



## 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



Written by: Ansley Erickson, School of Excellence, New York City  
Contributions by: June Devisfruto, Chief Ranger; Mike Weinstein, Park Ranger, and Matt Turner,  
Park Guide; Fort Pulaski National Monument, Savannah, Georgia



## I. Introductory Text

## II. Overview

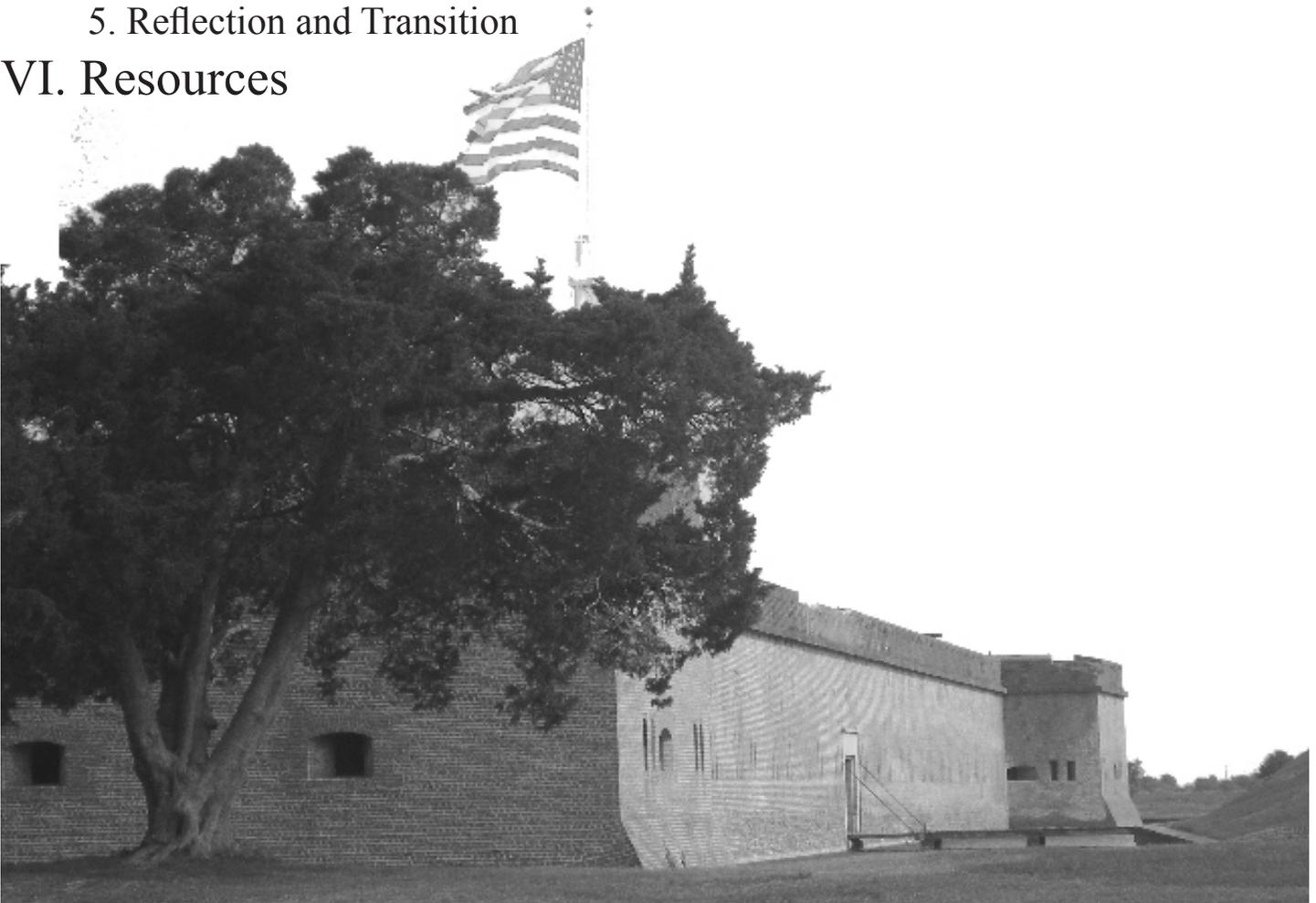
## III. Teacher pages (Rationale/Prior Knowledge/Standards)

## IV. Explore the Setting

## V. Learning Activities

1. African-American Life in Savannah Before & During the Civil War
2. Securing Freedom
3. African-American Views on Securing Freedom
4. A Report to Your Constituency
5. Reflection and Transition

## VI. Resources





## 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.





## Teacher pages (Rationale/Prior Knowledge/Standards)

### Rationale

By examining the experiences of free and enslaved African-Americans in and around Savannah, Georgia before and during the Civil War, and playing the role of an African-American leader in Savannah, students will learn that there was a wide range of experiences of both free and enslaved African-Americans on the eve of the Civil War. Students will use primary documents to research and write about these experiences from the point of view of an African-American leader in Savannah.

### Prior Knowledge for Students

Students need to know the following in order to have a context for the activity. Some of the highlights of the following should be included in the introduction.

*By the beginning of the 19th century, slavery has already existed in the United States for nearly 200 years.*

*Slavery in America was race-based. In addition to the basic premise that it was somehow morally permissible for one human being to regard another as property, the treatment of enslaved Africans and the conditions under which they lived was often but not always cruel.*

*There was a great range of experiences of slavery (physiological needs, relationships, setting, work conditions, etc.)*

*From the outset, states were allowed to decide for themselves whether slavery would be legal or not within the state.*

*By the time of the Civil War, the states in the north had ended slavery.*

*Lincoln's election in 1860 provided the spark the South needed to take political action. Eleven states seceded from the union.*

*In April 1861, Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter. The Civil War was underway.*

*Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation,*



## Teacher pages (Rationale/Prior Knowledge/Standards)

### Education Standards Linked to Fort Pulaski Curriculum

A. Content	Grades 5-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12
<p><i>United States History: Era 5, Standard 13</i> Understands the causes of the Civil War</p>	<p>Knows the locations of the southern and northern states and their economic resources (e.g., the industries and small family farms of the industrial north, the agricultural economy and slavery of the south)</p>	<p>Understands the economic, social, and cultural differences between the North and the South.</p>	
<p><i>United States History: Era 5, Standard 14</i> Understands the course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people</p>	<p>Understands the impact of the Civil War on social and gender issues (e.g., the roles of women on the home front and on the battlefield; the human and material costs of the war; the degree to which the war united the nation; how it changed the lives of women, men, and children)</p>	<p>Understands how different groups of people shaped the Civil War (e.g., the motives and experiences of Confederate and white and African-American Union soldiers, different perspectives on conscription, the effects of divided loyalties)</p>	<p>Understands how the Civil War influenced Northern and Southern society on the home front (e.g., the New York City draft riots of July 1863, the Union's reasons for curbing civil liberties in wartime, Lincoln's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus during the war) Understands how the Civil War influenced both military personnel and civilians.</p>
<p><i>United States History: Era 5, Standard 15</i> Understands how various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed.</p>	<p>Understands changes in social relations in the South during Reconstruction.</p>	<p>Understands the economic and social problems facing the South at the close of the Civil War.</p>	<p>Understands factors that inhibited and fostered African-American attempts to improve lives during reconstruction. Understands different perspectives of Reconstructions.</p>



## Education Standards Linked to Fort Pulaski Curriculum

B. Skills	Grades 5-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12
<p><i>Historical Understanding: Standard 2</i> Understands the historical perspective</p>		<p>Knows different types of primary and secondary sources and the motives, interests, and bias expressed in them (e.g., eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, articles, hearsay)</p>	
<p><i>Language Arts: Writing Standard 4</i> Gathers information for research purposes</p>			<p>Uses a variety of primary sources to gather information for research topics</p>
<p><i>United States History: Era 5, Standard 15</i> Understands how various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed.</p>	<p>Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, sketches, diaries, directions, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, speeches, public documents, maps)</p>	<p>Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, sketches, diaries, directions, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, speeches, public documents, maps)</p>	<p>Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, sketches, diaries, directions, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, speeches, public documents, maps)</p>



## Explore the Setting

Cockspur Island has been of some importance since the founding of the Colony of Georgia due to its strategic location just inside the mouth of the Savannah River. Behind Cockspur Island was a series of marsh islands, which in more recent times would be joined to Cockspur by the necessary dredging of the Savannah River to accommodate modern shipping using Savannah as a Port-of-Call. Savannah proper sits 15 miles upriver from Cockspur Island.

By the early 1820s, the bustling port of Savannah was a center of commerce and trade. Rice and cotton were important crops traded through the city and shipped to ports around the world. Large plantations spread out along the Savannah River as well as on the many coastal islands and marshes located outside the city. Soon, there was the need of a large river fortification to protect the growing city. Preparations on what would become Fort Pulaski began in 1829. The fort was completed eighteen years later in 1847 at a cost of nearly \$1,000,000. Slave labor was utilized by the US Government during construction of the fort. Later on, Fort Pulaski would play a larger role in the history of Savannah's African-Americans.

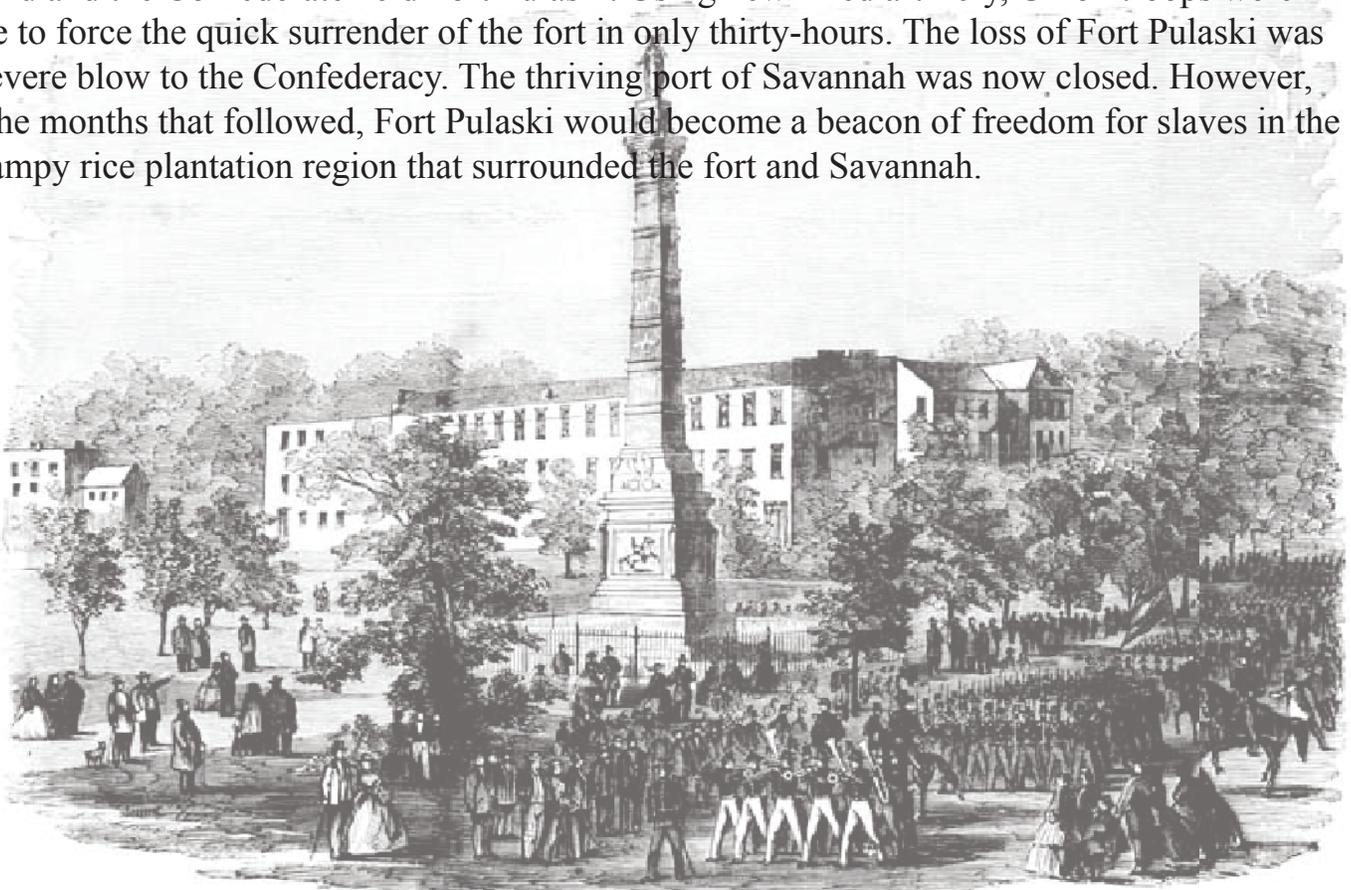




## Explore the Setting (cont'd.)

At the start of the Civil War, Savannah, the second-largest port on the South Atlantic (behind Charleston), had a population of more than 23,000, including about 7,700 enslaved and 700 free people of color (35 percent and 3 percent of the total population, respectively). The purchasing and shipment of cotton, rice, and other goods drove a thriving local economy. Most African-American residents of Savannah, enslaved or free, were unskilled laborers or domestic servants, but their number also included a significant number of skilled tradesmen.

With the firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston, the nation was thrust into war. By April 1862, war would arrive at Savannah's doorstep. Perched on tiny Cockspur Island at the mouth of the Savannah River, Fort Pulaski, the imposing brick fortress built decades before would soon come under fire. On April 10-11 1862, a fierce battle ensued between Union troops on Tybee Island and the Confederate held Fort Pulaski. Using new rifled artillery, Union troops were able to force the quick surrender of the fort in only thirty-hours. The loss of Fort Pulaski was a severe blow to the Confederacy. The thriving port of Savannah was now closed. However, in the months that followed, Fort Pulaski would become a beacon of freedom for slaves in the swampy rice plantation region that surrounded the fort and Savannah.



VIEW OF CONFEDERATE TROOPS EN ROUTE TO VIRGINIA, AS THEY PASS THE PULASKI MONUMENT, SAVANNAH, GA., AUGUST 7TH, 1862



## Learning Activities

### #1. African-American life in Savannah before & after the Civil War

#### A. Choosing a Character

Each pair or trio of students will be given the identity of one African-American leader in the Savannah community. Throughout this unit, the student will research and consider questions from the perspective of this leader.

African-American leaders from Savannah, Georgia.

1. *William J. Campbell*, age 51, born in Savannah, enslaved until 1849, liberated by will of his mistress, Ms. May Maxwell. For ten years, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Savannah, numbering around 1,800 members. The church property belongs to congregation. Trustees are all white. Worth around \$18,000.

2. *John Cox*, age 58, born in Savannah, enslaved until 1849, bought freedom for \$1,100. Pastor of the Second African Baptist Church. In the ministry fifteen years. Congregation of 1,222 persons. Church property worth \$10,000, belongs to the congregation.

3. *Ulysses L. Houston*, age 41, born in Grahamsville, S.C., enslaved until the Union army entered Savannah. Had been owned by Moses Henderson of Savannah. Pastor of Third African Baptist Church. Congregation numbers 400. Church property worth \$5,000, belongs to congregation. In the ministry about eight years.

4. *William Gaines*, age 41, born Wills County, Ga. Enslaved until Union forces freed him. Originally owned by Robert Toombs, formerly U.S. Senator, and his brother, Gabriel Toombs. Gaines is the local preacher of the M.E. Church (Andrew's Chapel). In the ministry sixteen years.



## #1. African-American life in Savannah before & after the Civil War (cont'd)

5. *Garrison Frazier*, age 67, born in Granville County, N.C., enslaved until about eight years ago when he bought himself and his wife, paying \$1,000 in gold and silver. Is an ordained minister in the Baptist Church, but, his health is failing, has now charge of no congregation. Has been in the ministry for 35 years.

6. *Arthur Wardell*, age 44, born in Liberty County, Ga. Enslaved until freed by Union army. Owned by A.A. Solomons of Savannah. Wardell is a licensed minister in the Baptist Church. Has been in the ministry for six years.

7. *Jas. Porter*, age 39, born in Charleston, S.C., free born, his mother having purchased her freedom. Is lay reader and president of the board of wardens and vestry of St. Stephen's Protestant Episcopal Colored Church in Savannah. Has been in communion nine years. The congregation numbers 200 persons. The church property is worth \$10,000, and is owned by the congregation.

8. *Adolphus Delmotte*, age 28, born in Savannah, free born. Is a licensed minister of the Missionary Baptist Church of Milledgeville. Congregation numbering 300 to 400 persons. Has been in the ministry about two years.

9. *John Johnson*, age 51, born in Bryan County, Ga. Enslaved up to the time th Union army arrived. Owned by W.W. Lincoln of Savannah. Is class-leader and treasurer of Andrew's Chapel for sixteen years.

10. *March Haynes*, age 44, born a slave in Pocatigo, S. C., March 4, 1825. Haynes elected a deacon of the Wilmington Baptist Church in 1849 by the Rev. Jack Watry. Still in bondage, Haynes was later removed to the Savannah area in 1858, member of the First African Baptist Church of Savannah. Following the fall of Fort Pulaski in April 1862, Union General David Hunter's Gen. Order No. 7 allowed for the emancipation of slaves in coastal Georgia. March Haynes became a successful recruiter and smuggler of fugitive slaves, credited in putting many of his race over on the Union side during the war.

Profile selected from the "Minutes of an Interview between the Colored Ministers and Church Officers at Savannah with General Sherman, January 12, 1865." See Resource #10.



## #1. African-American life in Savannah before & after the Civil War (cont'd)

### B. Writing Exercise

Using the resources listed below, each pair or trio of students will write a short (one or two paragraph) description of African-American life in Savannah before the war. Each description will vary, because there were a variety of African-American experiences in Savannah before the war. The description should use evidence related to:

*the geography and landscape - what was the area like?*

*the economy - what kinds of work were African-Americans doing?*

*the population - who were the African-Americans in Savannah?*

*social factors - literacy, religion, etc.*



Slaves picking cotton outside Savannah, Henry McAlphin's Hermitage Plantation, Savannah, Slave quarters at Hermitage. Library of Congress



## #2. Securing Freedom

### A. The idea of freedom: Write and Discuss

*Teacher note: "Freedom" is a word that many people use without thinking. It has different meanings in different contexts. Take a few minutes to help students think about their own notions of the word "freedom" by asking them to do some free-writing in response to these prompts, or think of prompts that relate to your student's specific experiences.*

- i. What does the word "freedom" mean to you?
- ii. Are you free?
- iii. Are you more free or less free than your parents or guardians?
- iv. What does it take to make sure that people have freedom?

*Ask students to share some of their ideas. Emphasize the differences between the legal category of "freedom" as opposed to "enslavement" and the other factors - such as economic sufficiency, social organization, etc. - that can affect whether a person is in fact free.*

### B. Group Reading Activity

What did the US Government do to secure the freedom of African-American during the war? What did African-Americans do to secure their own freedom?

*In this "jigsaw" activity, half of the class will examine primary documents to understand the steps the US Government took to secure the freedom of African-Americans in and around Savannah during the war. The other half of the class will examine primary documents to understand what African-Americans in the Savannah area did to secure their own freedom. Once each group has (cont'd)*



## #2. Securing Freedom (cont'd)

*done its own research, they will meet in groups of four to share what they learned. Then students will return to their role groups (pairs and trios) and add what they have learned to their description of African-American life in Savannah.*

**Group 1:** US Government: For students who have odd-numbered leader roles, see these resources:

- #5 - Barton letter re: slaves coming into Union lines
- #8 - Hunter/Lincoln Letters re: Hunter's Field Order
- #9 - Emancipation Proclamation

**Group 2:** African-Americans: For students who have even-numbered leader roles, see these resources:

- #1 - Segment from Higginson journal
- #5 - Barton letter re: slaves coming into Union lines
- #14 - Excerpts of Susie King Taylor's Reminiscences, Part II

## C. Writing

*In their role pair or trios, students add a paragraph to their descriptions of African-American life in Savannah based on what they have learned about securing freedom. Their paragraphs should answer the following:*

What was the US Government doing to secure the freedom of African-Americans in Savannah during the Civil War?

What were African-Americans doing to secure their freedom?



### #3. African-American Views on Securing Freedom

#### A. Context for General Sherman's Meeting

*Note to teachers: Explain to students: In January 1865, US General William T. Sherman called a meeting of African-American leaders in Savannah to provide him information as he created a plan for the future of African-Americans in the area. The leader you have been writing about (Learning Activity #1) is invited to this meeting, and will be expected to share his ideas. What have you learned about African-American life in Savannah, and the ways that the US and African-Americans helped secure freedom, will help you in deciding how you will answer Sherman's questions.*

#### B. Sherman's questions:

*The class brainstorms the kinds of questions that Sherman will ask. Use the categories here to get students thinking; encourage them to be specific in imagining the questions that Sherman will ask, as this will help them be better prepared to answer the questions.*



Union Gen. William T. Sherman

#### General categories of questions that Sherman asked:

*How do African-Americans in Georgia in 1865 understand the meaning of slavery, freedom, and emancipation?*

*How do African-Americans in Georgia in 1865 view their future? How can the US Government help?*

*What is the responsibility of the US Government to the newly freed slaves?*

*What is the responsibility of the US Government to those African-Americans who serve in the US military?*



### #3. African-American Views on Securing Freedom

#### C. Prepare for the meeting:

*Students work in role groups (pairs or trios) to plan their answers to the questions that they expect Sherman will ask. Students have their writing from Learning Activities #1 and #2, as well as the resources for each activity. They also have the resources for Learning Activity #3, which includes the official notes from the January 1865 meeting with Sherman. Students will notice that at the meeting only one representative was selected to speak for all of the African-American leaders. In recreating the meeting, each leader will be able to express his own opinion.*

*To prepare, students should ask themselves questions such as:*

Would the leader I'm representing agree with the comments in the notes?

Would they disagree?

What would their response be?

*Students should draw on the specific information they collected in Learning Activities #1 and #2 to shape their responses. Students should plan responses to each of the questions that the class brainstormed in part B above.*



## #3. African-American Views on Securing Freedom

### D. Recreate the January, 1865 meeting with Sherman

*Role play the meeting in class, with the teacher taking the role of Sherman and the US Government representatives and one student from each role group representing his leader. The teacher should solicit at least two responses per question, reinforcing the idea that different African-American leaders would have answered the questions differently. This role play should take at least 30 minutes.*

*Resource : Doc. 10 - Notes from Sherman meeting*



**Green-Meldrim house, General Sherman's Savannah headquarters.**

*Assign two or three students to serve as note-takers during the meeting. Their notes will be useful to the students for Learning Activity #4.*



## #4. Report to Your Constituency

### A. Reflect on Gen. Sherman's meeting:

*With your role group (pair or trio), reflect on the meeting/role play. Think about the perspective of the leader and discuss:*

What did you hear that surprised your character?

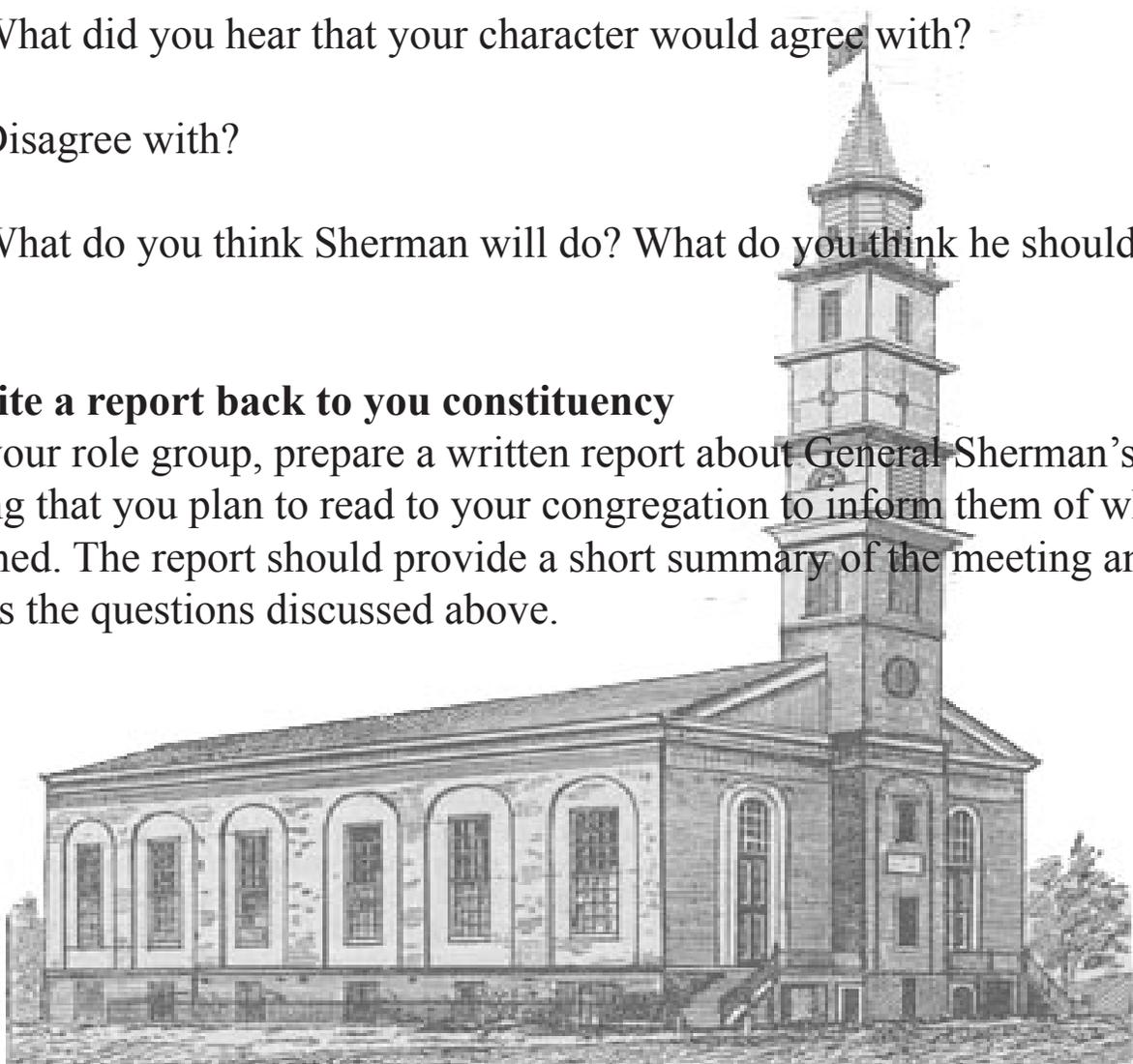
What did you hear that your character would agree with?

Disagree with?

What do you think Sherman will do? What do you think he should do?

### B. Write a report back to you constituency

With your role group, prepare a written report about General Sherman's meeting that you plan to read to your congregation to inform them of what happened. The report should provide a short summary of the meeting and address the questions discussed above.



First African Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia during the Civil War. Steeple later shortened following hurricane in 1890s.



## #5. Reflection and Transition

*Teacher note: At this point, students will have a better understanding of the ways African-Americans hoped the US Government would support their quest for freedom, both during and after the Civil War. To wrap up this unit, lead a discussion about what happened after Sherman's meeting.*

You might consider the following as components of the discussion:

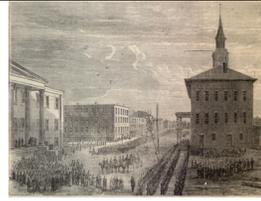
Look at Sherman's Special Field Orders No. 15

Explain the fact that over 40,000 freedmen moved into the area covered by these orders by June 1865.

Explain that President Andrew Johnson overrode the orders by August 1865, returning the land to prior owners.

*This is an appropriate point to make a transition to your study of Reconstruction, to look more deeply at what provisions were or were not made for African-American freedom during this period and during later eras in American history.*

*See resource #12 - Special Field Order 15*



## Resources

Resource #1- Enslaved Escape to Union Lines

Resource #2- Statistics

Resource #3- Slave Auction

Resource #4- Introduction to Savannah, Georgia

Resource #5- Escaping Slaves Coming into Union Lines

Resource #6- The Enslaved Try to Get Information

Resource #7- Property of the Enslaved

Resource #8- General David Hunter's Orders

Resource #9- The Emancipation Proclamation

Resource #10- What do the Newly Free People Want?

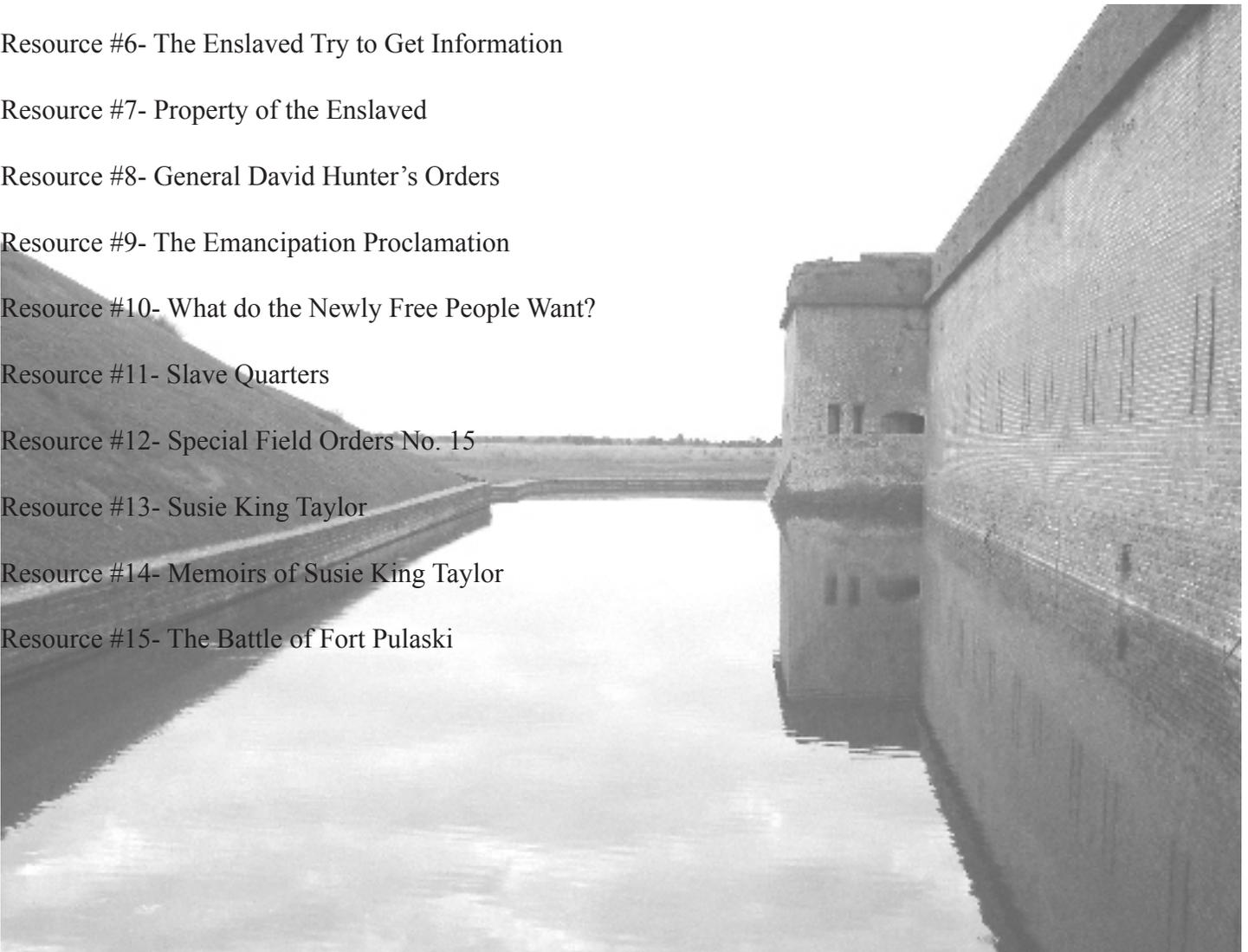
Resource #11- Slave Quarters

Resource #12- Special Field Orders No. 15

Resource #13- Susie King Taylor

Resource #14- Memoirs of Susie King Taylor

Resource #15- The Battle of Fort Pulaski





## Resource #1

### Enslaved Escape to Union Lines

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a white abolitionist from Massachusetts who commanded a regiment of former slaves from South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, recorded in his journal some of the stories of his men's lives in slavery and their escape to freedom.

*[Port Royal Island, S.C. February 15, 1863]*

*"...There is a pretty laundress here, a soldier's wife, Fanny Wright, who had a baby shot in her arms, escaping from the main land in a boat. There is a family of Millers, whose mother a grand old woman was here New Year's Day; she attempted to escape near Savannah but failed and while her husband was receiving 500 lashes, collected 22 of her children and grandchildren and tried again - hid them in a marsh till night, then found a flat boat which had been rejected by the rebels as unseaworthy, put them on board and came forty miles to our lines. One of my officers saw them when they came in. The old woman stood up tall and erect with children in her arms and as they touched the shore, said "My God, are we free?"*

*There is another family of Wilsons of which there are several representatives in this regiment. Three or four sons deliberated about escaping and finally selected the youngest to remain to take care of the old mother. The others with their sister and her children came in an old dugout canoe. They were five men in a boat, and they were shot at by rebel pickets and every man was wounded. A little girl of nine (who was here on New Year's Day) said, when they fired on "Don't cry Mother, Jesus will help you," and she began to pray, with the shots flying about. Captain Townbridge was on the naval vessel which took them up; the mother and child had been living 9 months in the woods and the child would not speak to anyone. He asked the mother if she would not let him adopt the child and she said "I would do anything for oonah but that." (oonah is the plural for you, they sometimes use it) This mother is almost white, her father was white and her grandmother Indian; she said that the negroes on their prayer meetings at Savannah prayed that the Yankees might take the city and that when Fort Pulaski was taken, thousands of slaves got ready to come to us. Captain Townbridge has since seen a Savannah paper in which Mother and Child were described and a reward offered."*

### Questions for Students:

According to Higginson, what were African-American in the Savannah area doing to secure their own freedom?

The events that Higginson describes are after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. Why do you think that African-Americans still chose to seek refuge at Fort Pulaski, even if they had been declared free?

What were some of the risks that former slaves faced in trying to secure their freedom?



## Resource #2

### Statistics

These statistics describe the population in Savannah and surrounding Chatham County in 1860. Look for what information you can gather about the African-American population in this area.

### Population by Color and Status, Chatham County, Ga. and Related Jurisdictions, 1860

Location	White	%	Slave	%	Free Black	%
Chatham County, Ga	15,511	50	14,807	48	725	2
Savannah	13,875	62	7,712	35	705	3
Georgia	591,590	56	462,198	44	3,500	1
All Slave States	9,144,762	66	3,953,696	32	319,960	2

Source: Figures from U.S. Census Office, 8th census, Population of the United States in 1860 (Washington, 1864). Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

### Slaveholders and Slaveholding, Chatham County, Ga. and Related Jurisdictions, 1860

Location	Free Households	Slaveholders	Average Slaveholding	Owners of 20 or more slaves
Chatham County, Ga	3,428	1,205	12	134
Georgia	109,919	41,084	11	6,364
All Slave States	1,529,605	395,196	10	47,559

Source: Figures from U.S. Census Office, 8th census, Population of the United States in 1860 (Washington, 1864). Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

### Questions for Students:

*What proportion of the population in Savannah, and surrounding Chatham County is African-American?*

*Of the African-Americans, how many are enslaved? How many are free?*

*Are most enslaved in large, plantation-style households or in households with few enslaved?*



## Resource #3 Slave Auction

In 1859 an enormous slave action took place at the Race Course three miles outside Savannah, Georgia. Four hundred thirty-six slaves were to be put on the auction block including men, women, children and infants. Word of the sale had spread through the South for weeks, drawing potential buyers from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama and Louisiana. All of Savannah’s available hotel rooms and any other lodging spaces were quickly appropriated by the influx of visitors. In the days running up to the auction, daily excursions were made from the city to the Race Course to inspect, evaluate and determine an appropriate bid for the human merchandise on display.

The sale’s magnitude was the result of the break-up of an old family estate that included two plantations. The majority of the slaves had never been sold before. Most had spent their entire lives on one of the two plantations included in the sale. The rules of the auction stipulated that the slaves would be sold as “families” - defined as a husband and wife and any offspring. However, there was no guarantee that this rule would be adhered to in all cases.

Announcing a slave auction

The sale gained such renown that it attracted the attention of Horace Greeley, Editor of the New York Tribune, one of America’s most influential newspapers at the time. Greeley was an abolitionist and staunchly opposed to slavery. He sent a reporter to cover the auction in order to reveal to his readers the barbarity inherent in one human being’s ability to own and sell another.



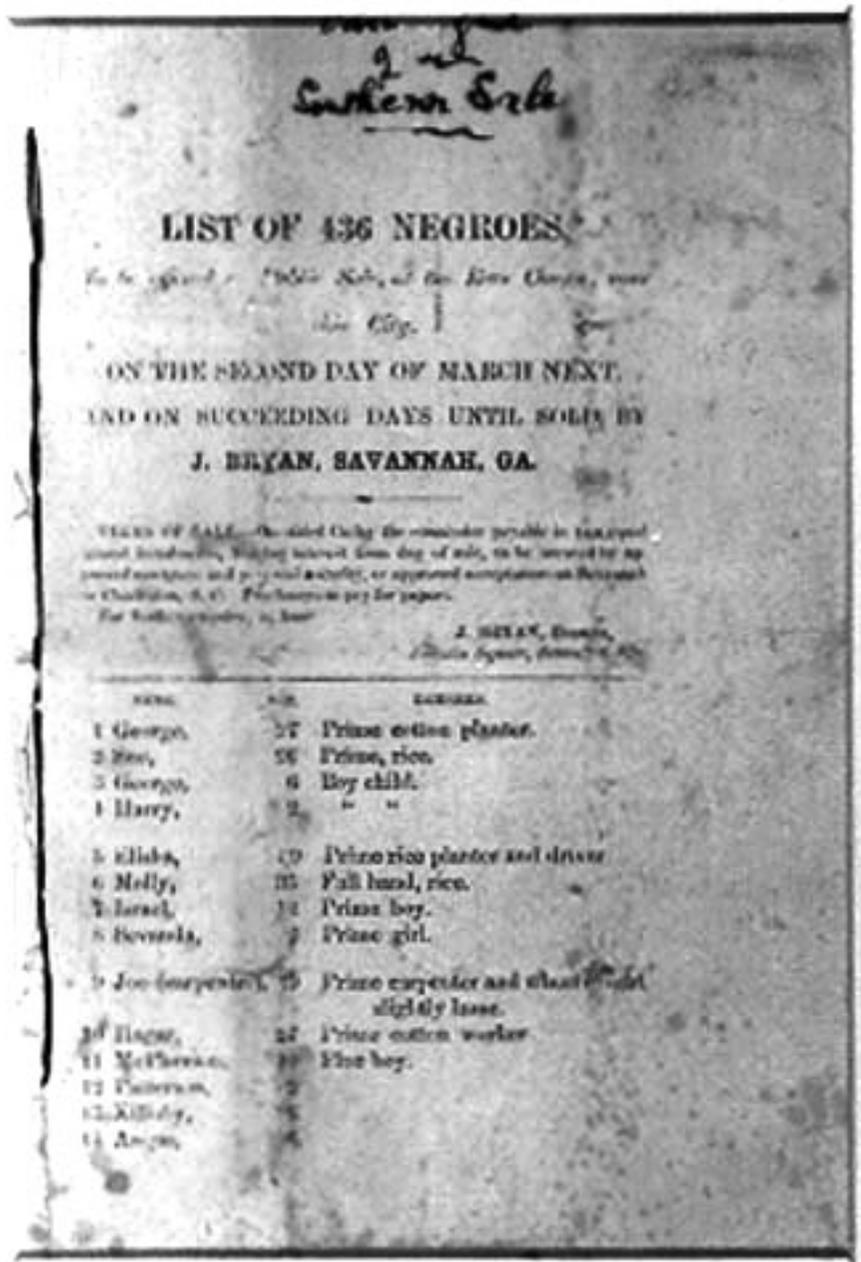
## Resource #3 Slave Auction (cont'd)

The broadside," or printed advertisement, on these pages was designed to catch people's attention and encourage people to buy the slaves these slaves. We can use it to find out important information about the enslaved population in Savannah and the surrounding area.

### Questions:

How are the slaves listed?  
Organized?

Do you notice any patterns regarding age and gender?





## Resource #4

### Introduction to Savannah, Georgia

Savannah is known as America's first planned city. General James Oglethorpe laid the city out in 1733 with a series of grids that allowed for wide open streets intertwined with shady public squares and parks that served as town meeting places and centers of business. Savannah had 24 original squares with 22 still in existence.

During the American Revolution, the British took Savannah in 1778, and held it into 1782. A land-sea force of French and Americans, led by Casimir Pulaski, tried to retake the city in 1779, first by siege and then by direct assault, but failed. After independence was secured, Savannah flourished. Soon, farmers discovered that the soil was rich and the climate favorable for cultivation of cotton and rice. Plantations and slavery became highly profitable systems for whites in the neighboring "Lowcountry" of South Carolina. So Georgia, the free colony, legalized slavery. The trans-Atlantic slave trade brought many African-Americans through the port of Savannah. Many who stayed in the area formed the unique Gullah culture of the coastal communities in Georgia and South Carolina.

With the wealth brought by cotton, residents built lavish homes and churches throughout the city. After the invention of the cotton gin on a plantation outside of Savannah, the city rivaled Charleston as a commercial port. Many of the world's cotton prices were set on the steps of the Savannah Cotton Exchange. The building is still in existence. But Savannah was not spared from misfortune. Two devastating fires in 1796 and 1820 each left half of Savannah in ashes, but residents re-built. The year 1820 saw an outbreak of yellow fever that killed a tenth of its population. Savannah also survived fires, epidemics and hurricanes, but always bounced back.

Antebellum Savannah was praised as the most picturesque and serene city in America. It was known for its grand oaks festooned with Spanish moss and its genteel citizenry. The Georgia Historical Society was founded in that era. Magnificent Forsyth Park got its ornate fountain. During the Civil War, the city suffered from sea blockades so strict that the economy crumbled. "Impregnable" Fort Pulaski at the mouth of the Savannah River was captured by Union soldiers in 1862. The city itself did not fall until Union General William Tecumseh Sherman entered on December 22, 1864, after burning the city of Atlanta and everything else in their path on his "march to the sea." Upon entering Savannah, Sherman was said to be so impressed by its beauty that he could not destroy it. On December 22, 1864, he sent a famous telegram to President Abraham Lincoln, offering the city as a Christmas present.

Reconstruction began. Food was scarce in Savannah, and the economy was in ruins. Despite these hardships and the added burdens of prejudice, the freed slaves who remained in Savannah built a thriving community, with its own churches, schools and economic strength. Savannah became one of the most historically significant African-American cities in the nation.



## Resource #5

### Escaping Slaves Coming into Union Lines

#### Union Commander Barton, letter

This letter was written by the Union commander at Fort Pulaski to a superior officer on September 9, 1862.

Captain, I have the honor to state for the information of the General Commanding, that yesterday twenty negroes (a portion of them children) came within our lines from around Savannah. There is nothing in the way of information to glean from them, with which the department is not already acquainted,- and as they are greatly needed here by the Officers, as servants it is proposed to keep them, unless the Commanding General should otherwise direct. Very Respectfully Your Obedt Servant.

Wm. B. Barton

Ft. Pulaski, Ga September 9, 1862

Col. Wm. B. Barton to Capt. L.J. Lambert, 9 Sept. 1862, B-48 1862, Letters Received ser. 4109, Dept. of the South, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393 Pt. 1, National Archives [FSSP C-1300].

#### Questions:

*What is happening at Fort Pulaski that the Union Commander wants to tell his superior officer?*

*What does the commander say that he wants to do about the situation?*

*What does this tell you about what African-Americans are doing to secure their freedom? How was the Union Army responding?*



“A Slave Family Coming into Union Lines.”1863, Library of Congress



## Resource #6

### The Enslaved Try to Get Information

This painting shows fugitive and escaped slaves heading toward Union held areas (such as Fort Pulaski) by boat through the marsh landscape surrounding Savannah. Many slaves reached Fort Pulaski on Cockspur Island by boat.



Painting of March Haynes heading toward Cockspur Island, Ga. FOPU

### Question:

What do you think African-Americans were hoping to accomplish by leaving their homes and going toward the Union held fort?



## Resource #7

### Property of the Enslaved

Nearly a decade after General William T. Sherman's troops finished their march across Georgia by taking Savannah, Charles Jess testified on behalf of his fellow former slave and neighbor, Mary Jess, who was trying to receive compensation from a federal commission for property that had been taken or destroyed by Sherman's men. This list provides a window into the life of one enslaved woman who had managed to accumulate a considerable amount of valuable goods of her own. The excerpt here gives a list of Mary's property. Notice what she was able to purchase and accumulate, and think about how she might have been able to do this.

[Savannah, Ga. March 12, 1873]

The property was in good condition when taken.

Item #1- The cow was about 4 years old, full-grown. The yearling was not full grown. It was nearly 2 years old. I don't know how much they would weigh- all I know was that they were in good condition. They were fat and fit for beef.

Item #2- These were full-grown hogs-fat- they would weigh about 100 lbs. a piece. I saw them cut their heads off.

Item #3- I know she had a great many turkeys. I don't know how many. I saw them taken away.

Item #4- She had a great many fowls- I saw them taken away.

Item #5- She had good furniture, cooking and household utensils. Her house was well-furnished. They took blankets, bedding and everything, didn't leave anything. They took all their clothing. The house was well furnished.

Item #6- There were 30 bee- hives. I saw them take away the boxes. They knocked the hives open. They left the bees, except for the ones that stuck.

Item #7- I don't know how much syrup she had. They cleaned this all out at one time.

Item #8- The lard was in large stone jars. I don't know how many she had.

Item #9- She had one sack of coffee. I saw them take it away.

Item #10- She had two sacks of flour. 100 lbs. per sack, they put these across the horse.



## Resource #7 Property of the Enslaved (cont'd)

Item #11- I could not tell how much sugar she had. It was in the barrell. They took it away.

Item #12- I think she had about two boxes of chewing tobacco. They just scabbled for that and took off.

Item #13- The wine was in demi-johns. It was Port wine. It was bought.

This property all belonged to Mrs. Jess. She was a dairy woman. She was allowed privileges that other servants didn't enjoy. She was allowed to raise poultry and stock and cattle. She sold them when she pleased - and she worked a garden. She worked and earned money outside her regular task work-

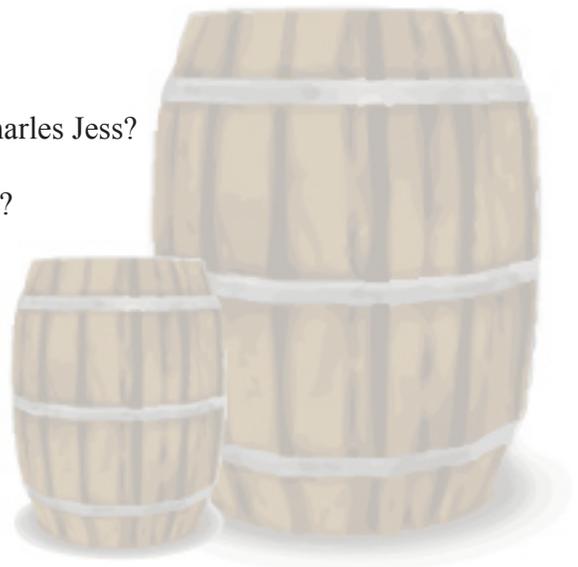
Testimony of Charles Jess, [12 Mar. 1873], claim of Mary Jess, Chatham Co. GA case files, Approved Claims, series 732, Southern Claims Commission, 3rd Auditor, Record Group 217, National Archives [FSSP I-12] The questions that correspond to the enumerated responses are not in file. According to other documents in the file, Mary Jess had submitted a claim for \$625.50 as compensation for the following property taken by Union soldiers: 1 cow, 10 hogs, 20 turkeys, 60 fowls, 300 lbs honey, 15 gallons syrup, 50 lbs lard, 100 lbs coffee, 1 1/2 sacks flour, 75 lbs sugar, 50 lbs tobacco, 5 gallons wine, and furniture. She was awarded \$130.

### Questions:

How would you describe Mary Jess's possessions?

How was she able to acquire these possessions, according to Charles Jess?

How do you think owning these goods affected Mary Jess's life?





## Resource #8

### General David Hunter's Orders

#### A. General Order No. 7

*This series of orders made by Union General David Hunter and President Abraham Lincoln provides important information about what the US Government was willing to do - and not willing to do - to secure the freedom of African-Americans in the Savannah area. [Note that there are guiding questions after each of the sections]*

Soon after the federal assault compelled the Confederates to surrender Fort Pulaski in April 1862, Union General David Hunter boldly declared free all the slaves on Cockspur Island, the site of the fort. Hunter's order ran counter to the Lincoln administration's insistence that the Union was not fighting to liberate slaves, and news of it spread through the rice plantations surrounding Fort Pulaski.

Fort Pulaski, Cockspur Island, Ga. April 13, 1862

General Orders, No. 7. All persons of color lately held to involuntary service by enemies of the United States in Fort Pulaski and on Cockspur Island, Georgia, are hereby confiscated and declared free, in conformity with the law, and shall hereafter receive the fruits of their own labor, Such of said persons of color as are able-bodied and may be required shall be employed in the quartermaster's department at the rates heretofore established by the Brig. Gen. T.W. Sherman. By command of Maj. General David Hunter.

#### Questions:

In your own words, what was Hunter saying about enslaved people in and around Cockspur Island and Fort Pulaski?

What do you think the results of this announcement were?

#### B. Abraham Lincoln's Counter Proclamation

*Not long after taking Fort Pulaski, General Hunter moved his headquarters to Hilton Head off the coast of South Carolina, where he took a giant step further. He issued an order liberating all the enslaved in the states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, even though his army only controlled a few scattered outposts along the coast. That was too much for President Lincoln, who was advocating a plan ending slavery gradually and compensating slaveholders for lost property. Lincoln overrode Hunter and took the occasion to lobby for his own plan.*



## Resource #8

### General David Hunter's Orders (cont'd)

Washington D.C. this nineteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas there appears in the public prints, what purports to be a proclamation, of Maj. General Hunter, in the words and figures following, to wit:

Head Quarters Department of the South,  
Hilton Head, S.C. May 9, 1862.

*General Order No. 11 - "The three States of Georgia, Florida and South Carolina, comprising the military department of the south, having deliberately declared themselves no longer under the protection of the United States of America, and having taken up arms against the said United States, it becomes a military necessity to declare them under martial law. This was accordingly done on the 25th day of April, 1862. Slavery and martial law in a free country are altogether incompatible; the persons in these three States — Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina— heretofore held as slaves, are therefore declared forever free."*

*Maj, General David Hunter  
1862*

Ed. W. Smith,  
Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

And whereas the same is producing some excitement, and misunderstanding; therefore

I Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, proclaim and declare, that the government of the United States, had no knowledge, information, or belief, of an intention on the part of General Hunter to issue such a proclamation; nor has it yet, any authentic information that the document is genuine - And further, that neither General Hunter, nor any other commander, or person, has been authorized by the Government of the United States, to make such proclamations declaring the slaves of any state free; and that the supposed proclamation, now in question, whether genuine or false, is altogether void, so far as respects such declaration. I further make known, that whether it be competent for me, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time, or in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the Government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which, undermy responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field. These are totally different questions from those of police regulations in armies and camps.



## Resource #8

### General David Hunter's Orders

On the 6th day of March last, by a special message, I recommended to Congress the adoption of a joint resolution, to be substantially as follows:

Resolved, That the United States ought to co-operate with any State which may adopt a gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such State, in its discretion, compensation for the inconveniences, public and private, produced by such change of system.

The resolution, in the language above quoted, was adopted by large majorities in both branches of Congress, and now stands an authentic, definite, and solemn proposal of the nation to the States and people most immediately interested in the subject-matter. To the people of these States I now earnestly appeal. I do not argue. I beseech you to make the arguments for yourselves. You cannot, if you would, be blind to the signs of the times. I beg of you a calm and enlarged consideration of them, ranging, if it may be, far above personal and partisan politics. This proposal makes common cause for a common object, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not the Pharisee. The change it contemplates would come gently as the dews of heaven, not rending or wrecking any thing. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done by one effort in all past times as in the Providence of God it is now your high privilege to do. May the vast future not have to lament that you have neglected it. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 19th day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-sixth.

Abraham Lincoln.

By the President—Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State.

## Questions:

What did Hunter's General Order No. 11 say about slaves in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida?

How did President Lincoln respond?

What does this tell you about what the US Government was willing to do in 1862 to secure freedom of African-Americans during the Civil War?



## Resource #9

### Emancipation Proclamation

This document provides an excerpt of the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln.

Whereas on the 22nd day of September, A.D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the executive will on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the first day above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:



## Resource #9

### Emancipation Proclamation (cont'd)

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Palquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebone, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Morthampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued. And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all case when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages. And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

(<https://www.nps.gov/ncro/anti/emancipation.html>)

### Questions:

What is the effect of this proclamation on the enslaved in an around Savannah?

Does this proclamation end slavery everywhere? Why or Why not?

What does Lincoln say about why he is issuing this proclamation?

What does this tell you about how the US Government was securing freedom for African-Americans during the Civil War?



## Resource #10

### What do the newly Free People Want?

*A Northern newspaper reported the proceedings of a remarkable gathering: At Savannah, Georgia, twenty black ministers and lay leaders joined Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and General William T. Sherman to consider the future of the thousands of slaves freed by the march of Sherman's army.*

MINUTES OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE COLORED MINISTERS AND CHURCH OFFICERS AT SAVANNAH WITH THE SECRETARY OF WAR AND MAJOR-GEN. SHERMAN.

HEADQUARTERS OF MAJ.-GEN. SHERMAN,  
CITY OF SAVANNAH, GA., Jan., 12, 1865—8 P.M.

On the evening of Thursday, the 12th day of January, 1865, the following persons of African descent met by appointment to hold an interview with Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, and Major-Gen. Sherman, to have a conference upon matters relating to the freedmen of the State of Georgia, to-wit:

One: William J. Campbell, aged 51 years, born in Savannah, slave until 1849, and then liberated by will of his mistress, Mrs. May Maxwell. For ten years pastor of the 1st Baptist Church of Savannah, numbering about 1,800 members. Average congregation, 1,900. The church property belonging to the congregation. Trustees white. Worth \$18,000.

Two: John Cox, aged fifty-eight years, born in Savannah; slave until 1849, when he bought his freedom for \$1,100. Pastor of the 2d African Baptist Church. In the ministry fifteen years. Congregation 1,222 persons. Church property worth \$10,000, belonging to the congregation.

Three: Ulysses L. Houston, aged forty-one years, born in Grahamsville, S.C.; slave until the Union army entered Savannah. Owned by Moses Henderson, Savannah, and pastor of Third African Baptist Church. Congregation numbering 400. Church property worth \$5,000; belongs to congregation. In the ministry about eight years.

Four: William Bentley, aged 72 years, born in Savannah, slave until 25 years of age, when his master, John Waters, emancipated him by will. Pastor of Andrew's Chapel, Methodist Episcopal Church—only one of that denomination in Savannah; congregation numbering 360 members; church property worth about \$20,000, and is owned by the congregation; been in the ministry about twenty years; a member of Georgia Conference.

Five: Charles Bradwell, aged 40 years, born in Liberty County, Ga.; slave until 1851; emancipated by will of his master, J. L. Bradwell. Local preacher in charge of the Methodist Episcopal congregation (Andrew's Chapel) in the absence of the minister; in the ministry 10 years.



## Resource #10

### What do the newly Free People Want? (cont'd)

Six: William Gaines, aged 41 years; born in Wills Co., Ga. Slave until the Union forces freed me. Owned by Robert Toombs, formerly United States Senator, and his brother, Gabriel Toombs, local preacher of the M.E. Church (Andrew's Chapel.) In the ministry 16 years.

Seven: James Hill, aged 52 years; born in Bryan Co., Ga. Slave up to the time the Union army came in. Owned by H. F. Willings, of Savannah. In the ministry 16 years.

Eight: Glasgow Taylor, aged 72 years, born in Wilkes County, Ga. Slave until the Union army came; owned by A. P. Wetter. Is a local preacher of the M.E. Church (Andrew's Chapel.) In the ministry 35 years.

Nine: Garrison Frazier, aged 67 years, born in Granville County, N.C. Slave until eight years ago, when he bought himself and wife, paying \$1,000 in gold and silver. Is an ordained minister in the Baptist Church, but, his health failing, has now charge of no congregation. Has been in the ministry 35 years.

Ten: James Mills, aged 56 years, born in Savannah; free-born, and is a licensed preacher of the first Baptist Church. Has been eight years in the ministry.

Eleven: Abraham Burke, aged 48 years, born in Bryan County, Ga. Slave until 20 years ago, when he bought himself for \$800. Has been in the ministry about 10 years.

Twelve: Arthur Wardell, aged 44 years, born in Liberty County, Ga. Slave until freed by the Union army. Owned by A. A. Solomons, Savannah, and is a licensed minister in the Baptist Church. Has been in the ministry 6 years.

Thirteen: Alexander Harris, aged 47 years, born in Savannah; free born. Licensed minister of Third African Baptist Church. Licensed about one month ago.

Fourteen: Andrew Neal, aged 61 years, born in Savannah, slave until the Union army liberated him. Owned by Mr. Wm. Gibbons, and has been deacon in the Third Baptist Church for 10 years.

Fifteen: Jas. Porter, aged 39 years, born in Charleston, South Carolina; free-born, his mother having purchased her freedom. Is lay-reader and president of the board of wardens and vestry of St. Stephen's Protestant Episcopal Colored Church in Savannah. Has been in communion 9 years. The congregation numbers about 200 persons. The church property is worth about \$10,000, and is owned by the congregation.



## Resource #10

### What do the newly Free People Want? (cont'd)

Sixteen: Adolphus Delmotte, aged 28 years, born in Savannah; free born. Is a licensed minister of the Missionary Baptist Church of Milledgeville. Congregation numbering about 300 or 400 persons. Has been in the ministry about two years.

Seventeen: Jacob Godfrey, aged 57 years, born in Marion, S.C. Slave until the Union army freed me; owned by James E. Godfrey—Methodist preacher now in the Rebel army. Is a class-leader and steward of Andrew's Chapel since 1836.

Eighteen: John Johnson, aged 51 years, born in Bryan County, Georgia. Slave up to the time the Union army came here; owned by W. W. Lincoln of Savannah. Is class-leader and treasurer of Andrew's Chapel for sixteen years.

Nineteen: Robt. N. Taylor, aged 51 years, born in Wilkes Co., Ga. Slave to the time the Union army came. Was owned by Augustus P. Welter, Savannah, and is class-leader in Andrew's Chapel for nine years.

Twenty: Jas. Lynch, aged 26 years, born in Baltimore, Md.; free-born. Is presiding elder of the M.E. Church and missionary to the department of the South. Has been seven years in the ministry and two years in the South.

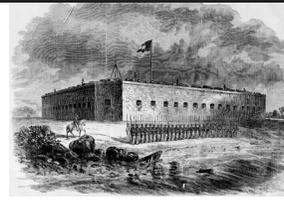
Garrison Frazier being chosen by the persons present to express their common sentiments upon the matters of inquiry, makes answers to inquiries as follows:

First: State what your understanding is in regard to the acts of Congress and President Lincoln's [Emancipation] proclamation, touching the condition of the colored people in the Rebel States.

Answer—So far as I understand President Lincoln's proclamation to the Rebellious States, it is, that if they would lay down their arms and submit to the laws of the United States before the first of January, 1863, all should be well; but if they did not, then all the slaves in the Rebel States should be free henceforth and forever. That is what I understood.

Second—State what you understand by Slavery and the freedom that was to be given by the President's proclamation.

Answer—Slavery is, receiving by irresistible power the work of another man, and not by his consent. The freedom, as I understand it, promised by the proclamation, is taking us from under the yoke of bondage, and placing us where we could reap the fruit of our own labor, take care of ourselves and assist the Government in maintaining our freedom.



## Resource #10

### What do the newly Free People Want? (cont'd)

Answer: The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor—that is, by the labor of the women and children and old men; and we can soon maintain ourselves and have something to spare. And to assist the Government, the young men should enlist in the service of the Government, and serve in such manner as they may be wanted. (The Rebels told us that they piled them up and made batteries of them, and sold them to Cuba; but we don't believe that.) We want to be placed on land until we are able to buy it and make it our own.

Fourth: State in what manner you would rather live—whether scattered among the whites or in colonies by yourselves.

Answer: I would prefer to live by ourselves, for there is a prejudice against us in the South that will take years to get over; but I do not know that I can answer for my brethren. [Mr. Lynch says he thinks they should not be separated, but live together. All the other persons present, being questioned one by one, answer that they agree with Brother Frazier.]

Fifth: Do you think that there is intelligence enough among the slaves of the South to maintain themselves under the Government of the United States and the equal protection of its laws, and maintain good and peaceable relations among yourselves and with your neighbors?

Answer—I think there is sufficient intelligence among us to do so.

Sixth—State what is the feeling of the black population of the South toward the Government of the United States; what is the understanding in respect to the present war—its causes and object, and their disposition to aid either side. State fully your views.

Answer—I think you will find there are thousands that are willing to make any sacrifice to assist the Government of the United States, while there are also many that are not willing to take up arms. I do not suppose there are a dozen men that are opposed to the Government. I understand, as to the war, that the South is the aggressor. President Lincoln was elected President by a majority of the United States, which guaranteed him the right of holding the office and exercising that right over the whole United States. The South, without knowing what he would do, rebelled. The war was commenced by the Rebels before he came into office. The object of the war was not at first to give the slaves their freedom, but the sole object of the war was at first to bring the rebellious States back into the Union and their loyalty to the laws of the United States. Afterward, knowing the value set on the slaves by the Rebels, the President thought that his proclamation would stimulate them to lay down their arms, reduce them to obedience, and help to bring back the Rebel States; and their not doing so has now made the freedom of the slaves a part of the war. It is my opinion that there is not a man in this city that could be started to help the Rebels one inch, for that would be suicide. There were two black men left with the



## Resource #10

### What do the newly Free People Want? (cont'd)

the Rebels because they had taken an active part for the Rebels, and thought something might befall them if they stayed behind; but there is not another man. If the prayers that have gone up for the Union army could be read out, you would not get through them these two weeks.

Seventh: State whether the sentiments you now express are those only of the colored people in the city; or do they extend to the colored population through the country? and what are your means of knowing the sentiments of those living in the country?

Answer: I think the sentiments are the same among the colored people of the State. My opinion is formed by personal communication in the course of my ministry, and also from the thousands that followed the Union army, leaving their homes and undergoing suffering. I did not think there would be so many; the number surpassed my expectation.

Eighth: If the Rebel leaders were to arm the slaves, what would be its effect?

Answer: I think they would fight as long as they were before the bayonet, and just as soon as soon as they could get away, they would desert, in my opinion.

Ninth: What, in your opinion, is the feeling of the colored people about enlisting and serving as soldiers of the United States? and what kind of military service do they prefer?

Answer: A large number have gone as soldiers to Port Royal [S.C.] to be drilled and put in the service; and I think there are thousands of the young men that would enlist. There is something about them that perhaps is wrong. They have suffered so long from the Rebels that they want to shoulder the musket. Others want to go into the Quartermaster's or Commissary's service.

Tenth: Do you understand the mode of enlistments of colored persons in the Rebel States by State agents under the Act of Congress? If yea, state what your understanding is.

Answer: My understanding is, that colored persons enlisted by State agents are enlisted as substitutes, and give credit to the States, and do not swell the army, because every black man enlisted by a State agent leaves a white man at home; and, also, that larger bounties are given or promised by State agents than are given by the States. The great object should be to push through this Rebellion the shortest way, and there seems to be something wanting in the enlistment by State agents, for it don't strengthen the army, but takes one away for every colored man enlisted.

Eleventh: State what, in your opinion, is the best way to enlist colored men for soldiers.



## Resource #10

### What do the newly Free People Want? (cont'd)

Answer: I think, sir, that all compulsory operations should be put a stop to. The ministers would talk to them, and the young men would enlist. It is my opinion that it would be far better for the State agents to stay at home, and the enlistments to be made for the United States under the direction of Gen. Sherman.

In the absence of Gen. Sherman, the following question was asked:

Twelfth: State what is the feeling of the colored people in regard to Gen. Sherman; and how far do they regard his sentiments and actions as friendly to their rights and interests, or otherwise?

Answer: We looked upon Gen. Sherman prior to his arrival as a man in the Providence of God specially set apart to accomplish this work, and we unanimously feel inexpressible gratitude to him, looking upon him as a man that should be honored for the faithful performance of his duty. Some of us called upon him immediately upon his arrival, and it is probable he would not meet the Secretary with more courtesy than he met us. His conduct and deportment toward us characterized him as a friend and a gentleman. We have confidence in Gen. Sherman, and think that what concerns us could not be under better hands. This is our opinion now from the short acquaintance and interest we have had. (Mr. Lynch states that with his limited acquaintance with Gen. Sherman, he is unwilling to express an opinion. All others present declare their agreement with Mr. Frazier about Gen. Sherman.)

Some conversation upon general subjects relating to Gen. Sherman's march then ensued, of which no note was taken.

Clipping from New-York Daily Tribune, [13 Feb. 1865], "Negroes of Savannah," Consolidated Correspondence File, ser. 225, Central Records, Quartermaster General, Record Group 92, National Archives.

## Questions:

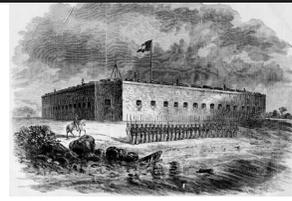
Would the leader you represent agree with the answers to the questions posed?

Would they disagree? Why?

What would their response be?

What other questions did your class think that Sherman might well have asked?

What would be your response to those questions?



## Resource #11 Slave Quarters

This photograph shows a slaves at their quarters or residences at the Hermitage plantation outside Savannah, Georgia during the Civil War.

### Questions:

What do you notice when you look at the photograph?

What do you think it would have been like to live in these quarters as a slave?

What are these quarters made from?

How comfortable would you find these living conditions?



**Cabins where slaves were raised for market--The famous Hermitage, Savannah, Georgia. Library of Congress**



## Resource #12

### Special Field Orders No. 15

*Four days after his meeting with African-American leaders in Savannah, General Sherman issued this “Special Field Order,” which described some provisions for formerly enslaved and free African-Americans in the coastal South.*

IN THE FIELD, SAVANNAH, GA., January 16th, 1865.

SPECIAL FIELD ORDERS, No. 15.

I. The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.

II. At Beaufort, Hilton Head, Savannah, Fernandina, St. Augustine and Jacksonville, the blacks may remain in their chosen or accustomed vocations—but on the islands, and in the settlements hereafter to be established, no white person whatever, unless military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, will be permitted to reside; and the sole and exclusive management of affairs will be left to the freed people themselves, subject only to the United States military authority and the acts of Congress. By the laws of war, and orders of the President of the United States, the negro is free and must be dealt with as such. He cannot be subjected to conscription or forced military service, save by the written orders of the highest military authority of the Department, under such regulations as the President or Congress may prescribe. Domestic servants, blacksmiths, carpenters and other mechanics, will be free to select their own work and residence, but the young and able-bodied negroes must be encouraged to enlist as soldiers in the service of the United States, to contribute their share towards maintaining their own freedom, and securing their rights as citizens of the United States.

Negroes so enlisted will be organized into companies, battalions and regiments, under the orders of the United States military authorities, and will be paid, fed and clothed according to law. The bounties paid on enlistment may, with the consent of the recruit, go to assist his family and settlement in procuring agricultural implements, seed, tools, boots, clothing, and other articles necessary for their livelihood.

III. Whenever three respectable negroes, heads of families, shall desire to settle on land, and shall have selected for that purpose an island or a locality clearly defined, within the limits above designated, the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations will himself, or by such subordinate officer as he may appoint, give them a license to settle such island or district, and afford them such assistance as he can to enable them to establish a peaceable agricultural settlement. The three parties named will subdivide the land, under the supervision of the Inspector, among themselves and such others as may choose to settle near them, so that each family shall have a plot of not more than (40) forty acres of tillable ground, and when it borders on some water channel, with not more than 800 feet water front, in the possession of which land the military authorities will afford them protection,



## Resource #12

### Special Field Orders No. 15 (cont'd)

until such time as they can protect themselves, or until Congress shall regulate their title. The Quartermaster may, on the requisition of the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, place at the disposal of the Inspector, one or more of the captured steamers, to ply between the settlements and one or more of the commercial points heretofore named in orders, to afford the settlers the opportunity to supply their necessary wants, and to sell the products of their land and labor.

IV. Whenever a negro has enlisted in the military service of the United States, he may locate his family in any one of the settlements at pleasure, and acquire a homestead, and all other rights and privileges of a settler, as though present in person. In like manner, negroes may settle their families and engage on board the gunboats, or in fishing, or in the navigation of the inland waters, without losing any claim to land or other advantages derived from this system. But no one, unless an actual settler as above defined, or unless absent on Government service, will be entitled to claim any right to land or property in any settlement by virtue of these orders.

V. In order to carry out this system of settlement, a general officer will be detailed as Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, whose duty it shall be to visit the settlements, to regulate their police and general management, and who will furnish personally to each head of a family, subject to the approval of the President of the United States, a possessory title in writing, giving as near as possible the description of boundaries; and who shall adjust all claims or conflicts that may arise under the same, subject to the like approval, treating such titles altogether as possessory. The same general officer will also be charged with the enlistment and organization of the negro recruits, and protecting their interests while absent from their settlements; and will be governed by the rules and regulations prescribed by the War Department for such purposes.

VI. Brigadier General R. SAXTON is hereby appointed Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, and will at once enter on the performance of his duties. No change is intended or desired in the settlement now on Beaufort [Port Royal] Island, nor will any rights to property heretofore acquired be affected thereby.

BY ORDER OF MAJOR GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN:

Special Field Orders, No. 15, Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, 16 Jan. 1865, Orders & Circulars, ser. 44, Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives.

### Questions:

What did Sherman think African-Americans needed to be able to secure their freedom?

Do you think the African-American leaders who spoke with Sherman in Savannah (see Resource #10) before this order was issued would support his order? Why or Why not?



## Resource #13 Susie King Taylor

Susie King Taylor was born in 1848. She was in Savannah, Georgia. She was a slave and was not allowed an education. Black women taught her how to read and write. She taught other African Americans when she was 14 years old. In 1862 she moved to Port Royal Island off the coast of South Carolina. There her husband joined the First South Carolina Volunteers, an all-black army. The army was made up of former slaves from the Sea Islands was one of the first African-American military units. They needed medical help. Susie was working in her husband's military company, even though she had no training. She was the first black army nurse. She worked on the battlefield for four years. Other women joined the army as nurses. Other people went for the job like Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. Her husband died at the end of the Civil War. She moved north to Boston, Massachusetts. There she met and married Russell Taylor. She died in 1912.



**Susie King Taylor**



## Resource #14

### Memoirs of Susie King Taylor

“There are many people who do not know what some of the colored women did during the war. There were hundreds of them who assisted the Union soldiers by hiding them and helping them to escape.”

In 1862, a young woman was brought upon a Federal gunboat near a small island off the coast of Georgia. Her name was Susie, and she was fourteen years old. In the chaos of battle, she and her uncle had fled the reaches of Southern authorities to join the Union boat. From that time until the end of the war, young Susie traveled with a Federal regiment and acted as nurse, cook, laundress, and spy. The quotes on this page are taken from the memoirs of her time spent on the front line of the Civil War. They speak of the hardship and danger she faced from day to day:

... I expected every moment to be killed by a shell but on arriving at the hospital I knew I was safe, for the shells could not reach us there. It was plainly to be seen now, the ruse of the flag of truce coming so often to us. The bearer was evidently a spy . . .” Sometimes, the words shed light on the goodness of the human spirit, that can exist even in the face of war. “Some mornings I would go along the picket line, and I could see the rebels on the opposite side of the river. Sometimes as they were changing pickets they would call over to our men and ask for something to eat, or for tobacco, and our men would tell them to come over. Sometimes one or two would desert to us, saying, they “had no negroes to fight for. . . .”

Susie talked frankly of the excitement of life with the army, as well:

“ . . . I learned to handle a musket very well while in the regiment, and could shoot straight and often hit the target. I assisted in cleaning the guns and used to fire them off, to see if the cartridges were dry, before cleaning and reloading, each day. I thought this great fun. I was also able to take a gun all apart, and put it together again. . . .” And she cared deeply for the Union men in her care: “. . . I gave my assistance to try to alleviate their sufferings. I asked the doctor at the hospital what I could get for them to eat. They wanted soup, but that I could not get; but I had a few cans of condensed milk to make some custard. I had doubts as to my success, for cooking with turtle eggs was something new to me, but the adage has it, “Nothing ventured, nothing done,” so I made a venture and the result was a very delicious custard. . . .”

### Questions:

What kind of experiences did Taylor experience during the war?

How did Taylor help during the conflict?



## Resource #15

### The Battle of Fort Pulaski

#### Construction

By the early 1820s, the bustling port of Savannah, Georgia was in need of a larger river fortification. Preparations on what would become Fort Pulaski began in 1827. Upon graduation from West Point, Lt. Robert E. Lee, the future Confederate general, was in charge of designing the series of canals and earthworks that drained excess water from Cockspur Island, site of construction located slightly east of Savannah, Georgia. This step was necessary to provide an adequate foundation for fort construction.

Laborers included military servicemen, skilled masons, and carpenters, as well as hundreds of slaves (hired out from owners) all of whom battled the humid southern heat as well as mosquitoes that caused yellow fever and malaria outbreaks. From 1829 to 1847, construction on the massive two story fort was intermittent. Conditions were so bad in the summer that work was sometimes halted for months.

The completed two tier structure is a truncated hexagon that faces east. Included is a demilune, moat, two powder magazines, and a parade ground about the size of a football field. Local brownish "Savannah Gray" brick is found in the lower walls. The rose red brick is from Baltimore, Maryland, and Alexandria, Virginia. The latter is harder than the "Savannah Grays" so is used in the arches and embrasures. "Savannah Grays" were handmade by slaves at Henry McAphin's plantation, the Hermitage, outside Savannah.

#### Civil War

Though completed in 1847, Fort Pulaski was under the control of only two caretakers until 1860 when South Carolina seceded from the United States and set in motion the Civil War. It was at this time that Georgia governor Joseph E. Brown ordered Fort Pulaski to be taken by the state of Georgia. A steamship carrying 110 men from Savannah traveled down river and the fort was signed over and now belonged to the state of Georgia. Following the secession of Georgia in February 1861, the state joined the Confederate States of America. Confederate troops then moved into the fort and prepared for possible attack.

In 1862, Fort Pulaski was considered invincible. Its 7-1/2-foot solid brick walls were backed with massive piers of masonry. The broad waters of the Savannah River and wide swampy marshes surrounded the fort on all sides. Ships of the Navy could not safely come within effective range of this citadel, and there was no firm ground on which land batteries could be erected nearer than Tybee Island, from 1 to 2-1/2 miles away. All previous military experience had taught that beyond a distance of 700 yards smoothbore guns and mortars would have little chance to break through heavy masonry walls, and beyond 1,000 yards no chance at all.



## Resource #15

### The Battle of Fort Pulaski (cont'd)

In referring to Fort Pulaski, the United States Chief of Engineers, General Totten, said “you might as well bombard the Rocky Mountains.” General Lee, himself, standing on the parapet of the fort with Colonel Olmstead, pointed to the shore of Tybee Island and remarked, “Colonel, they will make it pretty warm for you here with shells, but they cannot breach your walls at that distance.” In the minds of the experts a long-range bombardment would merely serve to pave the way for a direct assault.

On the morning of April 10, 1862 Union forces asked for the surrender of the Fort to prevent needless loss of life. Colonel Charles H. Olmstead, commander of the Confederate garrison, rejected the offer. The men in the fort learned that they had little to fear from the Federal mortars. Early on 10-inch and 13-inch mortar shells exploded high in the air or fell outside the fort. The few that dropped on the parade buried themselves in the ground and, on exploding, threw up harmless geysers of mud. Whenever a ponderous solid shot from a columbiad landed squarely on the wall, however, the whole fort quivered and shook.

At noon observers on Tybee counted 47 scars on the south flank, pancoupe, and southeast face of the fort, and it was already obvious that several of the embrasures were considerably enlarged. During the afternoon the fire slackened on both sides, and after sunset not more than 7 or 8 shells an hour were thrown until daylight the next morning. At the end of the day to observers on Tybee, the fort, notwithstanding its dents and scars, looked nearly as solid and capable of resistance as when fire was opened in the morning. There was a general feeling among the Union soldiers that the day’s work had not greatly hastened the surrender. The mortars had proved a disappointment and the effect of the breaching fire could not be definitely determined. Although there had been many narrow escapes, no one had been hurt in the Federal batteries.

Had Gillmore been able to inspect the fort at the end of the first day, he would have had reason to rejoice. The place was in shambles. Nearly all of the barbette guns and mortars bearing upon Tybee had been dismantled and only two of the five casemate guns were in order. At the southeast angle, the whole wall from the crest of the parapet to the moat was flaked away to a depth of from 2 to 4 feet.

On Friday morning, at daylight, the bombardment reopened with fresh vigor on both sides. Pulaski had repaired some of her guns during the night and now directed her barbette fire with considerable precision and rapidity. From Tybee, Gillmore’s gunners resumed the work of breaching with determination, and the effect was almost immediately apparent in the enlargement of the two embrasures on the left of the southeast face of the fort. Pulaski’s fire was far less accurate than that of the Federals. The batteries on Tybee were nearly all masked behind a low sand ridge and were also protected by heavy sandbag revetments. Most of the Confederate shot and shell buried themselves in the beach or traveled completely over the Federal batteries and trenches.



## Resource #15

### The Battle of Fort Pulaski (cont'd)

The moment had come for Olmstead to make a decision. There were only two courses open. He could fight on against overwhelming odds, or he could admit defeat. It must have been a difficult choice for the gallant 25-year-old colonel to make. Impressed by the utter hopelessness of the situation and believing the lives of the garrison to be his next care, he gave the order for surrender. The Confederate flag was lowered half way and a final gun was fired from a casemate. Then the flag was hauled down and the white sheet took its place. An old era in coastal fortifications had come to an end.

On Tybee there was wild rejoicing. Men danced together on the beach, shook hands, and cheered General Gillmore as he rode along the line. In Colonel Olmstead's quarters by the half-light of candles, the officers of the fort gave up their swords to General Hunter's representative, Maj. Charles G. Halpine. The weapons were laid on a table, and each officer, according to his rank, advanced in turn, mentioned his name and title, and spoke a few words appropriate to the occasion. Said Colonel Olmstead, "I yield my sword, but I trust I have not disgraced it."

The men of the garrison were formed by companies on the parade, stacked their arms, and marched to quarters for the night. The Stars and Stripes was then raised over the ramparts, and Pulaski again became part of the possessions, as well as the property, of the Union. Terms of the surrender were unconditional.

In its relation to the total strategy of the Civil War, the reduction of Fort Pulaski was important. The blockade directed against the South was materially strengthened by the acquisition of this fortress in the mouth of the Savannah River. After the surrender, Northern troops occupied the fort and commanded the entrance to the principal port of Georgia. It thus served as one of the many pincers that throttled the economic life of the South.

When viewed in larger perspective, however, an even greater significance may be attached to the battle for the once-great fort. "The result of this bombardment," General Hunter declared in his report to the Secretary of War, "must cause a change in the construction of fortifications as radical as that foreshadowed in naval architecture by the conflict between the Monitor and Merrimac. No works of stone or brick can resist the impact of rifled artillery of heavy calibre." Subsequent events verified this prophetic statement, and the Fort Pulaski incident may be considered one of the many mileposts in history. The strategy that had guided military experts had to be revised to meet the threat of a new weapon of war, and Fort Pulaski, because of the consequent changes, has become an interesting relic of another age.



## Resource #8

## General David Hunter's Orders