

# Fort Davis

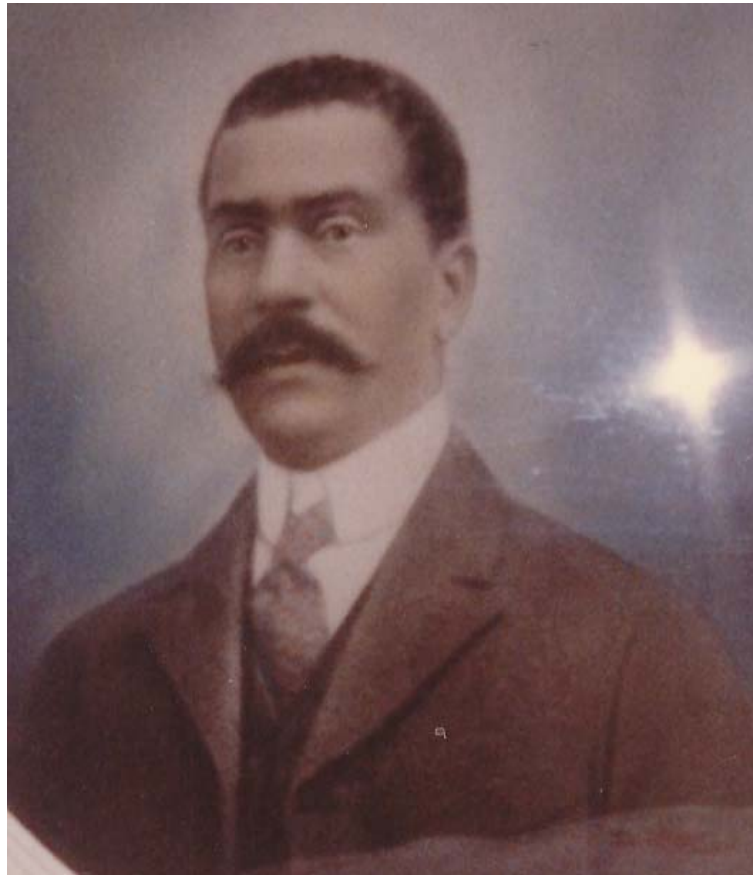
National Historic Site

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Curriculum Materials Grades 2-5

## Buffalo Soldiers At Fort Davis 1867 - 1885



**Sergeant Thomas Allsup served at Fort Davis with the  
10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (National Archives photo)**

Click on blue links for lessons needed

[Buffalo Soldiers Reading and Activities](#)

[Interactive PowerPoint Lesson Plans](#)

# Fort Davis

## National Historic Site

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Curriculum Materials Grades 2-5

Teacher Notes: Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis

**Topic:** Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis – Readings and Worksheets Activities

**Objectives and Standards:** Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)  
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/>

Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Social Studies 113.4:2,3,16a,17a,18,19	Social Studies 113.5:3,16,17,18	Social Studies 113.6:1,22,23,24	Social Studies 113.7:23,25,26,27
Language Arts 110.3: 10,13,15,17	Language Arts 110.5: 10,13,15,17	Language Arts 110.6:10,13,15,17,23	Language Arts 110.7: 10,13,15,17,23

### Materials Needed:

Copies of handout *Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis* (2 pages)

Copies of three worksheets:

- a. *What If You Had Been a Buffalo Soldier?*
- b. *Buffalo Soldier Summaries*
- c. *Create a Buffalo Soldiers' Timeline*

Paper / Pencils

Computers / books to for further research

### Lesson Activities:

1.
  - a. Discuss the importance of timelines and being able to read and understand important events over a period of time.
  - b. Show or demonstrate to students how timelines are read and understood, and what is written on them. A sample timeline is included, entitled *Create a Buffalo Soldiers' Timeline*.
  - c. Have students create a timeline of their life with at least four important events that have taken place since the year they were born up to the present day. Students in grades 2 and 3 can complete a more simple timeline using their daily schedules; they will be able to use the times in which certain events happen during the school day in their timelines.
2. Have students read or read to them (depending on their reading level) the historical background page entitled *Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis*. Point out or let students identify key events concerning the Buffalo Soldiers and their importance to the army post at Fort Davis. Writing the events on the chalk board or in an area for students to see will also give

students a chance to visually absorb the material being discussed. Students can do further research in books, encyclopedias, or on the Internet.

3. After reading and discussing the materials, students should be able to answer the following questions:
  - a. When did the Buffalo Soldiers begin serving at Fort Davis?
  - b. How long did they serve?
  - c. Who gave the African-American troops the name Buffalo Soldiers?
  - d. What was the main job of these soldiers while they served at Fort Davis?
  - e. What made the Buffalo Soldier regiments historical?
  - f. Explain why you would or would not have liked to be a Buffalo Soldier. Teacher may solicit answers orally or have students write them.
  
4. Students create timelines that depict the service of the Buffalo Soldier infantry and cavalry regiments during their 1867-1885 service period at Fort Davis. Students can do further research in books, encyclopedias, or on the Internet.

**Other Activities and Projects:** Here are several other activities that can be done in conjunction with this lesson.

- **Newspaper messages:** Using a newspaper, glue, construction paper, and scissors as their only materials, students write at least three facts they have learned about the Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis.
  
- **Buffalo Soldier Summaries:** Allow students to practice their oral and reading comprehension skills by allowing them to create summaries of the lives of the Buffalo Soldiers during their time at Fort Davis.

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Student Activity: Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis

## Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis

In 1866, following the Civil War, Congress passed a law to increase the size of the U.S. Army. As a result, a number of new regiments were authorized, and six of the new units (two cavalry and four infantry) were composed of black troops. For the first time in the history of the United States, black men could serve in the Regular Peacetime Army. With this law, Congress offered African-American men—many of whom had been former slaves—a place to live and the opportunity to earn a monthly salary, learn a trade, receive an education, and travel. The army offered these men the chance to have a better life.

The name “Buffalo Soldiers” has come to mean those African Americans who served in the Regular Army between the Civil War and World War I. The term came from the Plains Indians, who were said to have compared the hair of the black soldiers to that of the buffalo.



James Thompson was a soldier at Fort Davis with the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (National Archives photo)



Wesley Brandsford was a 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry trooper at Fort Davis (National Archives photo)



Sergeant Thomas Allsup served at Fort Davis with the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (National Archives photo)

Buffalo Soldier regiments served at Fort Davis from 1867 to 1885. When they came to Fort Davis, western Texas was a place open to attacks by raiding Apaches and Comanches. When they left in 1885, peaceful travel and settlement prevailed in much of the region. They served the army and their country well, and fourteen of them earned the Medal of Honor during the frontier Indian Wars period.

More than half of the soldiers who served at Fort Davis were African Americans. When both black and white soldiers were stationed at the fort at the same time, they were segregated into different regiments and lived in different barracks. Soldiers at Fort Davis performed duties to keep the post running, and their major job was to protect travelers, freight wagons, and the mail on the San Antonio-El Paso Road. They were also involved in numerous military campaigns.

In the biggest battle ever fought by troops from Fort Davis, Buffalo Soldiers fought Apaches and their war leader, Victorio, in 1880 at Tinaja de Las Palmas—about 100 miles west of Fort Davis. If you visit the museum at Fort Davis National Historic Site, you will see a diorama depicting this battle (shown below).



# What If You Had Been a Buffalo Soldier?



Thomas Stone was a 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry trooper at Fort Davis (National Archives photo)



George Bentley served at Fort Davis with the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (photo credit: National Park Service, Ft. Davis NHS)

**Some Buffalo Soldiers were among the bravest soldiers ever to fight. While at Fort Davis they protected travelers, freight wagons, and the mail that traveled along the San Antonio-El Paso Road. If you had a chance to go back in time and be a Buffalo Soldier, at what fort on the frontier would you want to live and how would you look? (Use box below to draw.)**

	9 <sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry	

Buffalo Soldier \_\_\_\_\_ Fort \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Name)

Complete the sentence below. Then write what your life might have been like as a Buffalo Soldier. Use the back side of this page.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Buffalo Soldiers \_\_\_\_\_ to protect people who  
adjective verb

traveled the \_\_\_\_\_ San Antonio to El Paso Road.  
adjective



*African-American soldiers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Fort Davis, 1875*

# Buffalo Soldier Summaries

Directions: Use the boxes below to help you summarize some of the important events in the lives of the Buffalo Soldiers who made Fort Davis their home from 1867 to 1885.

<p><b>Who ?</b></p> <p>Were the Buffalo Soldiers ....</p>	
<p><b>What ?</b></p> <p>Did they do....</p>	
<p><b>Where ?</b></p> <p>Did it happen....</p>	
<p><b>When ?</b></p> <p>Did it happen .....</p>	
<p><b>Why ?</b></p> <p>Did they do it.....</p>	

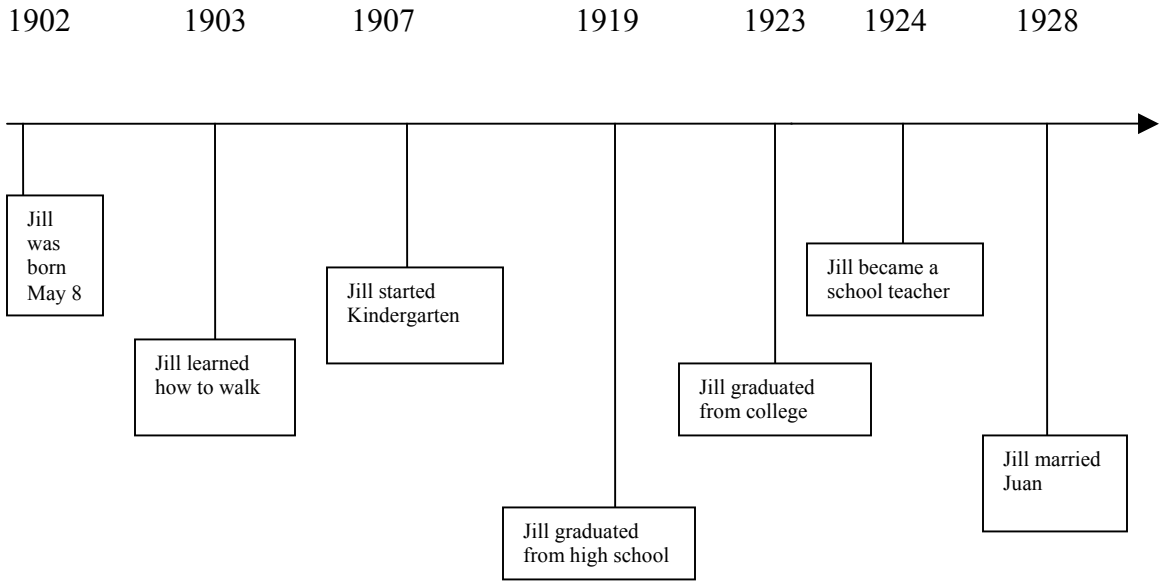
Now re-write your summary in paragraph form. Below are two examples to help you get started. Use the back of this page or a blank piece of paper for your writing.

**The Buffalo Soldiers were** \_\_\_\_\_

**Their job was to** \_\_\_\_\_

# Create a Buffalo Soldiers' Timeline

DIRECTIONS: Use this sample timeline to create a timeline of the Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis. Both infantry and cavalry regiments served at Fort Davis from 1867 to 1885.





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Teacher Notes: **Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis --  
Interactive PowerPoint**

**Topic:** Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis, 1867-1885 – Interactive PowerPoint Teacher Notes

**Objectives and Standards:** Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks>

Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>Social Studies 113.4</b>	<b>Social Studies 113.5</b>	<b>Social Studies 113.6</b>	<b>Social Studies 113.7</b>
b 2 C, b 4 A,B b 6 B b 8 A,B b 13 C b 15 A b 17 B,C,D	b 1 A,B,C b 3 B b 4 A,B b 10 B,D b 13 A b 16 A,B,D	b 1 A b 2 A b 3 E b 4 D b 9 A b 17 A b 20 C b 23 D	b 4 C,D,G b 6 B b 8 A b 23 C b 25 C
<b>Language Arts 110.4</b>	<b>Language Arts 110.5</b>	<b>Language Arts 110.6</b>	<b>Language Arts 110.7</b>
b 6 B b 7 B b 8 A,C b 10 B b 12 D b 13 B	b 6 B b 7 B b 8 A,C b 10 B b 12 D b 13 B	b 6 C b 7 B b 9 C b 10 A,K b 13 B,D b 14 A	b 6 C b 9 C b 10 A, K b 13 B,D b 14 A
<b>Tech. Applications</b>	<b>Tech. Applications</b>	<b>Tech. Applications</b>	<b>Tech. Applications 126.3</b>
126.2 b 1 B b 2 A b 7A,B	126.3 b 1 B, E b 2 A b 5 A b 7 A,B,C b 8 A,B	126.3 b 1 B, E b 2 A b 5 A b 7 A,B,C b 8 A,B	b 1 B, E b 2 A b 5 A b 7 A,B,C b 8 A,B

### Materials Needed

- PowerPoint Presentation *Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis, 1867-1885*
- Computer access with Internet link
- Printer to print out activity sheets
- Scissors to cut out activity sheets

**Lesson Activities:****Historic Readings/Background Information:**

The primary objective of the *Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis, 1867-1885* multimedia slide presentation is to gain an overview of major events and identify the significant achievements of the Buffalo Soldiers who were instrumental in the 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement of the frontier West. Language arts activities are included and draw from this content area to coordinate both areas of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements for grades 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.

Have students access, read, and discuss the attached PowerPoint Presentation of the *Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis, 1867-1885*. The slide show alternates between “gold-colored slides to read” and “blue-colored activity slides.” Students may simply read their way through the slide presentation by following the gold-button links. Or, the students may read each slide and follow the blue-button links to access various language arts activities. Teachers may choose to print out blue-colored activity worksheets for students to use.

**Activities and Projects:**

- **Why the Term *Buffalo Soldiers*?** – Fill-in Blank Cloze Activity
- **Volunteer Soldiers** – Vocabulary Activity and Timeline Activity
- **Soldiers in the Regular Army**– Timeline Activity
- **Walking in His Boots** –Job Finding Writing Activity
- ***Buffalo Soldiers - Friends & Foes*** - Name Game Activity
- **MORE Activities and Projects** – Suggestions for Other Activities

PowerPoint Viewers: The software found at this site can be downloaded and will play the PowerPoint for this lesson. Click this link to go to this page.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=428D5727-43AB-4F24-90B7-A94784AF71A4&displaylang=en>

Worksheets: To print activity sheets, open the Powerpoint file and go to File/Print and print the PowerPoint as slides.

**Student Activity Handouts:**

*Buffalo Soldiers Fill-in the Blanks Cloze Activity*

*Buffalo Soldiers Matching Vocabulary*

*Buffalo Soldier Timeline*

*Buffalo Soldier Job Finding Activity*

*Buffalo Soldier Name Game Activity*

**MORE Activities and Projects** – Varied Activities

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Student Activity: **Interactive PowerPoint**  
(25 slides with activities)






## Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Davis 1867-1885

Click above to activate PowerPoint

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# BUFFALO SOLDIERS

## at Fort Davis, Texas 1867 - 1885

				
1st Sgt. Thomas Allsup, 10th Cavalry	George Bentley, 9 <sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Troop K	James Thompson, 9 <sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Troop K	Thomas Stone & wife, 9 <sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Troop I	Wesley Brandsford, 10th Cavalry

**A strong tradition  
of dedicated service!**

These few photos serve to represent the many Buffalo Soldiers who  
honorably served at Fort Davis during the mid-1800s.

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