



WAR FOR FREEDOM

African-American Experiences in the Era of the Civil War A Web-based Curriculum

FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT



African-Americans living on Cockspur Island, Georgia following the fall of Fort Pulaski, circa 1862. NPS photo

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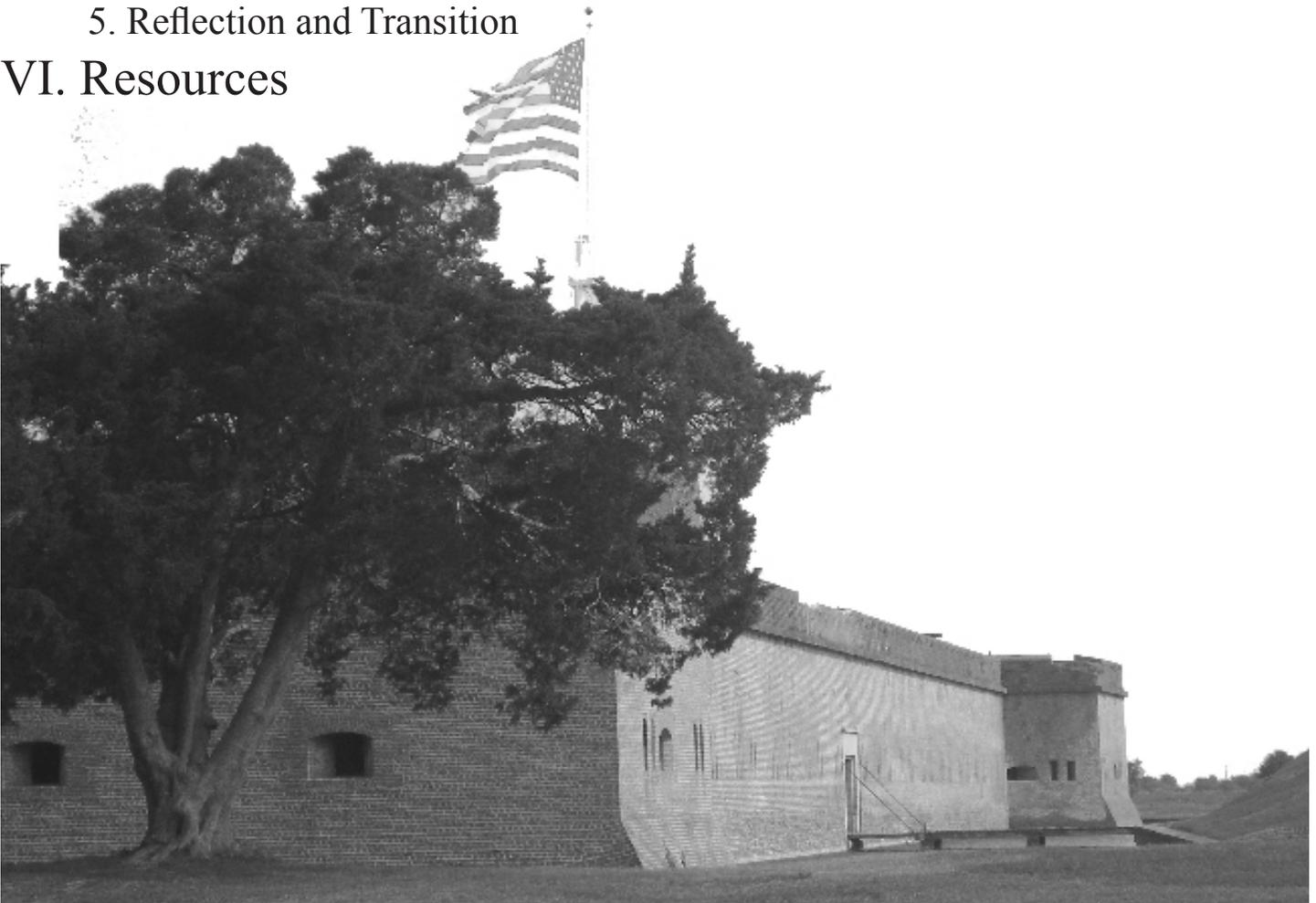
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Introductory Text: War For Freedom

In the four years of the American Civil War, the United States began to redeem itself from the 250-year-long-tragedy of slavery. On the battlefields of that war, and in the buildings, artifacts, documents, and stories they contain, four million African-Americans won their freedom. These sites, many of which have been preserved by the National Park Service, eloquently testify to the nation's "rebirth of freedom."

War for Freedom brings teachers and students close to the day-to-day lives and thoughts of black Americans moving from enslavement to emancipation. Each War for Freedom unit guides students to do research with original historic documents, to re-create moments of drama and personal choice, and to synthesize their learning and imagination in creative collaborative projects.

Fort Pulaski National Monument is one such site that looks to tell the story of African-Americans and their war for freedom during the Civil War in and around Savannah. In April 1862 Union forces captured Confederate held Fort Pulaski, which guarded the port city of Savannah, Georgia. Following the fall of Fort Pulaski, hundreds of African-Americans would pass through Fort Pulaski and Cockspur Island seeking freedom for themselves and their families. Later on, they would come together to form some of the nation's first colored troops, and also meet with Union Generals to plan for their future roles as free citizens.

In this unit, you and your students will use primary documents, re-create important events, write about topics from the point of view of African-Americans at Fort Pulaski and in the Savannah area before and during the Civil War.



Overview

Timeline of important events

- 1733**-Colony of Georgia and the city of Savannah founded by General James Edward Oglethorpe.
- 1735**-Laws enacted for Georgia under Trustee rule including slaves being prohibited in Georgia.
- 1749**-Law prohibiting the importation of slaves rescinded. Georgia planters already hiring South Carolina slaves for life and even openly purchasing slaves at the dock in Savannah.
- 1792**-Eli Whitney invents a cotton gin capable of handling short stapled upland cotton at Mulberry Grove Plantation outside Savannah. Need for slaves increases.
- 1820**-Savannah is a thriving port shipping rice and cotton to all corners of the globe.
- 1861**-Georgia seizes Fort Pulaski, secedes from the United States and joins the Confederate States of America (CSA)
- 1862**-April 10-11, Battle for Fort Pulaski. Union troops gain control of fort and close down port of Savannah.
- Following the fall of Fort Pulaski, General David Hunter issues Gen. Orders No. 7 & 11 granting freedom to area slaves, later rescinded by Abraham Lincoln.
- 1863**-President Abraham Lincoln issues his Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in the Confederate held states.
- 1864**-Savannah surrenders to Union General William T. Sherman in December.
- 1865**-January, Gen. Sherman meets with African-American leaders in Savannah to discuss the role of African-American as free citizens. Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse in April 8th. President Abraham Lincoln assassinated on April 14th.
- 1866**-Georgia enters reconstruction.
- 1870**-Georgia readmitted to the United States.

