



AMERICA

The Story of Us

TERMS TO KNOW:

Before or after watching this episode, encourage students to define and review the terms below. Students may also want to make their own lists of new vocabulary words and identification terms as they watch.

- Cavalier
- Chloroform
- De facto
- Emancipation
- Invincibility
- Minie ball
- Munitions
- Ploughshares
- Pragmatist
- Telegraph



America The Story of Us is useful for American History, Social Studies, and Media courses. It is appropriate for 7th grade students and above, and is an excellent resource for professional development.

EPISODE 5: CIVIL WAR

INTRODUCTION

America reached a crossroads as the Civil War intensified. Strict discipline and advances such as the minie ball bullet have welded General Robert E. Lee's Confederate army into a formidable force. Lee's victory at the Second Battle of Bull Run in August of 1862 leads him to within 20 miles of Washington and President Abraham Lincoln realizes that the Union could lose the war.

But the tide turns during a series of pivotal events that advance the Union forces. Following the battle of Antietam, the bloodiest ever on American soil, Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, freeing slaves forever; former slaves join the Union army in droves. With the help of the telegraph and President Lincoln's unwavering attention to the tactics of battle, the industrial capacity of the North is harnessed.



The Battle at Gettysburg and Sherman's March to the Sea are among key turning points leading to Union victory. The industrial might which sees the Union prevail now leaves America poised to expand its reach across North America and take the stage as a world power.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How did the invention of the minie ball bullet shape the Civil War? What were some other important inventions that affected the course of the war?
2. Who was Clara Barton, and why was she significant?
3. How did the telegraph help the Union side achieve victory in the Civil War?
4. When was the Emancipation Proclamation signed, and how did it shape the Civil War?



5. What were three outcomes of the Battle of Gettysburg? Why is Gettysburg still remembered as a turning point in the Civil War?
6. How many casualties were there in the Civil War? How do these numbers compare with other American wars?

Primary Source:

The following letter was written to President Abraham Lincoln by James Henry Gooding, a black corporal who had served in the 54th Massachusetts, the famed African American Civil War regiment.

Camp of 54th Mass Colored Regt

Morris Island Dept of the South, Sept. 28th 1863.
Your Excelency Abraham Lincoln:

Your Excelency will pardon the presumption of an humble individual like myself, in addressing you. but the earnest Solicitation of my Comrades in Arms, besides the genuine interest felt by myself in the matter is my excuse, for placing before the Executive head of the Nation our Common Grievance: On the 6th of the last Month, the Paymaster of the department, informed us, that if we would decide to recieve the sum of \$10 (ten dollars) per month, he would come and pay us that sum, but, that, on the sitting of Congress, the Regt would, in his opinion, be allowed the other 3 (three)...Now the main question is. Are we Soldiers, or are we LABOURERS.

We are fully armed, and equipped, have done all the various Duties, pertaining to a Soldiers life, have conducted ourselves, to the complete satisfaction of General Officers, who, were if any, prejudiced against us, but who now accord us all the encouragement, and honour due us: that flaunted a Traitor Flag: and more, Mr President. Today, the Anglo Saxon Mother, Wife, or Sister, are not alone, in tears for departed Sons, Husbands, and Brothers. The patient Trusting Decendants of Africs Clime, have dyed the ground with blood, in defense of the Union, and Democracy. . . Now Your Excellency, We have done a Soldiers Duty. Why cant we have a Soldiers pay? . . . If you, as chief Magistrate of the Nation, will assure us, of our whole pay.

We are content, our Patriotism, our enthusiasm will have a new impetus, to exert our energy more and more to aid Our Country. Not that our hearts ever flagged, in Devotion, spite the evident apathy displayed in our behalf, but We feel as though, our Country spurned us, now we are sworn to serve her.

Please give this a moments attention.

Corporal James Henry Gooding
Co. C. 54th Mass. Regt
Morris Island S.C.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main purpose of Gooding's letter to Lincoln? Why was he upset?
2. Do you think it was a brave decision for Gooding to write to Lincoln? What do you think the results of his letter might have been?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

What else was going on during this time period? Explore the sites below to learn more about the era of U.S. history covered in this episode.

Learn about photography during the Civil War era

www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/phcw/hd_phcw.htm

Images and background on the African American 54th Mass. Regiment

www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/54thmass.html

Native Americans in the West

http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/american_indians/uteindians.html

Mormon settlement in Utah

www.utah.com/cities/slc_history.htm

PLACES TO VISIT:

Interested in what you saw in this episode? Visiting historic sites is a great way for teachers, students, and families to learn more about the past. Explore these historic sites, or look for local historic sites in your town or city to visit.

Gettysburg National Military Park

www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm

Clara Barton National Visitor Site (Maryland)

www.nps.gov/clba/index.htm

Vicksburg National Military Park

www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm

Antietam National Battlefield Park

www.nps.gov/anti/index.htm

