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***Made In America: Courage, Imagination, Determination***  
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***Buffalo Soldiers Instructional Unit***

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## Exploring the Life and History of the "Buffalo Soldiers"

Adapted from By Walter Hill

The United States Colored Troops, (USCT) was organized May 22, 1863, and the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the four all-Black infantry regiments in 1866. Military service and the giving of one's life for one's country are the ultimate sacrifice. But why did African Americans invest their lives in a country that denied them every opportunity? It is a question that scholars of Afro-American history and Black military history are just beginning to explore.

After the USCT established a Black military presence as volunteer units during the Civil War, the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments began the historic tradition of a Black military presence in the peacetime regular army. The Congress sought to reorganize and restructure the army after the Civil War, and passed the Army Organization Act on July 28, 1866.

Under the act, Congress authorized four additional cavalry regiments, creating two "to be composed of colored men." From this time to the closing days of World War II, a distinct and unique history of the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments unfolded within the military.

They participated in the Indian campaigns in the West, fought with Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in the Spanish American War, enforced the neutrality laws along the Mexican border, saw four tours of duty in the Philippine Islands, and battled Pancho Villa during the Mexican punitive expedition under John J. Pershing in 1916. When the United States entered World War I, many of the non-commissioned officers received commissions and several hundred troopers joined new units preparing to fight in Europe.

In peacetime America, 1920 to 1941, they became efficient horse and marksmanship units, winning many competitions while fulfilling their duties as service troops for the cavalry school at Fort Riley, Kansas.



**Company B, 25th Infantry, Fort Shaw, Montana, 1888.  
(NARA, 111-SC-83786)**

When the United States entered World War II, the 9th and 10th Cavalry, along with others, became subject to changing military philosophy and the mechanization of the cavalry. These wartime changes, for all practical purposes, meant the end of the mounted cavalry in postwar America.

The records in the National Archives relating to the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments span some eighty years (1866-1946). Whether seeking information on an individual soldier or a military unit, a researcher must understand that information can be gathered from a variety of NARA record groups, and

consist of non-textual as well as textual records. The quality and nature of information varies with the records.

The recruitment of men for the 9th and 10th Cavalry immediately following the Civil War coincided with the mustering out of thousands of USCT troops. Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, is fundamental for military history research because the Adjutant General handled the record-keeping of the Army. Recruitment and enlistment files, muster rolls and returns of military divisions, departments, and posts, and correspondence and orders were routinely sent to this office. These records exist as the major source for personnel information on the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments prior to 1917.



**Squadron of the 9th Cavalry at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, 1889.**  
(NARA, 111-SC-82449).

The men of the 9th and 10th Cavalry came from various social and economic

backgrounds. Many were veterans of the Civil War. The ranks of the new cavalry units were filled with ex-slaves but they now had a new perspective—freedom. For a composite of who these men were, their former lives, their military experiences, and what happened to them, the enlistment papers in the Adjutant General's records are especially important. In many cases, detailed sketches and outlines of the men's lives can be gleaned from these records.

The organization of the 9th Cavalry took place in New Orleans, Louisiana, under the auspices of the Division of the Gulf (covering Florida, Louisiana, and Texas, August 1866). The unit was immediately sent to San Antonio, Texas, for station duty.

On August 6, 1866, General William T. Sherman, Commander, Military Division of the Mississippi, issued from his headquarters in St. Louis General Order No. 6, which established the first command structure for the 10th. The unit was based initially at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. As issues and events in the West unfolded, the command structure for both units changed and moved.

The Indian campaigns of the West provided the signature recognition for the 9th and 10th Cavalry. Shortly after both units were transferred to the West, they, along with other cavalry units, engaged Native Americans in battle. The 9th patrolled the Rio Grande River and the Mexican border, escorting and protecting government mail and settlers, and containing Indians, Mexicans, and lawless Americans.

Between 1867 and 1886, the 10th was engaged in extended campaigns against the Cheyennes, Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches in Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, and the Indian Territory. According to Benjamin H. Grierson, Colonel, 10th Cavalry, 1867 to 1890, the 10th acquired the name "Buffalo Soldiers" during the 1871 campaign against the Comanches in the Indian Territory. Grierson said that the Comanches respected the soldiers' tireless marching and dogged trail skills. They had earned the name of the rugged and revered buffalo. The 10th made the "Buffalo" its regimental coat of arms years later, but the term "Buffalo Soldiers," became synonymous with both the 9th and 10th units.

In tracing the activities of the units, the records of Record Group 391, Records of the U.S. Regular Mobile Units, and to a lesser extent Record Group 393, Records of the US Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, should be used in conjunction with particular record series within Record Group 94. The regimental records of the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments are a part of Record Group 391 and contain extremely useful operation reports, orders, and location information as well as correspondence and officer and troop lists. In addition, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, may also prove useful because the troops defended and assisted many of the Indian Agencies, in particular the Cheyenne and Kiowa.

The image of Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders charging up San Juan Hill is ingrained in the minds of most Americans. Those men of the 9th and 10th Cavalry alongside Roosevelt are not so prominent. They not only were with him, but they played an important role in the battle. There are official and unofficial reports of the battle in Record Group 391, US Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821-1942. Among the Letters and Endorsements Sent, 1896-99, is a handwritten account of the 9th Cavalry in battle. The 10th Cavalry's Regimental History, 1866-98, also covers the participation of that unit in the battle and other engagements during the war. The Medal of Honor winners from the 10th Cavalry are cited, and there are fading newspaper clippings describing the San Juan Hill action and the heroism of the "Buffalo Soldiers."

Record Group 395, US Army Overseas Operations and Commands, 1898-1942, along with Record Group 391 and records in the various record groups of the Adjutant General's Office, can be used to follow the 9th and 10th in their tours of duty in the Philippine Islands, 1900-09, and the punitive expedition in Mexico, 1915.

Two record groups that should also be consulted are Record Group 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army), and Record Group 159, Records of the Office of the Inspector General (Army). Court Martials were a necessary regulating tool for military behavior. While most soldiers who served did so honorably, others did not, and extenuating circumstances often placed soldiers in a military court of law. Among the Regimental Orders and Circulars Issued, Oct. 1875-Dec. 1891 in Record Group 391, are documents on court martial proceedings and military tribunal appointments. The actual court case files are in the Judge Advocate General records. Court cases typically provide details about people and events not usually found elsewhere.

The history of the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments is not only a part of the great military tradition of the United States but of the history of Black accomplishment. It is a distinct and unique history.

*Walter Hill is an archivist with the National Archives and Records Administration. He would like to acknowledge the assistance of Peggy Cifrino, General Powell's staff, NARA staffers Michael Musick, Elaine Everly, Tod Butler, the late Sara D. Jackson, "my spiritual mentor in Black military history," and various "Buffalo Associations" around the country with whom he has worked.*

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# The Buffalo Soldier Monument: Its Meaning and Significance



Commander Carlton  
Philpot, Buffalo Soldier  
Monument, Fort  
Leavenworth, Kansas.

*"... since 1641 there has never been a time in this country when Blacks were unwilling to serve and sacrifice for America."*

General Colin Powell, Buffalo Soldier Monument Ground-breaking ceremony, July 28, 1990.

Despite a record of uninterrupted courage, valor, patriotism and bravery, historians and this country had never fully recognized or acknowledged the honorable and selfless military service of African Americans. Dedication of the Buffalo Soldier Monument at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas on July 25, 1992, was a major step in changing this. However, as popular as the monument is, it does not mean the same thing to everyone. Most people think it is great, but a few do not think it is deserved.

To the remaining Buffalo Soldiers and their families, it is a symbol of immediate recognition and gratitude for a job well done, as well as a daily source of pride, satisfaction and inspiration. To the older Buffalo

Soldiers like 110 year old Jones Morgan of Richmond, Virginia and 98 year old Sergeant William Harrington of Salina, Kansas, it gave them their flowers to smell while they were alive. To all, it is a beauty to see. Trooper Elmer Robinson of Leavenworth, Kansas said it best one cold February night in 1989 as we looked over the vacant spot where the monument would be erected, "after all these years I didn't think anyone cared, now I feel like a hero."

To General Colin Powell, the originator of the idea for the monument, it is the realization of a modest ten year dream. The idea came to him one day in 1981 as he was jogging around Fort Leavenworth. During the jog he noticed there was little to show the Buffalo Soldiers had been there. The 10th Cavalry was formed and activated at Fort Leavenworth in 1867, and some contingent of the Buffalo Soldiers was always there through WWII. However, only their graves and two alleys next to the cemetery (9th and 10th Cavalry roads) bore their names. The General felt there should be more.

To the sculptor, Mr. Eddie Dixon, the monument is a source of inspiration for future generations. He knew that history denied to one group is history denied to all groups. He also wanted young people, especially Black youth, to understand that all Black heroes are not athletes and musicians. Both Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis served in Black units at Fort Riley, Kansas.

To the committee members and the thousands of people who helped build the monument, it means several things. First it is a symbol to stimulate and enhance public interest and awareness. Both young and old need to know they were the best in spite of having the worst. With hand me down horses, clothing and equipment they earned more Congressional Medals of Honor (20) and had the lowest desertion rate of any unit in the army. Against prejudice in and out of the military, they were the essence of excellence!

Second and most important, it is a symbol to motivate and encourage historians, authors, publishers, movie makers and teachers to include the exploits of the Buffalo Soldiers in books, movies and lesson plans. When historians write about Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in the Spanish

American War, they must write that the Buffalo Soldiers rescued the future president in the Battle of Kettle Hill and were the first to reach the top of San Juan Hill.

The next time movies are made about the great Apache Chiefs Geronimo and Victorio, the Buffalo Soldiers must not be omitted. And when television series like *Little Indiana Jones* portray Mexico during the days of Pancho Villa, the prominent role of the Buffalo Soldiers and Lieutenant Colonel Charles Young (the third black graduate of West Point) must be represented.

In their lesson plans about western expansion, teachers should include how the Buffalo Soldiers delivered the mail and protected the wagon trains, cattle drives, stage coaches, railroads, and settlers. Additionally they should note that the trails and roads surveyed and blazed by the Buffalo Soldiers were just as critical as those by Lewis and Clark. Next March, during Women's History Month, classroom bulletin boards should mention the only known female Buffalo Soldier, Cathy Williams. She served in the infantry under the name of William Cathy from 1866-1868.

The Army designated the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalries as all African American Regiments. Photograph courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.

For the small group of African Americans who say the Buffalo Soldiers are not deserving of recognition, the monument should be a source of healthy debate. Their opinion is that the fame of these Black knights of courage is a result on one minority (Blacks) killing another minority (Native Americans). To this group, I say the Buffalo Soldiers are not great because they killed Indians. They are great and deserving of recognition because they changed the face of the military forever.



They were the first African Americans to serve in the military during peace-time. On July 28, 1866, nearly sixteen months after the Civil War, the 39th Congress approved the formation of six Black regiments: the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Infantry. In 1869 the military was downsized and the four infantry units were combined into two, the 24th and 25th. In about 1867 the Indians gave them the name Buffalo Soldiers.

There are various views of how the name originated. One, the Black man's hair resembled the mane of the buffalo. Two, like the buffalo, when wounded or cornered, the Black soldiers fought ferociously and courageously. Three, they wore buffalo hide to keep warm; and finally, like stampeding buffalos, the Black soldiers charged into battle with their sabers forward and their heads down. However, regardless of the origin, they wore the name proudly and as a badge of honor.

Because the Buffalo Soldiers were first and very successful at what they did, other firsts followed. These included: General Colin Powell, the first Black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black aviation unit; the 761st, the first Black tank battalion; the 555th (Triple Nickel), the first Black Parachute unit; and the Golden Thirteen, the first Black Navy Officers. As General Powell so often states, ". . . they are the wind beneath my wings." When these true American heroes find their proper place in the history books, they will be the wind beneath the wings of many generations to come.

Reference: *The Legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers*, by Colonel Rick Swain, USA (Ret.), Buffalo Soldier Monument Dedication Souvenir Book. For copies write the Buffalo Soldier Educational and

Historical Committee at P.O. Box 3372, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 33027. Cost \$20.00 (includes taxes, s/h).

### **NOTES ON THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS**

African Americans, by law, were not permitted to serve in the Regular U.S. Peacetime Army until 28 July 1866. Congress then authorized the formation of six black regiments--four infantry and two cavalry. Prior to that time, they were permitted to serve only in the state militias.

Operating under the harshest conditions and with the worst horses and equipment in the military, the Buffalo Soldiers had the lowest desertion rate of any unit in the U.S. Army and at least 20 men earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. In addition, they received four campaign citations in the Indian Wars; campaign citations for action in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection and the Mexican Expedition; the French Campaign World War I Citation; five unit citations from World War II; 10 unit citations from the Korean Conflict; three Presidential Unit Citations; a Navy Unit Commendation; a Philippine Presidential Citation; and two Republic of Korea Presidential citations.

Reference: *Military Review* August 1990

## Researching African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1890

### Buffalo Soldiers and Black Infantrymen

By Trevor K. Plante



**Members of the Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, ca. 1880s. (NARA, 111-SC-**

During the Civil War approximately 186,000 African Americans served in the Union army in the U.S. Colored Troops.<sup>1</sup> Black soldiers served in volunteer cavalry, artillery, and infantry units, but the opportunity to serve as regulars in the Army was not afforded African Americans until after the Civil War. In 1866, due in large part to the wartime service of the U.S. Colored Troops, Congress authorized the army to raise six black regiments: four infantry and two cavalry. This change was part of a much larger army reorganization and laid the foundation for the proud tradition of the "Buffalo Soldiers."<sup>2</sup> This article describes records held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to aid genealogists researching African Americans who served in the regular army from 1866 to 1890. It also highlights records related to Charles Woods, who served in Company E, Ninth U.S. Cavalry, as an example of how to trace an individual's service in the army.

On July 28, 1866, Congress passed an act reorganizing the army by adding four regiments to the already existing six regiments of cavalry and expanding the number of infantry regiments from nineteen to forty-five. The reorganization included the creation of six colored regiments designated in November as the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-first Infantry.<sup>3</sup> The new colored regiments were to be composed of black enlisted men and white officers. Three years later, Congress reorganized the army again by reducing the number of infantry units from forty-five to twenty-five regiments. For the African American regulars, this reorganization changed only the infantry units and not the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry. The Thirty-eighth Infantry and Forty-first Infantry became the Twenty-fourth Infantry, while the Thirty-ninth and Fortieth were consolidated into the Twenty-fifth Infantry. These two new infantry regiments completely replaced the former Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth.<sup>4</sup>

For the next twenty years the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry served in the West on the frontier. The Ninth and Tenth Cavalry spent much of their time in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Indian Territory protecting citizens, mail and supply routes and battling hostile Native Americans, and outlaws. The Twenty-fourth Infantry served in the Department of Texas, Indian Territory, and the Department of Arizona, while the Twenty-fifth Infantry served in the Department of Texas and the Department of Dakota.<sup>5</sup>

It was during this period that two of the regiments gained the nickname "Buffalo Soldiers." The nickname initially described troopers of the Tenth Cavalry, but the Ninth soon adopted the name as well. Although Native Americans bestowed the name upon the troopers, there are differing accounts as to the reason. One account suggests the name was acquired during the 1871 campaign against the Comanches, when Indians referred to the cavalymen as "Buffalo Soldiers" because of their rugged and tireless marching. Other accounts state that Native Americans bestowed the nickname on the black troopers because they believed the hair of the black cavalymen resembled the hair of the buffalo. Another suggests that the name was given because of the buffalo-hide coats worn by the soldiers in cold weather. The troopers took the nickname as a sign of respect from Native Americans, who held great reverence for the buffalo, and eventually the Tenth Cavalry adopted the buffalo as part of its regimental crest.<sup>6</sup>

## Enlisted Men

Unlike individuals who served as volunteers in the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War, black regulars do not have compiled military service records. The War Department did not compile military service records for individuals who served in the regular army. The place to start researching African American enlisted men is the Regular Army Enlistment Papers, 1798 - 1894 (Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's - 1917, entry 91). This series is arranged alphabetically by name of soldier and generally shows the soldier's name, place of enlistment, date, by whom enlisted, age, occupation, personal description, regimental assignment, and certification of the examining surgeon and recruiting officer. Soldiers will usually have multiple enlistment papers if they served two or more enlistments.

Researchers should also consult the *Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798 - 1914*, which is reproduced on National Archives Microfilm Publication M233. The register of enlistments are arranged chronologically and then under alphabetically by first letter of surname and usually show the individual's name, military organization, physical description, age at time of enlistment, place of birth, enlistment information, discharge information, and remarks.

For medical information, consult carded medical records (1821 - 1884) found in RG 94, entry 529. These cards relate to regular army personnel admitted to hospitals for treatment and may include information such as name, rank, organization, age, race, birthplace, date entered service, cause of admission, date of admission, hospital to which admitted, and disposition of the case. This series is arranged by the number of the regiment (cavalry, infantry, and artillery are filed together under the common regiment number) and then by initial letter of surname. For example, the Ninth Cavalry is filed under the number "9" along with the Ninth Infantry.

Using the enlistment papers, register of enlistments, and carded medical records, researchers can gain valuable information about a soldier. For example, according to his enlistment paper, Charles Woods, born in New Orleans, enlisted for five years at Baton Rouge on September 1, 1866. The twenty-two-year-old laborer was assigned to the Ninth Regiment of Cavalry. The enlistment paper also provides a physical description showing, "this soldier has black eyes, black hair, yellow complexion is five feet, one inches high."<sup>7</sup> The register of enlistments shows that Private Woods was discharged June 17, 1870, for disability at Fort Concho, Texas.<sup>8</sup> According to the carded medical records, Woods at various times suffered from rheumatism, diarrhea, bronchitis, and gonorrhea.<sup>9</sup>

## Officers

From their inception, the colored regiments were led by white officers. This changed once black cadets started graduating from the U.S. Army Military Academy. Three black graduates of West Point, Henry O. Flipper, John Alexander, and Charles Young, all served as Buffalo Soldiers. Flipper was commissioned in 1879 and served in the Tenth Cavalry. John Alexander (commissioned in 1887) and Charles Young (commissioned in 1889) both served in the Ninth Cavalry.<sup>10</sup>

When researching both black and white officers, researchers should consult the two volumes of Francis B. Heitman's *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington: GPO, 1903). Volume one contains a register of army officers, providing a brief history of their service. Volume two contains a "chronological list of battles, actions, etc., in which troops of the Regular Army have participated and troops engaged."

When researching the records for an officer's military service, consult the Commission Branch (CB) and Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch (ACP) records both found in RG 94, entry 297, Letters Received, 1863 - 1894. There is a card index arranged by name of officer for each of these

files. CB files are reproduced on National Archives Microfilm Publication M1064, *Letters Received by the Commission Branch of the Adjutant General's Office, 1863 - 1870*, and a select number of ACP files have been reproduced on National Archives Microfiche M1395, *Letters Received by the Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch, 1871 - 1894*.

## Returns

Other records that may be of interest to researchers are post returns and regular army unit returns. Returns for many military posts, camps, and stations are reproduced on National Archives Microfilm Publication M617, *Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800 - 1916*. Returns generally show units stationed at the post and their strength, the names and duties of officers, the number of officers present and absent, and a record of events. Unit returns are monthly returns of military organizations reporting stations of companies and names of company commanders, unit strength, including men present, absent, sick, on extra duty or daily duty, in arrest or confinement, and significant remarks. Unit returns for Buffalo Soldiers can be found on National Archives Microfilm Publication M744, *Returns from Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833 - 1916*. When researching the unit returns of the African American infantry regiments, consult National Archives Microfilm Publication M665, *Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821 - December 1916*. The returns for the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-first Infantry cover 1866 to 1869. A note of caution: When researching the returns for the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry, be sure to start with the 1869 returns; the returns for the period 1866 to 1869 are for the old units and are not African American soldiers. For additional records related to individual regular army regiments, consult Record Group 391, Records of United States Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821 - 1942.

## Courts-Martial

Researchers will find that court-martial records are a great source of information not only for a particular soldier but also for providing insights into the trials and tribulations faced by black soldiers. The court-martial records include the proceedings or testimony of a case, which contains common language used by black soldiers in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Records related to proceedings of U.S. Army courts-martial or courts of inquiry can be found in Record Group 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army). To find an individual's case file, first consult National Archives Microfilm Publication M1105, *Registers of the Records of the Proceedings of the U.S. Army General Courts-Martial, 1809 - 1890*. The years 1866 - 1890 are covered by registers OO to RR and are reproduced on microfilm roll numbers six through eight. The case files include proceedings of courts of inquiry and court-martial trials related to African American soldiers. These files are not on microfilm and are filed by case file number in RG 153, entry 15A. For this period, the files have a double-alpha numeric file number such as PP-248.

In searching court-martial records, we find that Cpl. Charles Woods was tried by a general court-martial at Austin, Texas, on June 4, 1867. There were several charges in the case including mutiny, striking his superior officer, and desertion. Corporal Woods pleaded "not guilty" to the first two charges and "guilty" to the third charge of desertion. Woods was found guilty of all three charges and sentenced to death. Because of facts brought out during the case, including the harsh treatment by an officer toward his men, the judge advocate general recommended that Woods's sentence be remitted. In writing to the adjutant general, the judge advocate general wrote, "But in view of the extraordinary circumstances developed by the testimony, showing that there was no disposition on the part of the prisoner either to mutiny or to desert, but that his conduct, and that of his company, was the result of outrageous treatment on the part of one of the commissioned officers, and in view of the suffering he has already endured, the sentence is remitted and the prisoner will be restored to duty."<sup>11</sup> A November 20 regimental order reduced Woods to the rank of private.

## Pensions

For researchers interested in pension files of individuals who served as Buffalo Soldiers or in black infantry units, consult National Archives Microfilm Publication T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861 - 1934*. This microfilm publication is arranged alphabetically by the individual's last name. The index cards include the individual's unit(s), making it easier to decipher individuals with the same name. Once the application number or pension certificate number is found (this includes invalid and widow pensions), researchers can request to view the pension file. Pension files (including application files) often contain valuable personal information on soldiers that are not found in their military records.

Our story of Charles Woods ends with the pension records. After consulting the pension index, we find that Woods's pension application is shown as number 413,571. According to the index, the pension application was filed on December 14, 1880, from the state of Texas.<sup>12</sup> Upon checking Woods's pension application file, we find that his story ends on a sad note. It appears Woods was denied a pension because of his court-martial conviction. Several appeals were made to the commissioner of pensions, who contacted the Adjutant General's Office (AGO) for more information. One response from the AGO shows the root of the problem: "The record of desertion appearing against the claimant has *not* been, *nor can it be*, removed; He was tried by General Court - Martial for the offence and convicted. His sentence was remitted by this office and he was restored to duty with his troop."<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, Charles Woods died June 6, 1887, while his pension application was still being appealed.<sup>14</sup>

## Medals of Honor

Between 1866 and 1890 African Americans established a proud tradition of service as regulars in the U.S. Army. Proof of their bravery can be found in the Medals of Honor awarded to several of their members. During the Indian Campaigns, eighteen African Americans were awarded the Medal of Honor. Records related to these soldiers have been reproduced on roll two of National Archives Microfilm Publication M929, *Documents Relating to the Military and Naval Service of Blacks Awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor from the Civil War to the Spanish-American War*. Roll two, covering the Indian Campaigns, is arranged alphabetically by surname and includes three Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts who were awarded the Medal of Honor.<sup>15</sup> Consult the NARA pamphlet describing M929 for the list of recipients' names and corresponding microfilm frame numbers.

The records and microfilm publications described in this article are available at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. For researchers unable to visit the National Archives, copies of enlistment papers, register of enlistments, and pension files held by NARA can be obtained through the mail. To obtain the proper request form, please write to Old Military and Civil Records, National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20408-0001.

## Notes

1. Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (1986), p. 43.
2. For a description of the link between Gen. Colin Powell and the Buffalo Soldiers, see Walter Hill, "Exploring the Life and History of the 'Buffalo Soldiers,'" *The Record: News from the National Archives and Records Administration* (March 1998): 12 - 14 (also available online at [www.archives.gov/publications/the\\_record/march\\_1998/buffalo\\_soldiers.html](http://www.archives.gov/publications/the_record/march_1998/buffalo_soldiers.html)).
3. AGO General Order No. 56, Aug. 1, 1866, and AGO General Order No. 92, Nov. 23, 1866. Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866 - 1891* (1973), p. 12.

4. AGO General Orders No. 15 & 16, Mar. 11, 1869, and AGO General Order No. 17, Mar. 15, 1869. Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, p. 16. The old Twenty-fourth Infantry consolidated with the Twenty-ninth to form the new Eleventh Infantry, while the old Twenty-fifth consolidated with the Eighteenth to form the new Eighteenth. See *Army Lineage Series: Infantry: Part I: Regular Army* (1972), pp. 31 - 32.
5. The Twenty-fourth Infantry served in the Department of Texas from 1869 to 1880, Indian Territory from 1880 to 1888, and following 1888 in the Department of Arizona. The Twenty-fifth Infantry served in the Department of Texas from 1870 to 1880 and the Department of Dakota following 1880. See Aloha P. South, Reference Information Paper No. 63, *Data Relating to Negro Military Personnel in the 19th Century* (1973), p. 3.
6. Account of Col. Benjamin H. Grierson, Tenth Cavalry, found in Hill, "Exploring the Life and History of the 'Buffalo Soldiers,'" p. 13. Other accounts found in Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, p. 54; William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (1967), p. 26; and Gerald Astor, *The Right to Fight: A History of African Americans in the Military* (1998) pp. 46 - 47.
7. Charles Woods, Enlistment Papers, 1798 - 1894, box 846, Record Group (RG) 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's - 1917, National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, DC.
8. Register of Enlistments, Vol. 64, p. 271, *Register of Enlistments of the U.S. Army, 1798 - 1914* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M233, roll 32), RG 94, NAB.
9. Charles Woods & C. Woods, Carded Medical Records, box 495, entry 529, RG 94, NAB.
10. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, pp. 58 - 61.
11. AGO General Court-Martial Order No. 83, Oct. 16, 1867. Case file OO-2488, box 2258, Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army), RG 153, NAB. Reduced to the ranks from corporal per Regimental Order No. 110, Nov. 20, 1867. See remarks under Pvt. Charles Woods in Co. E, 9th Cav., Muster Rolls, Oct. 31 to Dec. 31, 1867, box 1118, entry 53, RG 94, NAB.
12. *General Index to Pension Files, 1861 - 1934* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T288, roll 534), RG 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, NAB.
13. From Adjutant General's Office to Commissioner of Pensions, Jan. 22, 1887, pension file SO 413571, entry 9A, RG 15, NAB.
14. Pension file SO 413571, *ibid.*
15. The Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts were descendants of blacks who had intermarried with Seminole Indians in Florida and migrated to Mexico in the 1830s. In 1870 the Seminole-Negro Indians began crossing the Mexican border into Texas, settling in areas around Fort Clark and Fort Duncan.

Articles published in *Prologue* do not necessarily represent the views of NARA or of any other agency of the United States Government.

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A U.S. Department of Education Grant Program  
Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools

**Source:** Delicia Worrill

**Grade levels targeted by this lesson:** K-2

**Lesson Title:** Choral Reading: Buffalo Soldiers

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** Students should be familiar with who the Buffalo Soldiers are.

**This lesson meets student learning objectives/standards in the following content areas:**

Social Studies  Reading/Language Arts  Math  Science  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**QCC/GPS Correlations:**

ELAKR4 The student demonstrates the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and expression.

ELA1R4 The student demonstrates the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and expression.

ELA2R2 The student demonstrates the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and expression.

**Instructional Objectives:** Students will practice the skill of reading fluently.

**Rationale for topic:** Buffalo Soldiers played an important role in the western expansion of America.

**Instructional strategies used:** Direct instruction, collaborative groups, hands-on activities

**Materials/ technology used:** Copies of the reading, paper plates, crayons, colored pencils, popsicle sticks or yarn.

**Procedures:**

After a lesson in which the Buffalo soldiers have been introduced to the students, ask the students to tell what they remember or liked most about the Buffalo soldiers. Write their answers on the board. Next tell the students they are going to do a choral reading about the Buffalo soldiers. Explain that a choral reading is when more than one student recites a line or lines at the same time. It is almost like a play except that the students do not have to dress up in costume or act out what they are saying.

Pass out a copy of the reading to all students. Read it together out loud as a class stopping to discuss what each line means. Place the students into three groups. Explain that group one will read the lines that are indicated by **R1**, and group two will read the lines indicated by **R2** and group three the lines indicated by **R3**. Where it says **All**, everyone is to read it together. Allow the students to practice their lines within their groups as long as they need to so that everyone is able to read the lines fluently. When you feel that the students are able to read with minimal mistakes bring the class together and have them do a dry run. Practice as a class until each group is able to read their lines at the right time correctly.

Now the students are ready to create a mask that they will use for the official performance of the choral reading. Follow the instructions found on Paper Plate Mask saved to the Resource CD. Discuss with the students how they think the mask should look, bring into the discussion that it is believed the men were called Buffalo soldiers both because of their bravery in battle but also because their hair was curly and brown like a buffalo's.

Once the masks are complete the class is ready to perform the choral reading. This can be done using another class as the audience.

**Evaluation:** based on performance

**Appendices:** Choral reading attached.

## **Choral Reading: Buffalo Soldiers**

**(For three voices)**

**R1:** Buffalo Soldiers were the first peace-time all black regiment.

**R2:** The 9<sup>th</sup> Calvary was the first followed by the 10<sup>th</sup> Calvary.

**All:** “WE CAN: WE WILL” became their motto.

**R3:** Next was the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

**All:** WE CAN: WE WILL

**R1:** Their job was to defend the weak, Indian or American, anyone in need.

**R2:** They protected railroad workers and the mail stage coaches.

**All: WE CAN: WE WILL**

**R3: They were ordered to fight.**

**All: WE CAN: WE WILL**

**R1: Spain, Philippines, Germany, Japan**

**All: WE CAN: WE WILL**

**All: Against all odds they are true American heroes.**



## **Cathay Williams**

In a tiny shotgun cabin  
Martha's baby girl was born.  
A baby born to slavery  
That no one could forewarn.

Cathay Williams was determined  
And never was deterred  
As she began her life as a house girl  
Being seen but never heard.

Then the Civil War broke out  
And the Union soldiers came  
And taking Cathay with them  
Her life would never be the same.

Cathay learned the ways of military life  
And became an accomplished cook.  
She was sent to General Sheridan  
A job she proudly undertook.

Then the Civil War was ended  
And Cathay was finally free  
And in seeking out her freedom,  
She found her place in history.

Her own way she needed to make  
And a burden to no one be  
So as a Buffalo Soldier she joined up  
In the 38th U. S. Infantry.

Cathay Williams became William Cathay  
And no one was to know  
The secret of her identity  
As a soldier she did grow.

The troops moved west to Ft. Cummings  
To keep the Apache at bay.  
There were one hundred and one enlisted men  
And among them was William Cathay.

After two years as a soldier  
In the 38th Company A  
William went to see the doctor  
And her secret came out that day

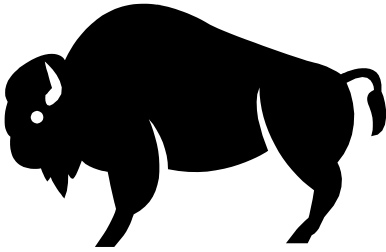
Discharged as a Buffalo Soldier  
Cathay did her very best  
As she continued to make her way  
In this land they called the West.

Because of her illegal enlistment  
Her pension passed her by  
But she picked herself up and moved on  
And never questioned why.

Life ended for Cathay Williams  
At the age of eighty-two  
She lived a long independent life  
A life that was tried but true.

A salute to Cathay Williams  
The hero of this rhyme  
A special woman of the west  
A legend in her time.

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## Buffalo Soldier

Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta  
There was a Buffalo Soldier  
In the heart of America  
Stolen from Africa, brought to America  
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival  
I mean it, when I analyze the stench  
To me, it makes a lot of sense  
How the Dreadlock Rasta was the Buffalo Soldier  
And he was taken from Africa, brought to America  
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival  
Said he was a Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta  
Buffalo Soldier, in the heart of America  
If you know your history  
Then you would know where you coming from  
Then you wouldn't have to ask me  
Who the heck do I think I am  
I'm just a Buffalo Soldier  
In the heart of America  
Stolen from Africa, brought to America  
Said he was fighting on arrival  
Fighting for survival  
Said he was a Buffalo Soldier  
Win the war for America  
Dreadie, woe yoe yoe, woe woe yoe yoe  
Woe yoe yoe yo, yo yo woe yo, woe yoe yoe  
(repaet)  
Buffalo Soldier, trodding through the land  
Said he wanna ran, then you wanna hand  
Trodding through the land, yea, yea  
Said he was a Buffalo Soldier  
Win the war for America  
Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta  
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival  
Driven from the mainland  
To the heart of the caribbean  
Singing, woe yoe yoe, woe woe yoe yoe  
Woe yoe yoe yo, yo yo woe yo woe yo yoe  
(repeat)  
Trodding through San Juan  
In the arms of America



Trodding through Jamaica, a Buffalo Soldier  
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival  
Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta  
Singing, woe yoe yoe, woe woe yoe yoe  
Woe yoe yeo yo, yo yo woe yo woe yo yoe

**"Buffalo Soldier"** is a reggae song co-written by Bob Marley and Noel G. "King Sporty" Williams from Marley's final recording sessions in 1980. It did not appear on record until the 1983 posthumous release of *Confrontation*, when it became a big hit and one of Marley's best-known songs. The title and lyrics refer to the black U.S. cavalry regiments, known as "Buffalo Soldiers" that fought in the Indian Wars after 1866. The song describes Marley's search for his genealogy. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEQXvsQJVnY>



A U.S. Department of Education Grant Program  
Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools

**Grade levels targeted by this lesson:** K-2

**Lesson Title:** Buffalo Soldiers Writing Sentences

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** Students should be familiar with the west, Native Americans and the fact that the U.S. grew to the size it is today.

**This lesson meets student learning objectives/standards in the following content areas:**

Social Studies  Reading/Language Arts  Math  Science  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**QCC/GPS Correlations:**

ELAKLSV1 The student uses oral and visual skills to communicate. The student describes people, places, things, locations, and actions. ELAKR1 The student demonstrates knowledge of concepts of print. ELAKW1 The student begins to understand the principles of writing.

ELA1R1 The Student demonstrated knowledge of concepts of print. ELA1W1 The student begins to demonstrate competency in the writing process.

ELA2W1 The student demonstrates competency in the writing process.

**Instructional Objectives:** Students will use pictures as a way to understand history.

**Rationale for topic:** The Buffalo Soldiers served an important role during the westward expansion and growth of the U.S. Their utility and bravery extended far beyond the age of the Indian Wars.

**Instructional strategies used:** Direct instruction, whole class

**Materials/ technology used:** Copies of pictures of Buffalo Soldiers found in the folder “Buffalo Soldiers Writing Sentences LP”, copies of sentences/captions cut into strips or the teacher may generate his or her own captions for the pictures.

**Procedures:**

After a lesson or after reading a book about the Buffalo Soldiers place the various pictures on the white board or project as transparencies.

Have the students tell what they see in the pictures, describing how they are dressed, how they look, what animals they may see and so forth. Then place the sentence that reflects the picture beneath or beside the picture. Ask the students can they think of a sentence that describes what they see. Write this sentence or have the student come up and write the sentence beneath or beside the caption you just placed with the picture.

**Evaluation:** Based on discussion and sentences generated.

**Appendices:** Sample sentences/captions attached below.

**The Civil War was a chance for African Americans to fight for their freedom.**

**They fought bravely.**

**The 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment became the first to be known as Buffalo Soldiers.**

**Their duties took them to the western frontier.**

**They protected settlers, rail road workers and escorted the U.S. Mail stagecoaches.**

**They fought in many wars including World War I.**

# **They fought bravely in World War II.**



A U.S. Department of Education Grant Program  
Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools

**Source:** Read Write Think [http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=835](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=835)

**Grade levels targeted by this lesson:** K-2

**Lesson Title:** Composing and Performing Found Poetry

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** Students should be familiar with poetry.

**This lesson meets student learning objectives/standards in the following content areas:**

Social Studies  Reading/Language Arts  Math  Science  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**QCC/GPS Correlations:**

ELAKW1 The student begins to understand the principles of writing

ELA1R5 The student acquires and uses grade-level words to communicate effectively. ELA1W1 The student begins to demonstrate competency in the writing process.

ELA2W1 The student demonstrates competency in the writing process.

**Instructional Objectives:** Students will

- identify words in read-aloud books that help make the story appealing.
- select a favorite page or passage from a book.
- select favorite words or phrases from children's stories.
- create a class poem using found words and phrases.
- perform their piece of the poem in front of others.
- listen to and critique the performance of others.
- assess their efforts using a checklist.

**Rationale for topic:** Students need to become comfortable with various types of writing.

**Instructional strategies used:** Direct instruction, collaborative groups, whole class participation

**Materials/ technology used:** Copies of the Student Planning Page, Rubric and Venn diagram for each student.

**Procedures:**

- Choose a book to read aloud to the class.
- From the selected book, create your own found poem, directions can be found on the resource CD as well as an example from *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*.
- Acquire (multiple copies, if available) of a favorite childhood story or series, multiple versions of one story, or editions with other points of view.
- Make appropriate copies of the Student Planning Page and Rubric both saved to the resource CD.
- Set a date for the class poetry performance and invite family and friends and other classes to attend the performance.

## Instruction and Activities

### *Session One*

1. Read a favorite children’s book aloud to the class. This lesson uses the book *The Buffalo Soldier* by Sherry Garland as an example, but any children’s book or series can be used.
2. Invite the students to share any thoughts or comments about the story.
3. Next, share the found poem with the students that you wrote based upon your read-aloud book. However, do not use the vocabulary “found poem” with the students yet.
4. Ask the students to share any thoughts or reactions they have to your poem.
5. To facilitate the discussion, you can lead students to discover that there are similar words and phrases between the book and that piece of writing.
6. On the board, write the phrase “Found Poem” or “Found Poetry.”
7. Explain to the students that your poem is a found poem, using words from the book that you have just read aloud. Explain that a found poem is a poem created by taking words and phrases from a text and arranging them into a poem.
8. Invite the students to share how found poetry is similar to or different than other poetry they know. Older students can work together to create a Venn diagram comparing found poetry to other types of poetry.
9. As a class, craft a definition that you will use for found poetry. Record it on paper or the board.
10. Using the children’s book that you have read aloud, walk the children through the procedure for creating a found poem. Or choose another favorite class book and create a found poem for the new book.

### *Session Two*

1. Begin the session by reviewing the concept of found poetry.
2. Ask the students to share any other examples of found poetry that they know of.
3. Review the book *Buffalo Soldier* with the class identifying and recording words or phrases that interest them, which they will use to create a class found poem.
4. Pass out copies of the Student Planning Page, found on the resource CD, for students to write words and phrases on.
5. After the story has been read and the notes have been taken, group students in pairs and ask them to share the words and phrases with each other.
6. When everyone has had a chance to share their notes, ask the students if any of them have a note that tells about the beginning of the story. Refer to the book as needed.
7. If several students volunteer, invite the class to vote on which line would make the best beginning to the found poem.
8. When a first line is found, record that line on paper or the board, and ask the student to line up first.
9. Invite the students to share lines, words, or phrases that could come next.
10. Record the suggestion of another student, and ask that student to line up next.
11. Continue this process until the entire class has volunteered a line, the poem tells a story, and a circle has been formed.
12. Read through the newly created poem entirely, with each member of the circle sharing their piece.
13. Rearrange any lines or students as needed.
14. Before the next session, type up and copy the poem created by the class to provide students with a script. Some students may be able to copy down the poem into their notebook.

### *Session Three*

1. Pass out the copies of the class poem to the students.
2. Invite students to share their reflections, thoughts, and feelings about the found poem that the class created.
3. Make any changes or adjustments that are needed to the class poem.
4. Ask the students to highlight their speaking parts, or allow them time to make note cards with their lines.
5. Share the rubric with the students and discuss the expectations for the performance. Older students can be invited to create their own rubric based on the task at hand.
6. Be sure to discuss the qualities of a good oral presentation. You may also want to role play or model speaking in front of a group.
7. Now that the students have a rubric in front of them, provide some time for the students to practice their parts, alone or in groups.
8. Encourage students to memorize their lines in the class-created poems.

### *Session Four*

1. When the students are prepared for the performance, invite family, friends, and other classes to attend the performance.
2. Before the students perform their poem, explain to the audience the procedure the class used to create the poem. If desired, a student or several students can tell the audience how the poem was composed.
3. Provide examples of the children's book and the poem on paper or on the board.
4. Ask students to take their place in the circle.
5. When the audience is ready, have the first student to begin with the first line of the poem.
6. Have the rest of the class take their turns, going around the circle, until the poem is complete.
7. When the performance is finished and the guests have left, ask the students to discuss what they thought of the performance.
8. Ask the students to share those thoughts and reflections using the rubric.

### **Evaluation:**

Students can complete the Performance Poetry Rubric in writing or during a class discussion, using one enlarged copy where student reflections are gathered.

**Appendices:** All materials found on the Resource CD



A U.S. Department of Education Grant Program  
Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools

**Grade levels targeted by this lesson:** K-2

**Lesson Title:** *The Buffalo Soldier* by Sherry Garland

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** African-American soldiers helped protect people moving out west.

**This lesson meets student learning objectives/standards in the following content areas:**

Social Studies  Reading/Language Arts  Math  Science  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**QCC/GPS Correlations:**

ELAKLSV1 The student uses oral and visual skills to communicate. The student describes people, places, things, locations, and actions.

ELAKR1 The student demonstrates knowledge of concepts of print.

ELAKW1 The student begins to understand the principles of writing.

ELA1R1 The Student demonstrated knowledge of concepts of print.

ELA1W1 The student begins to demonstrate competency in the writing process.

ELA2W1 The student demonstrates competency in the writing process.

**Instructional Objectives:** This lesson is designed to help students practice writing complete sentences.

**Rationale for topic:** The Buffalo Soldiers played an important role in American History in its expansion to the west.

**Instructional strategies used:** direct instruction, collaborative groups, hands-on activities

**Materials/ technology used:** Copies of Buffalo Soldier coloring sheet, graphic organizers, and *The Buffalo Soldier* by Sherry Garland

**Procedures:**

Introduce the book by playing Bob Marley's *Buffalo Soldier*. Tell the students that they are going to be learning about some very brave soldiers. Refer back to information previously taught on Westward Expansion, Manifest Destiny, and Native Americans.

Read out loud *The Buffalo Soldier* by Sherry Garland. Pause to ask questions and answer questions. Kindergarten teachers may want to pre-read the book to become familiar with the story. Some pages are wordy but by describing the illustrations and abbreviating what is read the students will still enjoy the story.

Pass out to students the copies of the describing wheel graphic organizer and either independently or as a class come up with as many descriptive words to describe a Buffalo Soldiers based on the story. For first and second grade students they can use this information to create a short paragraph about Buffalo Soldiers using the hamburger graphic organizer. Kindergarten students can color the Buffalo Soldier. First and second grade students can use the coloring sheet as an illustration for their paragraph.

**Evaluation:** Kindergarten based on describing wheel, first and second grade based on their paragraph.

**Appendices:** Coloring sheet and graphic organizers.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Color the Buffalo Soldier on Horse and learn the colorful history behind the noble Buffalo Soldiers.

## Buffalo Soldier




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<http://www.scissorcraft.com>

### Sandwich Chart

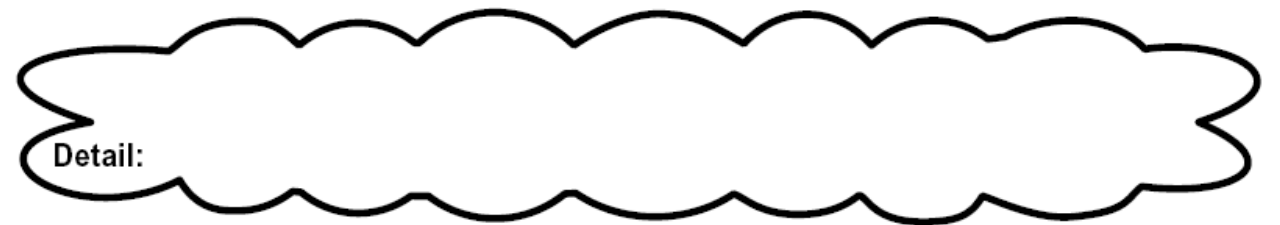
Write your topic at the top. Add details to the middle layers. Add a concluding sentence at the bottom.



Topic:



Detail:



Detail:



Detail:

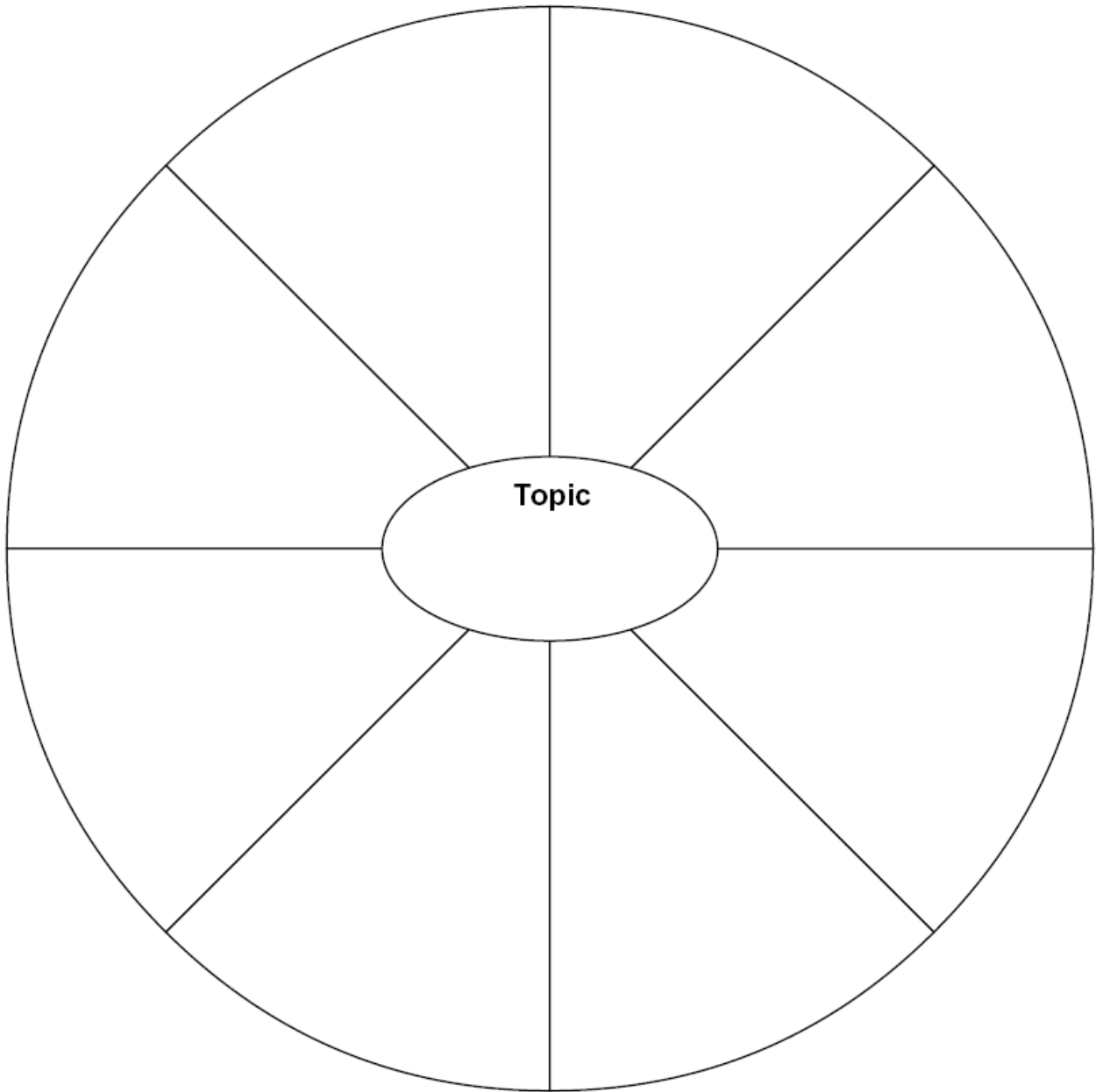


Concluding Sentence:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Describing Wheel**

Add describing words about your topic between the spokes.





**Resources Available through TAH Resource Library**

**Visit the website for a description of the items.**

<http://ccboe-media1/winnebago/index.asp>

The Buffalo soldiers and the American West  
Buffalo soldiers. Kit  
Buffalo soldiers Video  
Buffalo soldiers DVD  
African American heroes. Bulletin board kit

Glaser, Jason.