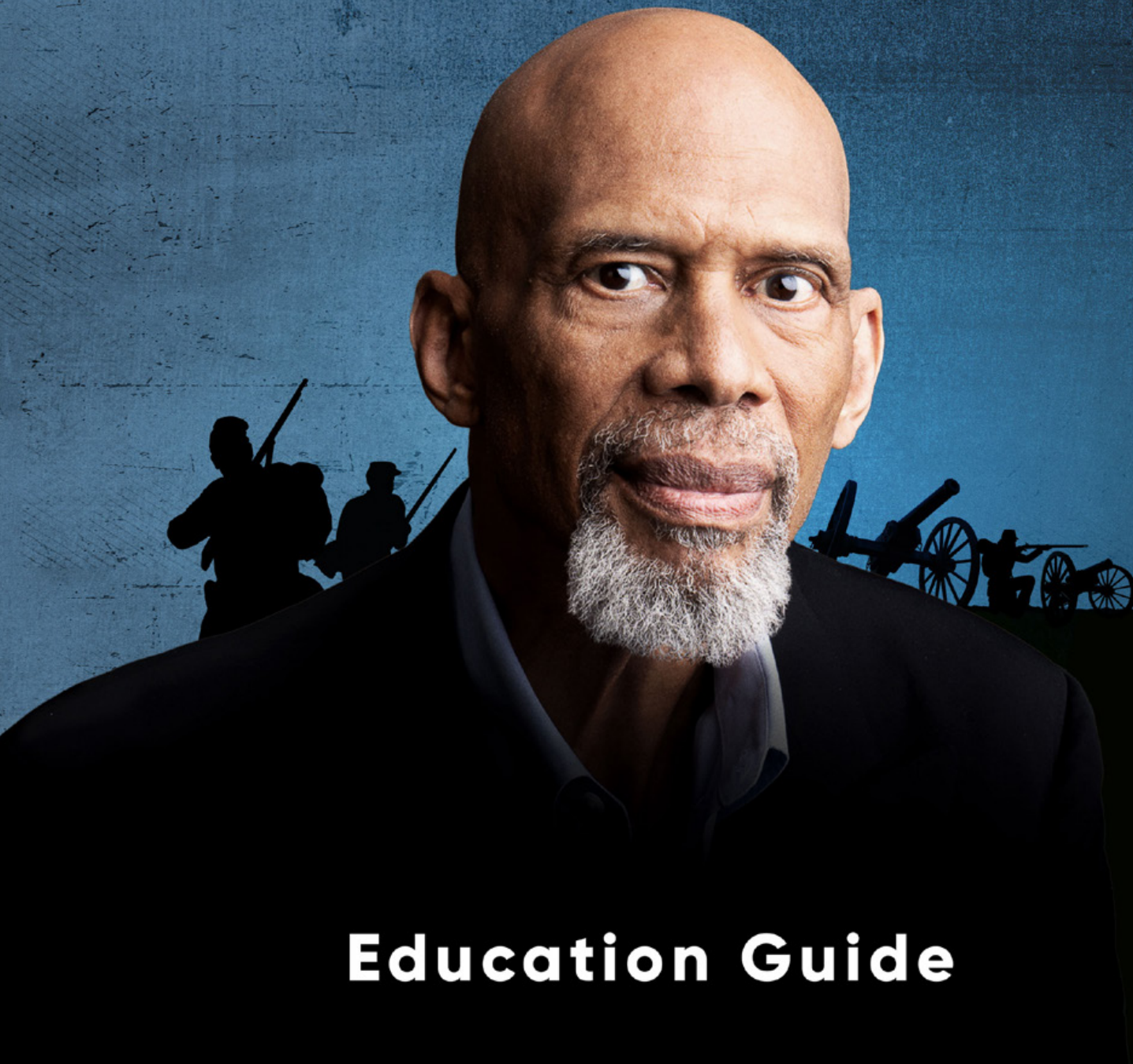


THE HISTORY® CHANNEL ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR & DEBORAH MORALES

BLACK PATRIOTS

HEROES OF THE CIVIL WAR™



Education Guide

Black Patriots: Heroes of the Civil War is a one-hour documentary on HISTORY featuring NBA legend, best-selling author and esteemed activist Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. The program explores one of the most pivotal times in our history, showcasing the critical contributions made by African Americans, including Harriet Tubman, Robert Smalls, Frederick Douglass, the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and the most celebrated regiment of Black soldiers during the Civil War, the famed 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. The program illustrates how Black men and women played a number of courageous and active roles during the war—heroes not just in their own stories but in our nation's history.

Curriculum Links:

Black Patriots: Heroes of the Civil War would be useful for American History, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college students.

Learn more about the series here:

<https://www.history.com/specials/black-patriots-heroes-of-the-civil-war>

Pre-Viewing Activity:

Ask students to read this article before viewing to provide context for the documentary:

<https://www.history.com/news/black-heroes-us-civil-war-tubman-douglass-augusta-smalls-galloway>



Terms to Define:

Students can think about the meaning of these terms before and after watching the documentary.

- Civil War
- Abolition
- Citizenship
- Enlistment
- Freedom
- Emancipation

Discussion Questions:

Below are some general questions that can prompt discussions, special projects or essays after students have watched the show.

1. How had life changed for Blacks in America in the years after the American Revolution, and how did the conflict over ending slavery lead to the outbreak of the American Civil War?
2. Why was President Lincoln initially reluctant to allow African Americans to enlist in the Union Army?
3. How did African Americans who did not join the army contribute to the Union's victory and the fight for freedom?
4. What were some of the obstacles faced by Black soldiers after joining the Union Army?
5. How did the bravery of Black soldiers in the Civil War help change the opinions of many white Americans?
6. In the immediate aftermath of the war, how did the U.S. government try to ensure freedoms and political rights for African Americans?
7. Do you agree with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar that the American Civil War helped define the meaning of democracy in America? Why or why not?
8. How did the American Civil War help pave the way for future movements like the Civil Rights Movement and today's equality and justice movements?

Related Activities

"Men of Color, To Arms" Primary Source Activity

Have students read Frederick Douglass' 1863 speech in support of Black soldiers and have them study the recruitment poster calling on Black men to enlist. Engage students in a discussion on Douglass' role during the Civil War and the impact Black soldiers had on the war. Prompts could include: What role did Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists play in convincing President Lincoln to allow Blacks to enlist in the Union Army? Why did Douglass believe that the Civil War could not be won by white soldiers alone? What role did formerly enslaved people in the Union victory? What types of language did enlistment posters like this use to encourage people to join the Army, what did they hope to achieve?

Optional additional activity: Have students create their own recruitment posters.

View documents here:

Douglass speech

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1863-frederick-douglass-men-color-arms/>

Enlistment poster

<https://cnu.libguides.com/c.php?g=23197&p=136493>

Black Medal of Honor Recipients

Twenty-five Black soldiers received the Medal of Honor during the Civil War, the nation's highest award for military valor. Students can choose one MOH recipient to research, and then create a one-sheet with bullet points about their life or a journal entry depicting the soldier's experience during the war. Examples might include Christian Fleetwood, William Carney and James Gardiner.

From Slavery to Politics

During the period immediately following the Civil War known as Reconstruction, some 2,000 Black Americans (included Robert Smalls, as depicted in *Black Patriots*) were elected to office on the state and local levels, taking their rightful place alongside white political leaders. Have students choose one of these Black politicians and using their own research, create a visual presentation highlighting their remarkable achievements, despite the continued prejudice many faced from those opposed to racial equality.

Working Behind Enemy Lines

As seen in *Black Patriots*, African Americans played a crucial—but often hidden—role as spies and scouts in the South during the Civil War. Have students write an essay on the contributions made by people like Harriet Tubman and Mary Richards. Ideas to consider: What skills were they able to use to provide crucial information to the Union Army? Why were they willing to risk their lives to help the Union cause? How do you think you would have reacted in a similar situation? Do you think their achievements are properly remembered and recognized today?

Related Content from History.com:

Article: Black Civil War Soldiers

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/black-civil-war-soldiers>

Video: The 54th Massachusetts Infantry

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/gilder-lehrman-massachusetts-54th-video>

Article: 6 Black Heroes of the Civil War

<https://www.history.com/news/black-heroes-us-civil-war-tubman-douglass-augusta-smalls-galloway>

Article: Why Frederick Douglass Wanted Black Men to Fight in the Civil War

<https://www.history.com/news/frederick-douglass-civil-war-black-recruitment>

Article: "Glory" Regiment Attacks Fort Wagner,

<https://www.history.com/news/glory-regiment-attacks-fort-wagner-150-years-ago>

Article: After the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman Led a Brazen Civil War Raid

<https://www.history.com/news/harriet-tubman-combahee-ferry-raid-civil-war>

More Related Content:

Article: Harriet Tubman – Biography.com

<https://www.biography.com/activist/harriet-tubman>

Harriet Tubman – National Women's History Museum

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/harriet-tubman>

Which Slave Sailed Himself to Freedom? – PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/which-slave-sailed-himself-to-freedom/>

Robert Smalls – U.S. House of Representatives

<https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/21764>

How Robert Smalls Seized a Confederate Ship and Sailed it to Freedom – Smithsonian Magazine

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thrilling-tale-how-robert-smalls-heroically-sailed-stolen-confederate-ship-freedom-180963689/>

Christian Fleetwood – American Battlefield Trust

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/christian-fleetwood>

Diary of Sgt. Christian Fleetwood – National Humanities Center

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/identity/text7/fleetwooddiary.pdf>

Mary Richards – American Battlefield Trust

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/mary-jane-richards>

Mary Richards Bowser – Encyclopedia Virginia

<https://encyclopedia.virginia.org/entries/bowser-mary-richards-fl-1846-1867/>

A History of Black Medal of Honor Winners – Oxford African American Studies Center

<https://oxfordaasc.com/page/featured-essay-black-medal-of-honor-recipients/featured-essay-a-history-of-black-medal-of-honor-winners>

Meet Sgt. William Carney: The First African American Medal of Honor Recipient – U.S Department of Defense

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/1075726/meet-sgt-william-carney-the-first-african-american-medal-of-honor-recipient/>

54th Massachusetts Regiment – National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/54th-massachusetts-regiment.htm>

Fort Wagner and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry – American Battlefield Trust

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/fort-wagner-and-54th-massachusetts-volunteer-infantry>

Frederick Douglass – Encyclopaedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Frederick-Douglass>

Frederick Douglass – Biography.com

<https://www.biography.com/activist/frederick-douglass>

Confronting a President: Douglass and Lincoln: National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/frdo/learn/historyculture/confronting-a-president-douglass-and-lincoln.htm>

