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did not free a single slave. Issued at a time when the Confederacy seemed to be winning the war, Lincoln hoped to transform a disagreement over secession into a crusade against slavery, thus preventing Great Britain (and France) from intervening on the side of the South. The proclamation allowed slavery to continue in the North as well as in Tennessee and large parts of Louisiana and Virginia. It applied only to Confederate-held slaves, which Lincoln had no authority over, but not to slaves under Federal control.

Lincoln's Views? "I am not in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office...." 9/15/1858 campaign speech "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery...." 3/4/1861 First Inaugural Address "I am a little uneasy about the abolishment of slavery in this District [of Columbia]...." 3/24/1862 letter to Horace Greeley "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it...." 8/22/1862 letter to Horace Greeley, New York Tribune editor

Confederate: Famed bridge engineer and former slave Horace King received naval contracts for building Confederate warships. A black servant named Sam Ashe killed the first Union officer during the war, abolitionist Major Theodore Winthrop. John W. Buckner, a black private, was wounded at Ft. Wagner repulsing the U.S. (Colored) 54th Massachusetts Regiment. George Wallace, a servant who surrendered with General Lee at Appomattox, later served in the Georgia Senate. Jim Lewis served General Stonewall Jackson, and was honored to hold his horse "Little Sorrel" at the general's funeral. Captured black cook Dick Poplar suffered cruelty by Yankee Negro guards at Pt. Lookout, MD for being a "Jeff Davis man."

Union: A daring Robert Smalls engineered theft of the CSS Planter, presenting it to the Yankee blockading fleet at Charleston. Black Medal of Honor awardees Christian Fleetwood and William Carey bravely carried the banner at Ft. Wagner's assault in 1863.

Colonial: The first man to die for the American cause of freedom was Crispus Attucks, a black seaman from Boston. At the time of the American Revolution, New York City held almost as many slaves as all of Georgia combined.

Surprising Facts: In St. Louis, General John Fremont freed slaves of "disloyal" Missouri Confederates; an angry Lincoln fired him. Slaves in Washington, D.C. were not freed until April 1862, a year after the war began with the firing at Ft. Sumter. Slavery continued throughout the entire war in five Union-held states: DE, MD, WV, KY and MO. The New York City draft riots of July 1863 resulted in burning of a beautiful black orphanage and lynching of blacks. A provision in the Confederate Constitution prohibited the African slave trade outright (unlike the U.S. Constitution). Encouraged by General Lee, the CSA eventually freed slaves who would join the army, and did recruit and arm black regiments. C.S. General Robert E. Lee freed his family slaves before the war; Union Gen. U.S. Grant kept his wife's slaves well into the war. Many blacks owned slaves themselves. In 1861 Charleston, for example, a free colored planter named William Ellison owned 70 slaves. Even in 1830 New York City, three decades before the war, eight black planters owned 17 slaves.

Blacks Today: Nelson W. Winbush, a retired educator and SCV member, lectures on his black Confederate ancestor, private Louis N. Nelson. A black Chicago funeral home owner, Ernest A. Griffin, flies the CSA battle flag and erected at his own expense a \$20,000 monument to the 6,000 Confederate soldiers who are buried on his property, once site of the Union prison Camp Douglas. Black professor Leonard Haynes (recently deceased) of Southern University (Baton Rouge) spoke regularly on black Confederates. American University's professor Edward Smith also lectures on the truth of black Confederate history and, with Nelson W. Winbush, has prepared an educational videotape entitled "Black Southern Heritage" (available at (954) 963-4857)

Info? Contact: Dr. Edward Smith, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016 (202) 885-1192; Dean of American Studies, Dr. Smith (a black professor) is dedicated to clarifying the historical role of blacks.

Websites: Library of Congress Black History Resource Guide - <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html>

Sons of Confederate Veterans, International Headquarters - <http://www.scv.org>

Books: Charles Kelly Barrow, et al. *Forgotten Confederates: An Anthology About Black Southerners* (1995)

Iver Bernstein. *The New York Draft Riots* (1990)

Ervin L. Jordan, Jr. *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (1995)

Larry Koger. *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slaveowners in South Carolina, 1790-1860* (1985, 1995)

Edward A. Miller, Jr. *Gullah Statesman: Robert Smalls - From Slavery to Congressman, 1839-1915* (1995)

Richard Rollins. *Black Southerners in Gray* (1994)

Cornish Taylor. *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (1956)

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