



# LESSON PLAN:

## FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE AT ARLINGTON

*High School (9-12)*

### OVERVIEW:

Students analyze primary documents related to the end of Freedman's Village, which was previously located at Arlington National Cemetery. Freedman's Village was a community of freed African Americans established on the former Arlington estate in 1863. In 1887, the government decided to close Freedman's Village and evict the residents. After analyzing documents and summarizing the arguments on both sides of the question—should Freedman's Village be closed or remain open?—students choose their own stance and respond to a reflection question. For an extension opportunity, students can write a letter to the secretary of war detailing what they think should be done.

Resources include quotes, images, and analyzation worksheets. Resources are flexible and can be used in a variety of ways.

**Estimated time:** 1-2 class periods, 60-90 minutes total

### STANDARDS:

Social studies standards vary by state. This lesson can be used to teach the following standards and similar wording may be found in your state standards.

#### Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

#### National Council for the Social Studies Standards

- NCSS.D2.His.1.9-12: Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- NCSS.D2.His.2.9-12: Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
- NCSS.D2.His.3.9-12: Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- NCSS.D2.His.16.9-12: Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will explain why Freedman's Village was created, how it assisted those who lived there, and ways that it did not address the needs of a newly freed population.
- Students will identify:
  - The attitude of primary document authors toward Freedman's Village and its residents.
  - Arguments used by the military and Department of War to remove residents of Freedman's Village.
  - Arguments used by residents and supporters of the Village to support their continued residence or to request compensation for their losses.
- Students will use primary documents to draw conclusions and make inferences about:
  - Challenges faced by African Americans during and after Reconstruction.
  - The role of Freedman's Village and other communities in supporting the integration of newly freed people.

## RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Freedman's Village PowerPoint
- Primary Sources (1 source per group, 1 or more copies per group)
- Village Fast Facts (varies, from 1 or more copies for group 6 to 1 copy per group)
- Village Worksheets (1 worksheet per group, copies for each student in group)
- Primary Source Analysis Graphic Organizer, if needed
- Rubric, if grading

## LESSON ACTIVITIES:

Before teaching this lesson, students should already have a basic understanding of the challenges faced by newly freed African Americans.

- Introduction: 5 minutes
  - Display PowerPoint Slide 1:
    - Quick review of prior knowledge: Students have learned about slavery in the United States. They have learned about the Civil War and Reconstruction. They have learned how the lives of former slaves changed once their rights were legally recognized.
  - Display PowerPoint Slide 2:
    - Set purpose: Today we're going to consider ownership, property rights, and fairness. We're going back in time: to Virginia in 1887. It's been 22 years since the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment ended slavery in all parts of the U.S. Living outside Washington, D.C. in Virginia, you've heard rumors about the closure of Freedman's Village at Arlington. Naturally you have lots of questions



- Display PowerPoint Slide 3:
  - Some sample questions are shown. Students may share their own questions.
- Explain Activity: 10 minutes
  - Display PowerPoint Slide 4
    - Activity Overview: Working in groups, students will gather information so that they can answer the displayed questions and form their own opinions about what should be done.
  - Display PowerPoint Slide 5: Research Groups
    - Depending on class size, student abilities, and time available, students should be divided into 4-6 research groups. Each group will receive 1 or more copies of their primary resource and individual copies of the accompanying worksheet.
    - Groups: As you read today, you want to focus on the opinions and arguments the writers use. What do they think should be done about the village? How do they try to persuade you to agree with them?
      - **Resident Experts:** You'll be reading a letter written by one of the villagers to the government. He wrote this after a community meeting to discuss what action the villagers should take.
      - **Government Experts:** You'll be reading the official government correspondence that leads to the village being closed.
      - **Public Opinion A:** You'll be reading a newspaper article that appeared shortly after the residents found out about the village possibly being closed.
      - **Village History A:** You'll be reading parts of the same article, but your sections will focus more on the history of the village so we can find out what this village is and who lives there.
      - **Public Opinion B:** You'll be reading an article that was written a couple of years after these events take place.
      - **Village History B:** Your document includes images and information to round out our understanding of the village, especially its history and residents.
    - If only creating 4 or 5 student groups, it is recommended that all groups have a copy of Freedman's Village Fast Facts document (eliminating Village History B group). If only using 4 student groups, eliminate Public Opinion B group (Newspaper Article #3: Evening Star article).
- Activity: 20- 30 minutes
  - In groups or individually, students read their primary source document and fill out the front page of the corresponding worksheet. If students fill out the worksheets individually, give them time (5-10 minutes) to discuss their answers with their groups before moving on. They can also start to fill in the chart on the back.



- Depending on students' literacy skills and familiarity with primary resources, they may benefit from using a graphic organizer to assist in their analysis. If you or your school district do not already have a standard format, the "Optional Analysis Organizer" included with this lesson may be used. Additional organizers can be found by searching for commonly used acronyms, such as HIPPO or SOAPS.
- About the Resources and Groups:
  - **Resident Experts:** When the villagers heard about the closure of the village, they had a meeting to discuss what they should do. They had John Syphax write a letter to Secretary of War William Endicott to ask about the situation and argue their cause. Syphax outlined the circumstances of the residents and their contributions to both the government and the community. If they cannot stay on the land, he asked that each homeowner receive \$350 in compensation.
  - **Government Experts:** This series of letters began with the superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery requesting the removal of the villagers because they were suspected of cutting down hundreds of trees at the cemetery for firewood. In response, the quartermaster general of the Army informed the secretary of war that the villagers were in violation of an Army regulation banning civilians from residing on military reservations. The request for removal was approved. Because these are military documents, the tone is typically straightforward and factual. Some language in Commerford's letter suggests that he was unsympathetic to the villagers. You may want to point out to this group that some residents of the village were employed at Fort Myer, located next to the cemetery, and that the commanding officer at Fort Myer wanted to keep the village open.
  - **Public Opinion A:** The New York Herald article is sympathetic to the residents and argues that they are being unfairly driven out primarily to satisfy those who want to develop the valuable land. The article emphasizes the sacrifices and improvements made by the villagers. The article also mentions the possibility that the events are influenced by local white residents' unhappiness with villagers voting. The newspaper article is a contemporary outside view on the events.
  - **Public Opinion B:** The Evening Star article was published in 1890, the year that the remaining residents were evicted. The tone of the article is less sympathetic to the residents (and even hostile at times). The article mentions that villagers lost their suffrage (right to vote) because they were residing on land that was owned by the federal government. It also gives some background and details about the village.
  - **Village History A:** Portions of the excerpts from the Herald article are identical to those in Newspaper Article #1; however, this excerpt focuses on the history of the village. Again, the Herald article is sympathetic to the villagers.
  - **Village History B:** While the text is not from a primary source, the drawing and map of the village, along with the picture of Sojourner Truth, are all primary



sources. This document provides facts about the estate and village that are not available in the other documents and will help give students a fleshed-out knowledge of the village’s history.

- Discussion: 15-25 minutes
  - Slide 6 and worksheets: As a whole class, discuss the Table on the back of the worksheets. What were some reasons for closing the village? What were reasons to keep it open?

Possible Answers: Reasons to Continue Freedman’s Village	Possible Answers: Reasons to Close Freedman’s Village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many villagers work for the government, including those who work at Fort Myer</li> <li>• Villagers paid for their homes</li> <li>• Different government agents made them think they would be able to stay permanently</li> <li>• Villagers have planted trees, built churches, and made other improvements</li> <li>• Villagers had been treated unfairly: slavery, losing money in the Freedman’s Bank, failed colony attempt in Haiti (Hayti)</li> <li>• Villagers have paid taxes and been underpaid for their work</li> <li>• Villagers are good community members who work hard</li> <li>• Villagers should not be kicked out for land developers</li> <li>• Villagers should not be evicted in the winter</li> <li>• No proof villagers cut trees for firewood</li> <li>• If evicted, villagers should be paid for their homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official reason: Army regulations forbid civilians living on a military reservation</li> <li>• High crime rates in the village</li> <li>• Villagers were a financial burden to the larger (mostly white) Alexandria community</li> <li>• Villagers did not pay local taxes (residing on federal government land), but used local services to fund education (may argue that the federal government should pay for education services)</li> <li>• Villagers were cutting down trees in the cemetery for firewood</li> <li>• The land the village was on was valuable for development</li> <li>• The cemetery could not expand without the village closing</li> <li>• Because of the size of the village, the African American residents had a big impact on local elections as they would typically vote for the same candidate</li> </ul>

- Slide 7: Once you have completed your lists, you can discuss other questions, such as:
  - Are the only options to keep the village open or to close it? What else could be done?
  - Since Army regulations forbid civilians from living on the property, what could be a solution to this problem?
  - If the village has to close, is there a way to make things more “fair” for the residents?



- Look at the lists we've made. What reasons do you find to be compelling? Why do you think those reasons are important or worth considering?
  - What reasons do you think are *not* convincing? What makes these arguments weak?
  - How might your knowledge of what happened after the village closed influence which reasons you find more likely?
    - For instance, one possible reason for closing the village is the value of the land. We know that the land wasn't developed commercially and became part of Arlington National Cemetery.
  - Houston Hartsfield Holloway was a blacksmith, teacher, and minister. He was also enslaved from his birth in 1844 until 1865. While he never lived in the village, he wrote in his autobiography about his experience with emancipation. A well-known line from his autobiography is: "For we colored people did not know how to be free and the white people did not know how to have a free colored person about them."
    - How might this quote be supported by the circumstances of Freedman's Village?
    - What circumstances of Freedman's Village would contradict this quote?
- Reflection: 10-15 minutes
    - Slide 8 and worksheets: Students now have time to consider the Reflection Question on the back of the page. What are their own opinions? What do they think would be fair or right?
  - Note: If students need shortened versions of the primary sources, these can be found in the middle school lesson. Newspaper Article #3 is not available in a shortened version.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS:

During the Civil War, and directly afterward, the population of newly freed Blacks in and around Washington D.C. increased dramatically. Newly freed people were also called "freedmen" or "contrabands." (The name "contraband" was used because in the South, slaves were classified as property. Enemy property captured by the U.S. Army was considered contraband and would not be returned. You can read more about the name and the official U.S. policy here: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/fort-monroe-and-the-contrabands-of-war.htm>) Among the difficulties faced by these displaced refugees, the needs for housing, food and employment to support themselves and their families were primary. To address these needs, the federal government established "contraband camps" throughout the city. However, overcrowding and poor sanitation made these camps difficult places to live.



Arlington Plantation, the home of Confederate General Robert E. Lee (which was actually owned by his wife, Mary Custis Lee), had been seized by the U.S. Army in 1861, shortly after Virginia seceded and the Lee family fled south. The high ground overlooking Washington, D.C. was an important strategic position for the military to hold. In 1864, part of the estate became a military cemetery.

By 1863, government officials were looking for a site for a new contraband camp and ultimately chose a portion of the Arlington Estate. Unlike other camps of the time, Freedman's Village eventually became a permanent settlement for formerly enslaved persons. While residents were encouraged to learn skills, find work and only live in the village temporarily, some chose to remain there for years. Noted abolitionist and former slave Sojourner Truth lived in the village for a year, helping to educate and train residents. Over the years, the population of the village fluctuated between 1,000 and 3,000 residents. Residents established schools, churches, and a home for the aged and infirm. The village provided many individuals with a chance to acquire necessary skills and experiences as they constructed lives outside of slavery.

However, the village was not free of problems. Without a civil government, the residents were under military rule and then the jurisdiction of the federal government's Freedmen's Bureau, established in 1865. Residents were required to work for the federal government or to have another means of employment. The government pressured them to sign work contracts, which many African Americans were reluctant to do, fearing that they were signing their way back into slavery. Moreover, managing social services in Freedman's Village proved challenging. Conditions in the home for the aged, for example, were poor: in 1867, a hospital surgeon noted in a letter that there was insufficient heat, cleanliness, and attention to residents' needs.

As early as 1868, the federal government made efforts to close the village and move residents out. However, the village survived until 1887. In December 1887, the Army informed villagers that they had 90 days to relocate. The deadline lapsed as Major Carpenter, the commanding officer at Fort Myer who was ordered to remove the villagers, called for an investigation that included a survey, a census, and an evaluation of property. As the investigation went on, however, many residents moved away. In 1888, 763 people still lived in the village. In 1890, the remaining 150 families moved, and the Army tore down the remaining buildings. In 1900, Congress appropriated \$75,000 to pay the villagers and settle the debt owed to them. Former residents or their descendants were also paid.

Today, no trace of Freedman's Village remains at Arlington National Cemetery. While the exact boundaries of the village are unknown, part of it was situated on what are now Sections 4, 8, 20 and 34.

While the buildings of Freedman's Village were torn down, the community that residents built did not collapse. Residents used what they had learned during their time there to form other Black communities in the Arlington area. (Three of these communities—Green Valley, Hall's Hill, and Johnson's Hill—still



exist and some local families can trace their family history to Freedman's Village.) They took with them the skills they had learned, the educations they had gained, and the organizations (including churches) that they had created. Organizations that began in the village and continue in Arlington today include the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows and Mt. Olive and Mt. Zion Baptist churches.

The federal government's official reason for closing the village was that Army regulations forbade civilians from residing on military reservations. However, there were other considerations that probably influenced the decision to close the village. Students will read about these reasons and draw their own conclusions about why the village was closed.

## LESSON EXTENSIONS:

- Share examples of student work with Arlington National Cemetery by posting pictures on Twitter with the hashtag #ANCEducation or #BlackHistoryANC. Remember to follow your school/district's student privacy and social media policies.
- Extended Writing Activity: students can use their reflection response to write a letter to Secretary of War William Endicott in 1887.
- Further Discussion Topics: (included in PowerPoint)
  - The U.S. Army controlled the Arlington property throughout the Civil War, but the Lee family retained ownership. In 1862, Mary Custis Lee attempted to pay the property tax on Arlington by sending her cousin to pay the bill in person. The commissioners refused to accept payment from anyone but Mary Custis Lee, declared the property to be in default, and sold it to the federal government at auction for \$26,800 (below the assessed value). When George Washington Custis Lee inherited Arlington Estate on the death of his mother in 1873, he went to court because he felt that his rights as a landowner had been violated due to the way the government originally took control of the land in 1862. In 1882, the Supreme Court sided with GWC Lee, and the land was restored to Lee, who then sold it to the government for \$150,000. This was done despite the fact that Lee had served as a Confederate officer and rebelled against the U.S. government.
    - How does Lee's treatment contrast with the treatment of the villagers?
    - Are some rights (such as property) respected more than others? (by society, government, the courts, etc.) How can all rights be equally respected?
    - What should be done when different groups have rights that seem to be in conflict?
  - In an 1865 speech titled "What the Black Man Wants," Frederick Douglass said:
    - "What have you asked the Black men of the South... to do? ... You have asked us to call down, not only upon ourselves, but upon our children's children, the deadly





hate of the entire Southern people...You have called upon us to expose ourselves to all the subtle machinations of their malignity for all time. And now, what do you propose to do when you come to make peace? To reward your enemies, and trample in the dust your friends? ...Do you intend to sacrifice them and reward your enemies? Do you mean to give your enemies the right to vote, and take it away from your friends? Is that wise policy? Is that honorable? Could American honor withstand such a blow? I do not believe you will do it. I think you will see to it that we have the right to vote.”

- In what ways could the closure of Freedman’s Village be said to “reward [Northern] enemies, and trample in the dust” African American friends?
- “...in regard to the colored people there is always more that is benevolent, I perceive, than just, manifested towards us. What I ask for the negro is not benevolence, not pity, not sympathy, but simply *justice*. The American people have always been anxious to know what they shall do with us... Everybody has asked the question... “What shall we do with the negro?” I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us! Your doing with us has already played the mischief with us. Do nothing with us! ... And if the negro cannot stand on his own legs, let him fall also. All I ask is, give him a chance to stand on his own legs! Let him alone! ... If you will only untie his hands, and give him a chance, I think he will live.”
  - In what ways did Freedman’s Village provide freed people with justice? In what ways did it fall short of justice?
  - What changes do you think Douglass would have suggested to Freedman’s Village? What do you think he would have approved about the village?
- In 1865, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, and a group of African American ministers, with Garrison Frazier as spokesperson, met in Savannah, Georgia to discuss the condition and needs of the newly freed Black population. Frazier was a Baptist minister and had been a slave until 1857. The recommendations of Frazier and the other ministers included:
  - “The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor...and we can soon maintain ourselves and have something to spare... We want to be placed on land until we are able to buy it and make it our own.”
  - “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.”
  - How was Freedman’s Village an opportunity to try the ministers’ recommendations?
  - How did Freedman’s Village fall short of what the ministers recommended?
  - The transcribed text of the meeting can be found here:  
<http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/savmtg.htm>



- The original newspaper article can be found here:  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1865-02-13/ed-1/seq-5/>
- Explore these additional sources for more information and lessons about Reconstruction:
  - A National Archives lesson about the Freedmen’s Bureau:  
<https://www.docsteach.org/activities/teacher/how-effective-were-the-efforts-of-the-freedmens-bureau>
  - Other National Archives Civil War and Reconstruction Lessons:  
<https://www.docsteach.org/activities/activities?fe=czoXOil1js=&rt=aMt7hY99gB6Y>
  - A Library of Congress lesson about problems African Americans faced during Reconstruction. Students use LOC resources to research:  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/reconstruction/>
  - National Endowment for the Humanities Reconstruction Lesson:  
<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/lesson-3-battle-over-reconstruction-aftermath-reconstruction>
  - Additional primary documents related to Emancipation can be found in the Freedman’s Village Bibliography under the “Further Reading” section. Most of these documents have been transcribed and offer a variety of first-hand accounts of the experiences of people of differing backgrounds during the Reconstruction era.



## Planning a Visit to Arlington National Cemetery?



Nothing remains of Freedman’s Village on the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery. However, Section 27 has the graves of around 3,800 citizens or civilians. While they were not residents of Freedman’s Village, they were former slaves who lived in the Washington, D.C. region. If you are interested in more information and discussion questions to use with your class during a visit to the cemetery, a detailed walking tour is available on ANC’s website.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# RESIDENT EXPERT

1

## Villagers to Government

When the villagers learned that the government was going to close the village, they held a meeting to determine what should be done. They chose John B. Syphax to write a letter to the secretary of war. Syphax was the son of Maria Carter Syphax, whose white half-sister, Mary Custis Lee, inherited the Arlington Estate.

## READING QUESTIONS

1. What is Syphax’s attitude toward Secretary of War Endicott? What words or phrases from the letter support your conclusion?

Answers will vary. Example: Syphax is very respectful of the Secretary. He “begs leave” to present facts for Endicott’s “honorable consideration”

2. According to Syphax, why did residents of the village believe that they would be able to stay and have some claim to the land?

Agents made them think they’d have a claim to part of the land. When some returned from Hayti, they were told they’d remain. They were allowed to build an expensive church.

3. What improvements did the residents make to their homes and the village?

They planted trees and made unspecified improvements. They built a church and new houses.

4. If residents are forced to move, what does Syphax ask for in compensation?

\$350 for each homeowner

5. What is Syphax’s opinion about closing the village? Do you agree with him? Why or Why not?

Answers will vary, but Syphax is against closing the village



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# GOVERNMENT EXPERT

2

## Cemetery, Army, Gov't

The decision to close Freedman's Village began with the letter from J.A. Commerford on November 12, 1887. Commerford was the superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery. The letter was sent to S.B. Holabird, the quartermaster general of the Army. Holabird then sent a letter to the secretary of war who decided what should be done about the village. The U.S. government had purchased the Arlington land, and regulations for government-owned land differed from those for privately owned land.

## READING QUESTIONS

1. What is Commerford's attitude toward the residents of Freedman's Village? What words or phrases from the letter support your conclusion?

He has a negative view of them. He calls them "squatters" and lumps them all in with those who are cutting down the trees and stealing wood.

2. Commerford accuses the villagers of cutting down trees. Is cutting down the trees really such a big problem? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

3. Commerford says that removal of the villagers is the most effective way to prevent theft. Do you agree? Is there another solution they could try?

Answers will vary.

4. In Holabird's letter he barely mentions Commerford's original concern. Why do you think that is?

Answers will vary.

5. What are the opinions of the cemetery, army, and government about closing the village? Do you agree with them? Why or Why not?

Answers will vary, but they're planning to close the village.



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# PUBLIC OPINION A

3

## Newspaper Article #1:

The New York Herald sent a reporter to observe the village and speak to residents as part of his research for the article. Published on December 8, 1887, the article is a contemporary view of the situation. The article is not an objective presentation of facts: the author has a decided viewpoint. Your excerpt includes sections of the article that focus on possible reasons the closure is happening.

## READING QUESTIONS

1. What is Burkau’s attitude toward the residents of Freedman’s Village? What words or phrases from the letter support your conclusion?

Answers will vary. Ex: Burkau supports the villagers. His language is sympathetic to the villagers. He says they’re being “deprived,” they’re “honest,” but also “helpless.” The war department is suffering from a “curious trick.” They’ve been “deluded,” etc.

2. What evidence does the article give that residents are possibly being treated unfairly?

Answers will vary. Ex: They aren’t being compensated for their property. The charges “are believed to be wholly unfounded.”

3. Burkau suggests that the superintendent of Arlington Cemetery isn’t doing his job well. Do you agree with Burkau? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

4. The article suggests 3 other reasons that people may want to close the village. What are these reasons?

1. Build a park  
2. Build Mt. Vernon Ave  
3. Whites unhappy with the Black vote

5. What are the writer’s opinions about closing the village? Do you agree with him? Why or Why not?

Answers will vary, but the writer is against closing the village.



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# VILLAGE HISTORY A

4

## Newspaper Article #2:

The New York Herald sent a reporter to observe the village and speak to residents as part of his research for the article. Published on December 8, 1887, the article is a contemporary view of the situation. The article is not an objective presentation of facts: the author has a decided viewpoint. Your excerpt includes sections of the article that focus on the history of the village.

## READING QUESTIONS

1. What is Burkau’s attitude toward the residents of Freedman’s Village? What words or phrases from the letter support your conclusion?

Answers will vary. Ex: Burkau supports the villagers. His language is sympathetic to the villagers. He says they’re being “deprived,” they’re “honest,” but also “helpless.” The war department is suffering from a “curious trick.” They’ve been “deluded,” etc.

2. What evidence does the article give that residents are possibly being treated unfairly?

Answers will vary. Ex: They aren’t being compensated for their property. The charges “are believed to be wholly unfounded.”

3. When did the village begin? Why was it needed at the time?

The article makes it seem that it began in 1862. The village was needed because the increase in the freed slave population. They were housed together for sanitary and disciplinary reasons.

4. What improvements have the residents made to the village?

Houses are whitewashed. They’ve built a church. They built additions to the homes. They purchased books and sent their kids to school.

5. What are the writer’s opinions about closing the village? Do you agree with him? Why or Why not?

Answers will vary, but the writer is against closing the village.

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# PUBLIC OPINION B

5

## Newspaper Article #3:

This Washington D.C. Evening Star article was published almost 3 years after the village was initially ordered to close. While written a couple of years later, the article is still a contemporary view of the situation. The article is not an objective presentation of facts: the author has a decided viewpoint. Your excerpt includes sections that focus on the village’s history and possible reasons for the closure.

## READING QUESTIONS

1. What is the writer’s attitude toward the residents of Freedman’s Village? What words or phrases from the letter support your conclusion?

Answers will vary. Ex: The writer is not sympathetic to them. He says they paid rent by “sitting on the grass to keep it from growing” which shows that he thinks they’re lazy. But he also say’s they’re a “moral, law-abiding and industrious people.”

2. What evidence does the article give that residents are possibly being treated unfairly?

Answers will vary. Ex: They improved their homes and paid cash for them. They were allowed to build a church, which made them think they’d be allowed to stay. They can’t vote.

3. What evidence does the article give that residents don’t deserve to be compensated?

Answers will vary. Ex: He says they paid rent by sitting on the grass to keep it from growing. The buildings are dilapidated. He calls the location a “crap pasture.”

4. The article suggests other reasons that people may want to close the village. What are these reasons?

The cemetery is being expanded. They aren’t able to vote living on government land. People in Alexandria are unhappy about how the village looks.

5. What are the writer’s opinions about closing the village? Do you agree with him? Why or Why not?

Answers will vary

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# VILLAGE HISTORY B

6

## Freedman's Village Fast Facts

In addition to 3 primary source images (2 contemporary drawings and 1 photograph of a resident), this page contains additional background information about the history of the village.

## READING QUESTIONS

1. When did the village begin? Why was it needed at the time?  
The village began in 1863. Fugitive slaves (contrabands) were moving to Washington D.C. and there wasn't adequate housing in the district.
2. Is there evidence that the village is still needed in 1887?  
Answers will vary; may include: people were living there permanently.
3. What happened to make the future of the village uncertain?  
Lee sued to remove the village and cemetery. The Supreme Court ruled for him and the government had just paid him for the land.
4. What advantages were available to newly freed Blacks who came to live in the village?  
Answers will vary
5. In what ways could the village be considered a disappointment?  
Answers will vary
6. Do you think the village should be closed or remain open? Use information from this resource to support your opinion.  
Answers will vary





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**ALL WORKSHEETS** (back)

**1 - 6**

Reasons to Continue Freedman's Village	Reasons to Close Freedman's Village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many villagers work for the government, including those who work at Fort Myer</li> <li>• Villagers paid for their homes</li> <li>• Different government agents made them think they'd be able to stay permanently</li> <li>• Villagers have planted trees, built churches, and made other improvements</li> <li>• Villagers had been treated unfairly: slavery, losing money in the Freedman's Bank, failed colony attempt in Haiti (Hayti)</li> <li>• Villagers have paid taxes and been underpaid for their work</li> <li>• Villagers are good community members who work hard</li> <li>• Villagers shouldn't be kicked out for land developers</li> <li>• Villagers shouldn't be evicted in the winter</li> <li>• No proof villagers cut trees for firewood</li> <li>• If evicted, villagers should be paid for their homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official reason: Army regulations forbid civilians living on a military reservation</li> <li>• High crime rates in the village</li> <li>• Villagers were a financial burden to the larger (mostly white) Alexandria community</li> <li>• Villagers don't pay local taxes (residing on federal government land), but use local services to fund education (may argue that the federal government should pay for education services)</li> <li>• Villagers were cutting down trees in the cemetery for firewood</li> <li>• The land the village is on is valuable for development</li> <li>• Because of the size of the village, the African American residents had a big impact on local elections as they would typically vote for the same candidate</li> </ul>

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

Now that you have read and discussed different viewpoints about closing the village, what is your opinion? Should the residents of Freedman's Village be removed from Arlington? If so, are they entitled to any compensation? Are there other solutions or compromises that could benefit both the villagers and the government?

*Answers will vary*

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period:

## RUBRIC

Use this rubric to assess student achievement of expectations.

Criteria	1	2	3	4	Feedback
Student correctly answered questions about material in their primary source excerpt.					
Student correctly identified historical arguments that supported continuing or closing Freedman's Village.					
Student clearly stated what should be done about Freedman's Village.					
Viewpoint is supported with evidence and details from primary sources and class discussion.					
	Total:				

1 = criteria not met; 2 = criteria partially met; 3 = criteria met; 4 = exceeds expectations



## SOURCES:

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## FURTHER READING :

Summary of life after emancipation: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.01700/?sp=13>

Report on leasing abandoned southern lands: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.32000/?sp=7>

Collection of letters from military leadership about the "contrabands" under their command: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.08200/?sp=1>

1877 paper on "The Color Question" that proposed sending freed Blacks to colonize in Africa: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.14100/?sp=4>

1872 speech by Frederick Douglass defining self-made men and the importance of work: <http://www.frederick-douglass-heritage.org/self-made-men/>

Speech by historian Jean Edward Smith about Ulysses S. Grant: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2013/05/let-us-have-peace-remembering-general-ulysses-s-grant/>

A collection of transcribed primary documents related to Emancipation: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/sampdocs.htm>

Documents in this collection include:

- Regulations for Black laborers: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/cozzens.htm>
- An attempt by a former slave owner to possess people through apprenticeship: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Kamper.html>
- Contract between planter and freedpeople: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Penick.html>  
<http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/McIntosh.html>



- Resolutions to limit Black freedom:
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Elon%20resolutions.html>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Opelousas.html>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Williamson.htm>
- Letter to restrict settlement of freed Blacks: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Martin.html>
- Statement about a settlement of free Blacks who were forced to move: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Barker.html>
- A letter about abandoned lands and the freed people who worked them: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/French.html>
- A group's petition to continue working land: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Norvall.html>
- The desire of freed people to marry: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Randall.html>
- What freed people needed to get started: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/J%20Johnson.htm>
- Need for education: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Sweeny.html>
- Need for land: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Edisto%20petitions.htm>
- Letter reviewing Freedmen's Bureau conditions in Missouri and Arkansas: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/DHWilliams.html>
- Resentment of poor whites: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Lucas.html>
- Allegations of laziness: <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Fulton.html>
- Poor treatment of freed people:
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Webber.htm>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/MHoward.html>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Hill.html>
- Consequences of Black Codes:
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/we%20the%20Colorde%20people.html>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Holly.html>
- Attempts at intimidation:
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Head.htm>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Hopkins.html>
- Necessity of protecting the rights of African Americans:
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Roxborough%20et%20al.html>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Robison.html>
  - <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Cook%20et%20al.html>

## POWERPOINT IMAGES:

**Slide 1:** Brady National Photographic Art Gallery. *Contraband School*. Photograph. Between 1861-1865.  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529344> also <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014645761/>

**Slide 2:** Roberts & Fellows. *Lee's Mansion, Wash., D.C.* Photograph. Between 1860-1900.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017660677/>

**Slide 3:** Clockwise from top left

Waud, Alfred R. *Freedmans village—Green Heights Arlington, VA*. Drawing. 1864.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2004660337/>



Nast, Thomas. *Emancipation/Th. Nast; King & Baird, printers, 607 Sansom Street, Philadelphia*. Engraving. S. Bott: Philadelphia, PA, ca. 1865. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004665360/>

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Gibson, James F. [*Cumberland Landing, Va. Group of "contrabands" at Foller's house*]. Photograph. 1862. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cwpb.01005/>

**Slide 3 Background:** Fraser, Elizabeth. *Rain Gardens at ANC*. Photograph. Arlington, Virginia: Arlington National Cemetery, August 2, 2019. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/48438439151/in/album-72157710049066637/>

**Slide 4:** Waud, Alfred R. *Freedmans village—Green Heights Arlington, VA*. Drawing. 1864. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004660337/>

**Slide 5:** Clockwise from top left

Brady National Photographic Art Gallery. *Contraband School*. Photograph. Between 1861-1865. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/529344> also <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014645761/>

*William Crowninshield Endicott, Secretary of War, three-quarter-length portrait, standing, facing front*. Photograph. ca. 1886. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90714297/>

*Washington and Potomac from Arlington, Arlington, Va*. Photograph. Detroit Publishing Co., between 1895-1910. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/det.4a16463/>

Waud, Alfred R. *Freedmans village—Green Heights Arlington, VA*. Drawing. 1864. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004660337/>

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**Slide 9:** Fraser, Elizabeth. *Spring Snow Storm 2018*. Photograph. Arlington Virginia: Arlington National Cemetery, March 21, 2018. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/39136158770/in/album-72157693997238804/>

**Slide 10:** Fraser, Elizabeth. *Fall Foliage 2018*. Photograph. Arlington Virginia: Arlington National Cemetery, October 26, 2018. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/31744808358/in/album-72157699715767602/>

**Slide 11:** Fraser, Elizabeth. *Spring Horticulture Highlights 2019*. Photograph. Arlington Virginia: Arlington National Cemetery, April 17, 2019. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/46912910424/in/album-72157704412162142/>



## VILLAGE FAST FACTS:

**Page 1:** *Freedman's village, Arlington, Virginia.* Illustration. Harper's Weekly, v. 8, May 7, 1864.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/97514440/>

**Page 2:** *Freedmans Village near Arlington Hights, Va., July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1865. Genl. [ground] Plan No. 9.* Map. 1865.

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/305826>

**Page 2:** *Sojourner Truth. I sell the shadow to support the substance.* Photograph. 1864.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/lprbscsm.scsm0880/>