



LESSON PLAN:

THE FREEDPEOPLE OF SECTION 27

Middle School (6-8)

OVERVIEW:

Students learn about the lives of freed African Americans in the years surrounding the Civil War, through a class lecture and exploration of a burial record from Arlington National Cemetery. Students will write a short obituary for one of the African American civilians on the burial record.

Resources include a PowerPoint slide deck and Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Estimated time: 1-2 class periods, 70-90 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.WHST.6-8.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

- NCSS.D2.His.1.6-8: Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

International Society for Technology in Education Standards

- ISTE.Student.3a: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
- ISTE.Student.5b: Students collect data or identify relevant data sets, use digital tools to analyze them, and represent data in various ways to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will use spreadsheet data to answer questions about African American civilians buried in Section 27 of Arlington National Cemetery.
- Students will use spreadsheet data to write an obituary for a selected African American civilian buried in Section 27 of Arlington National Cemetery.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- The Freedpeople of Section 27 PowerPoint presentation
- The Freedpeople of Section 27 Teacher PowerPoint Guide
- The Freedpeople of Section 27 Burial Record spreadsheet
- Student access to a computer

LESSON ACTIVITIES

- Introduction/Anticipatory Set: 5 mins
 - Display PowerPoint Slide 1
 - Lead a discussion about Arlington National Cemetery – what is its purpose? Who is buried there? *Responses will vary, but it is most important to establish that Arlington National Cemetery is a military cemetery and it is a greatly honored place in American society.*
 - Share: Though Arlington National Cemetery is a military cemetery, there is actually a section where thousands of African American civilians were buried between 1864-1867.
 - Ask: Who do you think these people were? Why were they buried at Arlington National Cemetery?
 - After a few responses, share that in today's lesson you will be discussing who those people were and what life would have been like for them at that time.
- Lecture: 30-40 mins
 - Display PowerPoint Slides 2-7, use notes in the Freedpeople of Section 27 Teacher PowerPoint Guide to present a lecture on life for freedpeople in the years surrounding the Civil War
 - Slide 2: Slavery and African American Rights
 - Slide 3: The Freedmen's Bureau
 - Slide 4: Section 27
 - Slide 5: African Americans After War
 - Slide 6: African Americans After War
 - Slide 7: Discrimination and Prejudice



- Spreadsheet Activity: 20 mins
 - Request students open Section 27 Burial Record spreadsheet. During activity, teacher may choose to display PowerPoint slides or display own copy of spreadsheet
 - Orient students to information on spreadsheet and explain limitations of burial record (PowerPoint Slide 8)
 - Practice using Find feature (PowerPoint Slide 9)
 - Practice using Sort feature (PowerPoint Slide 10)
 - Use Sort to explore common causes of death (PowerPoint Slide 11)
 - Discuss what inferences you can make about life at that time based on common causes of death
 - Use Sort to explore addresses (PowerPoint Slide 12)
 - Discuss what historians could learn from addresses
- Obituary Assignment: 10-30 mins
 - Display PowerPoint Slide 14: Write an Obituary
 - Explain requirements for obituary assignment (as time allows, may be completed in class or at home). Students will write a short obituary for an individual on the Section 27 Burial Record spreadsheet that must include:
 - Name
 - Date of burial
 - Grave number
 - Age
 - Address
 - Cause of death
 - Paragraph describing one historic event from their lifetime and how that events may have affected the individual

LESSON EXTENSIONS:

- Share your students' Section 27 obituaries with Arlington National Cemetery by posting on Twitter using the hashtag #BlackHistoryANC.
- Plot the addresses from the burial records selected by students on a map of Washington, D.C. to see how freedpeople were distributed throughout the city at that time
- Read more about the history of freedpeople in Section 27 in historian Tim Dennee's paper presented to the 38th Annual Conference on D.C. Historical Studies, available online here: <https://38thdcstudiesconference.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/arlington-section27.pdf>



- Explore firsthand accounts and essays about African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Freedmen & Southern Society Project website here:
<http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/index.html>



Planning a Visit to Arlington National Cemetery?



Section 27 is located in the north end of the cemetery, by the Ord & Weitzel Gate. Graves of freedpeople and African American soldiers of the United States Colored Troops can be found in the section between the cemetery wall and Ord & Weitzel Drive. If students are interested in finding the individual they selected from the burial record, there is a grave number on the back of each headstone.




POWERPOINT GUIDE:

The Freedpeople of Section 27

Middle School (6-8)

Slide	Notes for Presentation
<p>Slide 1: The Freedpeople of Section 27</p> 	<p>Lead a discussion about Arlington National Cemetery – what is its purpose? Who is buried there? <i>Responses will vary, but it is most important to establish that Arlington National Cemetery is a military cemetery and it is a greatly honored place in American society.</i></p> <p><i>Share:</i> Though Arlington National Cemetery is a military cemetery, there is actually a section where thousands of African American civilians were buried between 1864-1867.</p> <p><i>Ask:</i> Who do you think these people were? Why were they buried at Arlington National Cemetery?</p> <p>After a few responses, share that in today's lesson you will be discussing who those people were and what life would have been like for them at that time.</p>
<p>Slide 2: Slavery and African American Rights</p> 	<p>In the years surrounding the Civil War, the status of former slaves or “freedpeople” was very uncertain. At the start of the Civil War, the U.S. Congress passed laws declaring that the U.S. Army could confiscate Confederate property – including slaves – and forbidding the return of slaves to Confederate slaveowners. Because of this, many enslaved people escaped to the protection of the Army and northern non-slaveholding states. They were considered “contraband” (smuggled, or illegally taken goods) and often lived in camps around U.S. Army forts.</p> <p>President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, which freed all enslaved people in the Confederacy. However, enslaved people in Union slave-owning states (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and</p>



	<p>Missouri) were not yet free. Slavery was not abolished nationwide until the 13th Amendment was passed in 1865.</p> <p>The 14th Amendment, which was passed in 1868, granted citizenship to all people born or naturalized in the United States – including formerly enslaved people – and guaranteed all citizens equal protection of the law.</p> <p>In 1870, the 15th Amendment was passed, which prohibited the federal government and each state from denying a citizen the right to vote based on that person’s “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”</p> <p>Despite the provisions of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, many states passed laws known as “Black Codes” that heavily restricted the rights and liberties of African Americans. Even in states that had strongly opposed slavery, many public spaces, institutions, and neighborhoods were segregated and African Americans faced intense discrimination and prejudice.</p>
<p>Slide 3: The Freedmen’s Bureau</p> <div><p>THE FREEDMEN’S BUREAU</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen’s Bureau) created to assist former slaves• Efforts included building hospitals, supporting education efforts, helping families reunite after the war, and providing legal assistance• Bureau efforts opposed by President Andrew Johnson and others in Congress<p><small>1865 illustration of people gathered outside the Freedmen’s Bureau in Richmond, Virginia (Library of Congress/James E. Taylor)</small></p></div>	<p>To assist former slaves as they established their new lives as freedpeople, the government created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (commonly known as the Freedmen’s Bureau). The Freedmen’s Bureau took on a number of tasks, including building hospitals, supporting education efforts, helping families reunite after the war, and providing legal assistance. However, President Andrew Johnson and other white southerners in Congress opposed many of the Bureau’s goals and limited its funding, so it was not as effective as its organizers hoped.</p>
<p>Slide 4: Section 27</p>	<p>One of the ways the federal government took responsibility for supporting freedpeople was to provide burial assistance. Depending on a family’s financial needs, this could include just providing a coffin and headstone, assisting with transporting remains to a private burial ground, or burial in a national cemetery.</p>



SECTION 27



Photo taken June 29, 1864 of the first graves in Arlington National Cemetery. (Chrysler Museum of Art/Andrew Joseph Russell)

- Government provided burial assistance for poor freedpeople
- National cemeteries created to accommodate military burials during Civil War
- Burials at Arlington National Cemetery began along northern edge, in today's Section 27
- Contrabands and freedpeople fell under government responsibility and if too poor to afford private burial could be buried in a national cemetery
- Civilian burials occurred at ANC from 1864-1867

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY HISTORY EDUCATION SERIES

National cemeteries, including Arlington National Cemetery, were created during the Civil War to accommodate the thousands of U.S. Army soldiers who died in battle or in military hospitals. At that time, most families preferred to bury their loved ones in a private cemetery close to home, and national cemeteries were mostly used when the family of a soldier was too poor to afford a proper burial.

Burials at Arlington National Cemetery began along the cemetery's northern edge, in an area known today as Section 27. The first burials were of white soldiers, but soon white government employees and dependents were included, and then Black soldiers.

Since contrabands and freedpeople fell under the care of the federal government through the Army and Freedmen's Bureau, those who lived and died around Washington, D.C. and were too poor to afford burial in a private cemetery could be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. This only occurred from 1864-1867; after 1867 the cemetery was reserved for military burials.

Slide 5: African Americans After War

AFRICAN AMERICANS AFTER WAR



1863 illustration of freedpeople following the Union army in Newbern, North Carolina. (Library of Congress)

- Freedpeople had to decide – stay in the South or seek opportunities in the North?
- Population of African Americans in Washington, D.C. tripled between 1860-1870
- Freedmen's Bureau built housing to accommodate rise in population

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We know very little about the specific lives of the freedpeople buried in Section 27, but let's discuss what conditions were like for African Americans in general in the years surrounding the Civil War.

As the U.S. Army marched south, freed slaves had to decide – should they remain where they were, since that was their home and they were more sure of being able to provide food and shelter for their families? Or should they move to the North or West, where they knew they would no longer be slaves, but may not have a place to live or work? Many chose to move, and in Washington, D.C., the African American population tripled between 1860-1870 as thousands of freedpeople sought protection from the Army and federal government and the opportunity to start a new life.



Slide 6: African Americans After War

AFRICAN AMERICANS AFTER WAR

1866 illustration of an African American school in Charleston, South Carolina. (Library of Congress/Alfred Waud)

- Churches became center of African American communities – place to organize for civil rights activism, education efforts, and job training
- Highly valued literacy and education
- African Americans influential in establishing public school systems and established a number of universities

To accommodate the sudden rise in population, the Freedmen's Bureau converted Army barracks in Washington D.C. into tenements and operated government farms in Maryland and Virginia where families could live and work. In 1864, a Freedman's Village and farm were built on land that was later incorporated into Arlington National Cemetery – ironically, the residents of the Freedman's Village were buried at other cemeteries and are not the freedpeople in Section 27.

Like many white Americans, African Americans throughout the United States built communities centered around churches. Attending church was both a religious and a social activity. Families gathered at church to worship, but also to organize for civil rights activism, education efforts, and job training.

African Americans also highly valued literacy and education. Many African American communities worked with the Freedmen's Bureau and Northern aid societies to build schools and recruit teachers, and African American voters and legislators advocated for some of the first public school systems in the United States. A number of universities for African Americans were also established, including Washington, D.C.'s Howard University in 1867, named after General Oliver Otis Howard, the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau.

Slide 7: Discrimination and Prejudice

DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE

1877 illustration of convicts cleaning the streets of Richmond, Virginia. (Library of Congress)

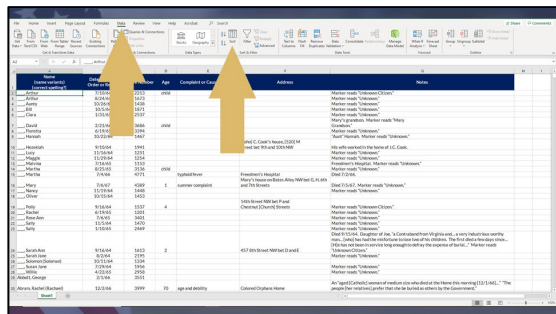
- Schools, hospitals, churches, public transportation, and neighborhoods segregated
- Black Codes restricted African American rights and targeted them for arrest
- Convicted African Americans forced back into unpaid hard labor
- Forcible apprenticeship laws allowed children to be taken from parents and apprenticed to former slaveowners
- Freedmen's Bureau attempted to legally assist

Though slavery had been abolished, African Americans still faced intense discrimination and prejudice. Institutions such as schools, hospitals, and churches were segregated, as well as public transportation systems and neighborhoods. Individual states passed laws known as Black Codes that restricted the rights of African Americans and made them easy targets for arrest. Since the 13th Amendment still allowed for slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime, many African Americans were forced back into unpaid hard labor for "crimes" as minor as not having a job or being outside at





Slide 10: Sort



- Use Find to look up Casey Muddy's cause of death.
"taken sick 4th July from drinking ice water"

The next skill is Sorting, which allows you to arrange data in ways that are easier to analyze. You can Sort by clicking on Data in the Ribbon, then Sort. Select which column you would like to sort by, then the order you would like it sorted by (for instance, sort the cell values alphabetically, A to Z).

Suggested Sort exercises:

- Sort the spreadsheet by Grave Number. What is the smallest grave number? *1098*
- Sort the spreadsheet by Name, alphabetically. How many Unknown burials are there? *385 (376 singular Unknowns, plus five Unknown men, two Unknown children, and two Unknown infants)*

Slide 11: Data Insights

★ DATA INSIGHTS

- What were some of the most common causes of death?
- What inferences can you make about people's lives based on these common diseases and causes of death?



Portrait of an unidentified African American man, likely a freedman, sitting outdoors. (Library of Congress/Reynolds, 1860-1870)

Now let's use the spreadsheet to explore a bit more about what life was like for freedpeople at this time. Sort the spreadsheet by Complaint or Cause of Death.

Ask: What are some of the most common causes of death?
Allow students time to read through list – Consumption and Diarrhea are the most common, but many others have a number of entries.

- Cholera, dysentery, diarrhea, and typhoid fever are all spread by contaminated food and water and can be prevented by proper sanitation.
- Consumption, phthisis, and scrofula are all now known as tuberculosis, and along with pneumonia and whooping cough are spread through the air.

Ask: What inferences can you make about what people's lives were like at this time, based on the most common causes of death?



Slide 12: Data Insights

★ DATA INSIGHTS

- What were some of the most common addresses/locations?
- What could a historian learn from the location of someone's death?

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Responses will vary, but may include: sanitation was poor, people lived in close quarters, there was very little prenatal care, antibiotics and vaccines did not exist yet.

Now sort the spreadsheet by Address.

Ask: What are some common locations?

Allow students time to read through list - the four most common locations are Claremont Cemetery, East Capitol Street Barracks, Freedmen's Hospital, and Giesboro Cemetery.

- Those from Claremont Cemetery and Giesboro Cemetery are reinterments, moved to Arlington National Cemetery to deal with overcrowding.
- The East Capitol Street Barracks was one of the tenements operated by the Freedmen's Bureau to provide more affordable housing for freedpeople.
- The Freedmen's Hospital was operated by the Freedmen's Bureau, and in 1868 it became a teaching hospital for the Howard University medical school.

Ask: What could a historian learn from the location of someone's death?

Responses will vary, but may include: an individual's race, wealth/social status, social connections

Slide 13: Write an Obituary

WRITE AN OBITUARY

- Name
- Date of burial
- Grave number
- Age
- Address
- Cause of death
- Paragraph describing one historic event from their lifetime and how that event may have affected them

EXAMPLE

Henry Jones, 60, was buried December 20, 1866. He died of dropsy at William Ford's house, on 3rd Street NW between L and New York Avenue. The Panic of 1837 happened when he was about 31, and if Mr. Jones worked on a plantation in the South he may have been sold multiple times as many plantation owners went bankrupt during this time. Mr. Jones is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Section 27, grave number 3997.

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While we know little about those buried in Section 27, their lives should not be forgotten. To honor their memory, select an individual on the burial record spreadsheet and write a short obituary that includes the following information:

- Name
- Date of Burial
- Grave number
- Age
- Address
- Cause of Death



	<p>Most obituaries include some information about the person's life, but since we do not have that information, write a paragraph that describes one historic event that happened during the person's lifetime, and how that event may have affected this person's life.</p>
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OBITUARY RUBRIC

Use this rubric to assess student achievement of expectations.

Criteria	1	2	3	4	Feedback
Student wrote an obituary that includes a selected individual's name, date of burial, grave number, age, address, and cause of death.					
Student wrote an obituary that includes a historic event from the individual's lifetime.					
Student made a clear connection between the historic event and how it may have affected the selected individual.					
	Total:				

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



SOURCES

Baltimore's Civil Rights Heritage. "1831-1884: Abolition and Emancipation." Accessed October 23, 2019. <https://baltimoreheritage.github.io/civil-rights-heritage/1831-1884/>

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[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Freedmen s Education in Virginia 1861-1870](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Freedmen_s_Education_in_Virginia_1861-1870)

Dennee, Timothy. 2011. "African-American Civilians Interred in Section 27 of Arlington National Cemetery, 1865-1867." Paper presented at *38th Annual Conference on D.C. Historical Studies, Goethe-Institut and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, D.C., November 3-6, 2011*. <https://38thdcstudiesconference.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/arlington-section27.pdf>

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Montgomery, William E. "African American Churches in Virginia (1865-1900)." Encyclopedia Virginia. Last modified August 29, 2016.

[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/African American Churches in Virginia 1865-1900](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/African_American_Churches_in_Virginia_1865-1900)

IMAGES

Slide 1: Larue, Rachel. Spring in Arlington National Cemetery. Photograph. Arlington, Virginia: Arlington National Cemetery, April 15, 2016. <https://flic.kr/p/Gi8q1K>

Slide 2: Negroes leaving their home by boat; Civil War. Illustration. 1864. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007675634/>

Slide 3: Taylor, James E. Glimpses at the Freedmen's Bureau. Issuing rations to the old and sick / from a sketch by our special artist, Jas. E. Taylor. Illustration. Richmond, Virginia, 1866. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2009633700/>

Slide 4: Photo: Russell, Andrew Joseph. Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia. Photograph. June 29, 1864. Norfolk, Virginia: Chrysler Museum of Art. <https://chrysler.emuseum.com/objects/10128/cemetery-at-arlington-virginia>

Slide 5: The effects of the proclamation - freed Negroes coming into our lines at Newbern, North Carolina. Illustration. New Bern, North Carolina, 1863. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/95501775/>



Slide 6: Waud, Alfred R. "Zion" school for colored children, Charleston, South Carolina / from a sketch by A.R. Waud. Illustration. Charleston, South Carolina, 1866. Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/97501517/>

Slide 7: Preparing for the reception of the president. The chain gang convicts cleaning the streets of Richmond. Illustration. Richmond, Virginia, 1877. Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/94502949/>

Slide 11: Full-length portrait of an elderly African American man seated with a cane, facing front. Photograph. Between 1860-1870. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010647828/>

Slide 12: Gibson, James F. Cumberland Landing, Va. Group of "contrabands" at Foller's house. Photograph. Cumberland Landing, Virginia, 1862. Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2018666163/>