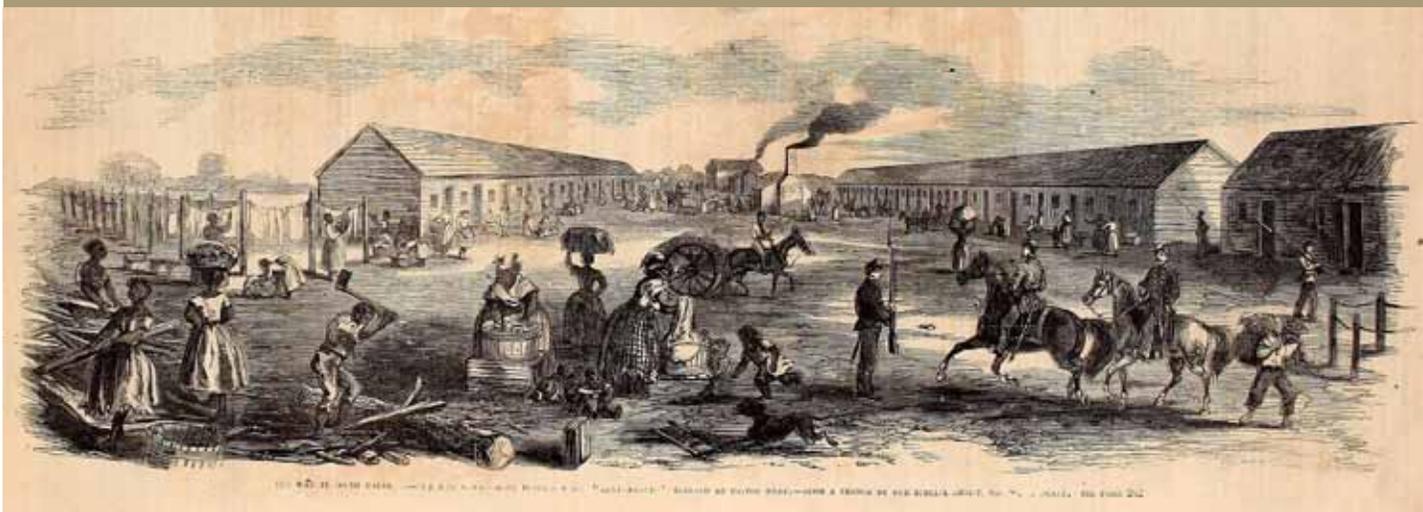


THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN



BY THE HISTORY WORKSHOP

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

LESSON AUTHOR:

The History Workshop

INTRODUCTION:

On November 7, 1861, Confederate forces were defeated at the Battle of Port Royal. Hilton Head Island, and later Beaufort and St. Helena Island fell to Union forces. Planters abandoned the Sea Islands and thousands of enslaved people escaped from bondage. Hilton Head Island became the headquarters for the US Army's Department of the South and the chief operational port for the Navy's South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

By February 1862, there were over 600 former slaves seeking refuge at the Union camp on Hilton Head Island. The army was quickly overwhelmed. In September 1862, Major General Ormsby Mitchel proposed to create a town for the former slaves. Mitchelville became the first self-governed Freedmen's community in the United States. Residents worked for the army during the war and the subsequent occupation. When the army left Hilton Head Island in 1868, most jobs went with it. Mitchelville soon declined and by 1880 ceased to be a town. By the mid-1950s, only Hilton Head Island's older residents remembered Mitchelville.

This lesson plan introduces students to the history of Mitchelville by exploring how researchers use historical documents to learn about the past. Students will use primary and secondary sources including newspaper articles, photographs, military accounts, research reports, and websites to understand Mitchelville's story, evaluate information, analyze and assess sources, extract information, and organize data.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL:

3 and 4

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will understand and describe the occupation of Hilton Head and the establishment of Mitchelville during the Civil War.
- Students will explore historical documents and photographs that contain information about Mitchelville.
- Students will understand the difference between primary and secondary sources.
- Students will use documents to understand the sequence of historical events.
- Students will analyze and assess documents, extract information, and use the data to make conclusions about historical events.

MATERIALS:

- Website @ www.findingfreedomshome.com
- Historical Timeline (see website or attached PDF)
- Sample Archival Documents
- Description of Mitchelville (see website or attached PDF)

- *Harper's Weekly* Illustration: Contraband Barracks
- Newspaper Article: New South, October 1862
- Activity Four Timeline Events
- Historical Research Worksheet
- Document Analysis Worksheet
- Chronology Worksheet
- Timeline Worksheet

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: UNDERSTANDING MITCHELVILLE

In October 1862, Major General Ormsby Mitchel, commander of the Department of the South at Hilton Head Island ordered the construction of a Freedmen's town to serve as a new home for thousands of former slaves who flocked to the island after it fell to Union forces in November 1861. Mitchelville was more than a refugee camp. The town's new residents built their own homes with materials provided by the Union Army. They were responsible for creating their own government, enforcing town ordinances, establishing schools, and ensuring every child between the ages of six and 15 attended regularly. Mitchelville proved that freed men and women could govern, sustain, and educate themselves.



Map of Mitchelville in 1865.

At its peak in 1865, approximately 3,500 people may have lived in the town. Mitchelville declined after the US Army and the jobs it offered left the island in 1868. By the 1880s, Mitchelville ceased to exist as a formal town. By the 1950s, only the island's oldest residents remembered its important history.

THE BATTLE OF PORT ROYAL THE UNION BLOCKADE

At the start of the Civil War, President Lincoln and his military commanders planned to blockade Southern ports to stop the flow of supplies from Europe to the Confederate states and establish a series of bases from which to patrol the 3,500 miles of coastline that lay in Confederate territory.

At the same time, South Carolina Governor Francis Pickens directed General P. T. Beauregard, the new commander of South Carolina's provisional forces, to review the coastal defenses of the state. General Beauregard ordered the construction of Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard at the entrance to Port Royal Sound.

THE BATTLE OF PORT ROYAL

In October 1861, a joint Army and Navy expedition under General Thomas Sherman and Captain Samuel DuPont to set sail from Hampton Roads, Virginia. Port Royal Sound, South Carolina was their first target. By November 6, despite bad weather, a formidable flotilla of 25 ships sat at the entrance to Port Royal Sound.

“General. You will proceed to New York immediately and organize, in connection with Captain DuPont of the Navy, an expedition of 12,000 men. Its destination you and the Navy commander will determine after you have sailed. You should sail at the earliest possible moment.”

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“I have just received the following information which I consider entirely reliable, that the enemy’s expedition is intended for Port Royal.”

MESSAGE TO GOVERNOR PICKENS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, NOVEMBER 1861

The Confederates occupied newly constructed Fort Walker on Hilton Head Island and Fort Beauregard on Bay Point. Fort Walker was garrisoned by the 11th Regiment of SC Volunteers commanded by Colonel William C. Heyward. Fort Beauregard was commanded by Colonel R. G. M. Dunovant. Four ships under the command of Flag Officer Josiah Tatnall were positioned on Skull Creek.

The battle began on the morning of November 7, 1861. The Confederates were under-manned and out-gunned. The Union armada steamed passed the Confederate forts in an elliptical pattern firing directly into the batteries.

“At last the memorable 7th dawned upon us, bright and serene; not a ripple upon the broad expanse of water to disturb the accuracy of fire from the broad decks of that magnificent armada about advancing in battle array, to vomit forth its iron hail with all the spiteful energy of long-suppressed rage and conscious strength.”

GENERAL THOMAS DRAYTON, NOVEMBER 24, 1861

By 2:00 pm Confederate forces were defeated. Hilton Head Island, and later Beaufort and St. Helena Island fell to Union troops. Planters and their families abandoned the Sea Islands. Thousands of enslaved people escaped from bondage.



The Battle of Port Royal.



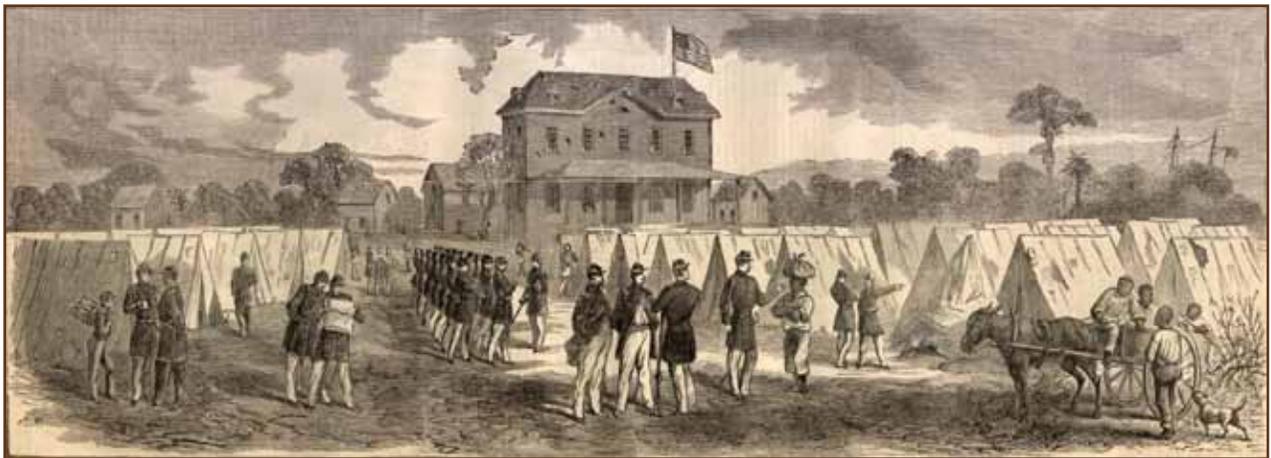
Gen. Thomas Drayton.

“Two o'clock had now arrived, when I noticed our men coming out of the fort, which they had bravely defended for 41/2 hours against fearful odds, and then only retiring when all but three of the guns on the water-front had been disabled, and only 500 pounds of powder in the magazine.”

GENERAL THOMAS DRAYTON, NOVEMBER 24, 1861

THE UNION ARMY'S DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH

Hilton Head Island became the headquarters for the US Army's Department of the South and the chief operational port for the Navy's South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. The army built an inland line of defenses including Fort Sherman and Fort Welles, and an encampment with tent housing, Officer's quarters, Quartermaster's depot, guard house, commissaries, stables, blacksmith's shop, carpenter shop, bake house, and hospital.



The Union encampment on Hilton Head Island.

“...the line of entrenchments projected and built at Hilton Head on the margin of Port Royal Harbor measured a mile and three-quarters in length, and embraced an area of perhaps six hundred acres. The palisades and embankments, beginning at the ocean beach on the east, extended across marshes and the upland to [Fish Haul] creek on the west...The whole work was immense, elaborate, scientific, expensive, and strong. Within were the headquarters of the Department of the South and the depots of ordnance and supplies for the army.”

FREDERICK DENISON, 3RD RHODE ISLAND HEAVY ARTILLERY REGIMENT, 1879

The town of Hilton Head with shops, post office, printing office, theatre, church, photographer's studio, and hotels sprang up adjacent to the post. The 3rd New Hampshire Volunteers camped on Thomas Drayton's Fish Haul Plantation. A detail from the regiment was directed to build a saw mill. Lumber from the mill was used to build storehouses, docks, and barracks for the African American refugees arriving daily at the Union lines.



Thomas Drayton's Fish Haul plantation.

“Quite a town is being built about the Fort of portable houses built up North and shipped down here ready to be put up...Immense store houses have been put up in which government supplies for the troops are placed. Immense bakeries are in operation to supply us with the soft bread we have been eating for some months. All kinds of sutler and speculative establishments abound and do a thriving trade.”

PENNSYLVANIA SOLDIER, 1862

MITCHELVILLE: FREEDOM'S HOME CONTRABANDS FLOCK TO HILTON HEAD

One day after the Union Army and Navy captured Hilton Head, 80 escaped slaves arrived at Fort Walker. Within a month there were 400 contrabands at the encampment and their numbers increased daily.

“They are coming in great numbers...150 have come in, mostly able-bodied men, and it will soon be necessary to furnish them this coarse clothing.”

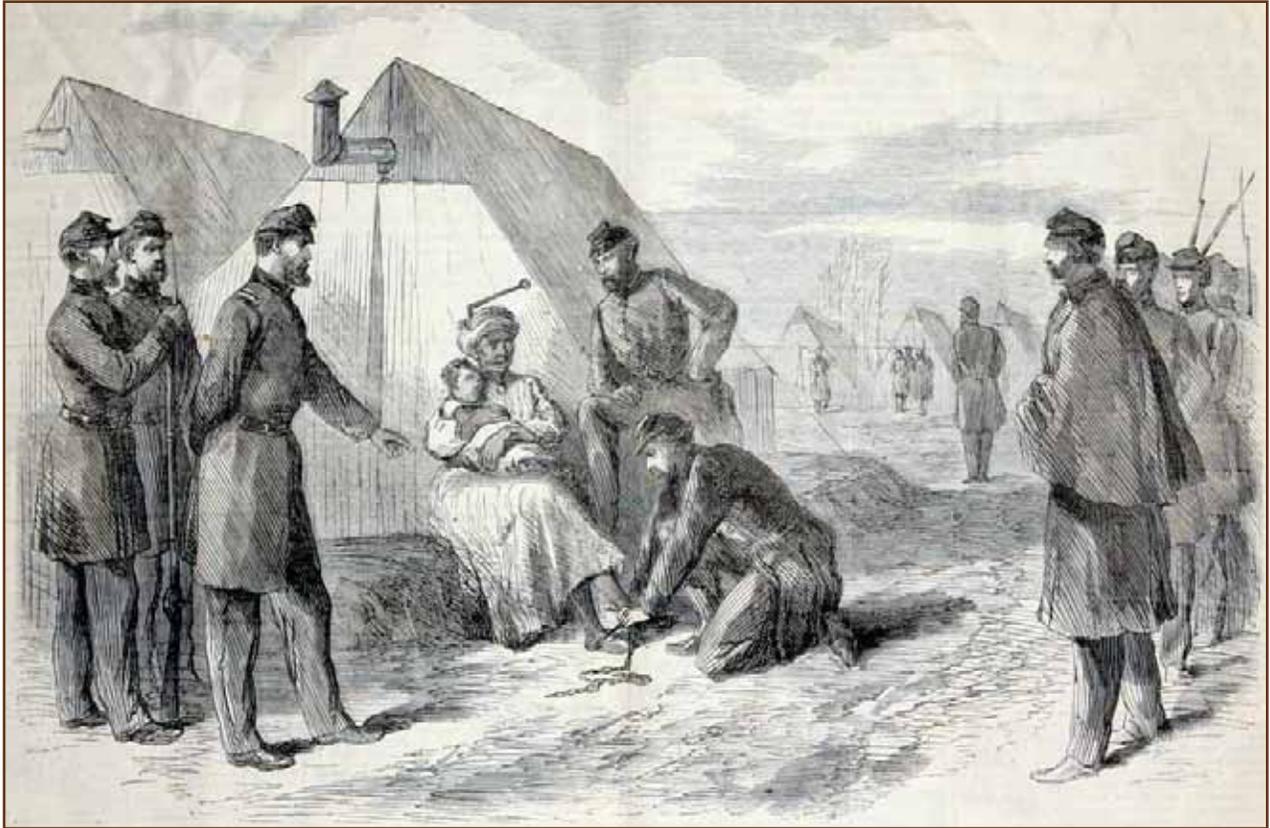
ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER, CAPTAIN SAXTON, NOVEMBER 9, 1861

“This week, 48 escaped from a single plantation near Grahamville...After four days of trial and peril, hidden by day and threading the waters with their boats by night, evading the rebel pickets, joyfully entered camp at Hilton Head.”

REPORT OF E. L. PIERCE, GOVERNMENT AGENT, FEBRUARY 3, 1862

Although commanders had a clear directive to hold former slaves, there was little guidance regarding their care. The Union Army was quickly overwhelmed by the scope of this humanitarian crisis since most of former slaves required food, clothing, and shelter. However, the army quickly realized that many of the able-bodied men and women were willing and able to provide much needed support to the rapidly growing encampment and town of Hilton Head.

The Quartermaster's department provided immediate aid by establishing refugee camps at Beaufort, Bay Point, and Otter Island. On Hilton Head, they built large barracks described in 1862 by Edward Pierce, Special Agent to the Department of the Treasury as *“two long rows of wooden buildings, nicely whitewashed on the outside, and having much the appearance of commissary storehouses, pierced with innumerable windows for the purpose of ventilation.”* As word spread that the army offered jobs and shelter, these facilities were soon overcrowded and unhealthy.



Former slaves who escaped to Union lines were called Contrabands.

“These people were first called contrabands at Fortress Monroe; but at Port Royal, where they were next introduced to us in any considerable number, they were generally referred to as freedmen. These terms are milestones in our progress: and they are yet to be lost in the better and more comprehensive designation of citizens, or, when discrimination is convenient, citizens of African descent.”

EDWARD PIERCE, THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, SEPTEMBER, 1863

MORE THAN A REFUGEE CAMP

Major General Ormsby Mitchel, a staunch abolitionist, assumed command of Hilton Head Island on September 17, 1862. Mitchel was disturbed by the overcrowded conditions he found in the refugee barracks. In October, he ordered construction of a Freedmen’s community north of the Union encampment on a portion of Fish Haul Plantation. Mitchel wanted to move the refugees out of the military depot, improve their living conditions, and give them some autonomy. Mitchelville, he said, would be more than a refugee camp, it would prove that freed men and women could govern, sustain, and educate themselves.

“...the present negro quarters, a long row of partitions into which are crowded young and old, male and female, without respect either to quality or quantity... the Major-General has ordered [it] to be removed outside [the encampments], and accordingly a piece of ground has been selected near the Drayton Plantation, about two miles off, for a negro village. The negroes are to be made to build their own houses, and as it is thought to be high time they should begin to learn what freedom means by experience of self-dependence, they are to be left as much as possible to themselves...”

NEW YORK TIMES, OCTOBER 8, 1862



A photograph of homes in Mitchelville labeled Refugee Quarters.

“Some wholesome changes are contemplated by the new regime (General Ormsby Mitchel assumed command on September 17, 1862), not the least of which is the removal of the negro quarters beyond the stockade...where they can at once have more comfort and freedom for improvement...Accordingly, a spot has been selected near the Drayton Plantation for a negro village. They are able to build their own houses, and will probably be encouraged to establish their own police and the supervision of their Superintendent. A teacher, Ashbell Landon, has been appointed, to be paid from the Quartermaster’s Department...Mr. McMath is at present the active and efficient Superintendent of these people on the island.”

NEW SOUTH, OCTOBER, 4, 1862

BUILDING FREEDOM’S HOME

Accounts say General Mitchel organized a contest between his engineers and the refugees, inviting each to build a sample cabin. He selected the house built by the contrabands as the model for Mitchelville’s homes. The Army Corps of Engineers laid out streets and lots. Contrabands built their own homes with lumber and nails provided by the army. In late October 1862, Mitchel reported groups of people building six houses a day.

[Mitchel] called [the contrabands] together, told them they must build houses for themselves. He gave instructions to the engineers, after he himself had selected the site for the proposed village, that they should build a log cabin as a sample. He also told the negroes to build a cabin after their own ideas, and he would decide which to take as a model for the rest of the buildings. The models were completed, and General Mitchel selected that built by the negroes. He then had all the contraband families provided with boards, nails, hammers, etc. and told them to build on each lot which had been set off,

a house for themselves. The negroes, unassisted by the advice or help of others than themselves, fell to work, and the result was the odd looking village, which they called Mitchelville.

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, MAY 18, 1863

“The other day I went out with Gen. Mitchel, on his invitation, to see the beginning of the negro village that he has started. There were already fourteen houses in a good state of forwardness. He has a squad of fifty negroes at work, and they are averaging one house a day. The houses are very comfortable and commodious structures; built partly with slabs from the saw mills, and partly with rough timber worked out by the negroes themselves. Thus far the thing promises well, and the negroes enter into it with all their heart. In fact nothing has ever taken such hold of them as this hope—the first they have ever had—of having homes of their own.”

PRIVATE LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK EVENING POST

Historic photographs taken in 1864 by Civil War photographer Samuel Cooley show the great individuality of Mitchelville’s residences. Small framed houses were built on wooden piers or wooden sills set on the ground. Most of the houses were clad in wood siding. Roofs had wood, metal, or bitumen paper shingles. Each house had a chimney or coal-burning stove. Some had glass windows others wooden shutters. The photos also show an assortment of fences, canvas lean-tos, and other outdoor fixtures. Each family had a one-quarter or one-half acre to cultivate

“...they are very comfortable, so [the women] told me as they displayed with great pride the interior of their imaginative mansions. Each cabin has a lot attached to it, which the negro women keep in a good state of cultivation, and raise vegetables of all kinds, which command a ready sale in the camps, or at officers’ quarters

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, MAY 18, 1863

KEEPING THE LAW

Self-government was essential to the success of Mitchelville. Only African Americans could live in the village. The town was governed by a supervisor and treasurer appointed by the military commander and councilmen elected by the residents. The council could enforce village ordinances, levy taxes, oversee sanitation and garbage regulations, and regulate all matters affecting the well-being of citizens and the good order of society. They were also charged with establishing schools and ensuring all children between the ages of six and 15 attended daily.

“As an evidence of the effects of the new system in inspiring self-reliance, it should be noted that the other evening they called a meeting of their own accord, and voted, the motion being regularly made and put, that it was now but just that they should provide the candles for their meetings, hitherto provided by the Government. A collection was taken at a subsequent meeting, and \$2.42 was the result.”

THE NEGROES AT PORT ROYAL: REPORT OF E. L. PIERCE, GOVERNMENT AGENT, TO HON. SALMON P. CHASE, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, FEBRUARY 3, 1862

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS!

Mitchelville's residents earned a living working in the military encampment as pilots, guides, carpenters, personal servants, laundresses, cooks, blacksmiths, stable hands, and general laborers. Some people worked as paid laborers on local cotton plantations. Many people, particularly women, grew small gardens and raised chickens and pigs to support and feed their families. They sold vegetables, eggs, fish, and other food stuffs to the soldiers in the encampment. Many able-bodied men enlisted in the Union Army.



Contraband office at Hilton Head.

“The people find employment in the stables, in the commissaries, in the stores, in policing the streets, and other situations. Some sell plants, oranges, and other edibles. They come over the narrow bridge in long lines in the morning, with buckets, baskets, bags, haversacks, etc. and return at evening with those articles filled variously. Some contain household necessaries, while others are filled with broken stale bread or other refuse of cookhouses. This may be called dry swill, and is intended for sundry black, white, and speckled swine.”

CHARLESTON LEADER, 1865

SHOPPING AT MITCHELVILLE

The US Army operated a commissary where both residents of Mitchelville and soldiers could buy food, personal items, and household goods. Government rations also were distributed from here. In addition, independent business owners could apply for a permit from the Treasury Department to operate a trading post or store in Mitchelville. Over the years, there may have been four or five stores in the village. William G. Tackaberry and Henry A. Ely opened a store in December 1864, and sold everything from coffee pots to shoe laces.

“There is a great demand for plates, knives, forks, tin ware, and better clothing, including even hoop skirts. Negro cloth...is very generally rejected. But there is no article if household furniture or wearing apparel, used by persons of moderate means among us, which they will not purchase when they are allowed the opportunity of labor and earning wages.”

ANONYMOUS, 1863

CITIZENSHIP THROUGH SERVICE

“Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters US, let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, 1863

The Confiscation Acts gave military commanders the authority to recruit slaves liberated in rebel territory. The Union army welcomed their labor and set them to non-combat fatigue duty. Former slaves served as cooks and servants, helped dig ditches, wrangled horses and cattle, and built camps and fortifications.

On January 1st, 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation opened the door to combat service. Freedmen served in segregated regiments led by white officers. At the beginning, not all Union officers and soldiers welcomed the addition of Black soldiers.



Recruitment offices.

“Say! Citizens of the Republic... will you have the government accept the proffered aid of these hundreds of thousands of willing men to help bring this war to a speedy end? Or will you allow the hatred of color, and the fear of destroying slavery to repel their aid, and prolong the horror of the war?”

EMANCIPATION LEAGUE, BOSTON, 1862

In time, their bravery and professionalism overcame this prejudice. African American soldiers proved their special zeal for victory over an old oppressor and for a new life as citizens. By the end of the war, nearly 200,000 African Americans, many former slaves, served in over 100 regiments. Nearly 40,000 men died. Twenty-five Black soldiers received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their heroic actions during the war.

“The experiment of arming blacks, so far as I have made it, has been a complete and even marvelous success... They are now eager beyond all things to take the field and be led into action, and it is the unanimous opinion of the officers who have had the charge of them, that in the peculiarities of this climate and country they will prove invaluable auxiliaries, fully equal to the similar regiments so long and successfully used by the British authorities in the West India Islands.”

GENERAL D. HUNTER, MAJOR-GENERAL COMMANDING

“The men are volunteers, having been led to enlist by duty to their race, to their kindred still in bonds, and to us, their allies.”

EDWARD L. PIERCE, THE FREEDMEN AT PORT ROYAL, SEPTEMBER 1863

SOUTH CAROLINA'S COLORED TROOPS

General David Hunter arrived on Hilton Head Island to assume command in March 1862. Hunter believed strongly that the Union Army should enlist contrabands as soldiers. He took action into his own hands by proclaiming that, as a military necessity, all persons in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida held as slaves were free. His directive ordered all able-bodied men to go to Hilton Head for military service. President Lincoln reversed Hunter's order two weeks later, squashing his efforts to raise an African American regiment.

1ST SC VOLUNTEER INFANTRY



1st SC Volunteer Infantry at Beaufort, SC.

In late summer of 1862, General Rufus Saxton, with proper authority, recruited freedmen for the 1st South Carolina Volunteers (SCVI). Colonel Thomas Higginson arrived on Hilton Head in February 1863 to serve as the regiment's commander. The regiment was re-designated the 33rd United States Colored Infantry in 1864.

“On the 10th of October, General Saxton, being provided with competent authority to raise five thousand colored troops, began to recruit a regiment. His authority from the War Department bore the date August 25th, and the order conferring it states the object to be ‘to guard the plantations, and protect the inhabitants from captivity and murder.’ This was the first clear authority ever given by the Government to raise a negro regiment in this war.”

**EDWARD L. PIERCE, THE FREEDMEN AT PORT ROYAL,
SEPTEMBER 1863**

2ND SC VOLUNTEER INFANTRY

On May 22, 1863, Colonel James Montgomery mustered freedmen from Hilton Head Island and Beaufort into the 2nd SCVI (later 34th USCT). Ten days later, during a raid on Combahee River plantations led by Montgomery and Harriet Tubman, they freed 800 slaves in a single night.

3RD SC VOLUNTEER INFANTRY

After the Combahee River raid, Harriet Tubman took 100 freed slaves to the recruiting office on Hilton Head Island where they enlisted in the 3rd SCVI. The regiment moved to Jacksonville, FL in 1864 and joined the 4th SCVI to form the 21st USCT.

POSTBELLUM MITCHELVILLE

The Civil War ended on April 9, 1865. The 21st US Colored Infantry Regiment (3rd SCIV) returned to Hilton Head Island in 1867 and mustered out of Federal service. The Federal army officially left Hilton Head in January 1868, and with it went many paying jobs. The people of Mitchelville did not have clear title to their homes and began to leave, looking for work and a new life. Soon many homes were abandoned; the old houses often salvaged for building materials. In 1875, heirs of the original owner paid back taxes and obtained title to Fish Haul Plantation, including Mitchelville. The heirs subdivided and sold the property in small lots. In 1885, Freedman Gabriel Gardner purchased 650 acres which he divided into small lots to sell. Mitchelville ceased to be a town and became a close-knit, kinship-based community.

By 1900, there were 2,235 people on Hilton Head Island. Almost all were African Americans. Wealthy northerners began to buy large sections of the island including land owned by native islanders. By 1900, African Americans owned only one-quarter of the land. By the early 20th century Mitchelville no longer appeared on maps of the area. Fish Haul Plantation and the land that was once Mitchelville were sold to the Hilton Head Company in 1950.

THE GULLAH GEECHEE LEGACY

Today Hilton Head's native islanders, the descendants of enslaved people who lived and worked on Sea Island and Lowcountry plantations, are known as Gullah Geechee people. Their diverse African roots and enslavement in isolated communities created a unique culture that is embodied in their cuisine, music and performing arts, language and oral traditions, crafts, and religion and spirituality.

In 2006, the US Congress created the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The Corridor encompasses a cultural and linguistic area along the southeastern coast of the United States from Pender County, North Carolina to St. John's County, Florida and 30 miles inland. The Corridor celebrates, preserves, and shares the important contributions made to American culture and history by Gullah Geechee people. Mitchelville is an important destination along the Corridor.

PRESERVING MITCHELVILLE

Mitchelville is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A significant portion of the village is preserved at Fish Haul Creek Park owned and operated by the Town of Hilton Head Island. The park is the future home of Mitchelville Freedom Park. The Mitchelville Preservation Project is working to create a multi-media visitor experience that will celebrate the historical, cultural, social, political, economic, and spiritual story of Mitchelville's former residents.

GULLAH GEECHEE GENEALOGY

The Heritage Library Foundation, students from Clemson University, and members of the Mitchelville Preservation Project are working with Ancestry.com to identify people who lived at Mitchelville between 1862 and 1868. Using hospital and military records, information from the National Archives in Washington, DC, and local family documents they have discovered the names of over 500 residents. They hope to connect living descendants to their Mitchelville ancestors.

DOING HISTORICAL RESEARCH:

Historians study the past by gathering information from written records, photographs, and other graphic representations to learn about people, places, and events. The time after which written records are available varies from region to region in the United States and from country to country around the world. Learning about the past helps us to appreciate our traditions and the traditions of others, and our country's heritage. History can help us understand how the past shapes the world today. Historical research gives us insight into the people who lived and worked at Mitchelville.

HOW DO WE LEARN ABOUT THE PAST FROM WRITTEN RECORDS?

Historians use primary sources, such as personal diaries, journals, letters, tax records, census records, wills, plats, photographs, military records, and court papers. Historians take the information they find in primary sources and weave them together to tell a story of the past as they understand it. Sometimes they use other historians' interpretations of events and people. These are secondary sources of information. Although these sources are further removed from the events and people they describe, they can often provide a more comprehensive view of the past.

HOW DO HISTORIANS UNDERTAKE RESEARCH?

Here are basic steps a historian follows to do research.

- The historian selects a property, person, or event to study.
- The historian outlines questions to answer.
- The historian visits libraries and archives, reads old newspapers, conducts oral histories, and examines personal collections to collect information.
- The historian analyzes this information, makes conclusions, and writes about their findings.

CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

PICTURING MITCHELVILLE

The American Civil War was one of the first major conflicts to be photographed extensively. Photographers worked as private citizens and as employees of the Confederate or Union governments. Photographers traveled into harm's way, photographing camp life, preparations for battle, and the battle's aftermath.

Mathew Brady is probably the best-known of these photographers. He felt it was his duty to document the war and petitioned President Lincoln for permission. Lincoln agreed as long as Brady financed the project himself. He hired a team of photographers and fitted them out with traveling studios loaded onto wagons. Brady's photographs were reintroduced to the American public in 1990, thanks to Ken Burns' ground breaking documentary about the Civil War.

Photographs of the war became popular nationwide and were often sold as stereo views, three dimensional photographs created with a twin lens camera. The photographs were viewed with handheld stereoscopes developed in Great Britain in the early 1800s and refined by Frenchman Jules Duboscq in 1851. Oliver Wendell Holmes introduced a small affordable version in 1861.

In 1864, Samuel A. Cooley, official photographer with the US Army, traveled to Hilton Head Island. He took a series of photographs of the Union encampment and Mitchelville. Today, thousands of photographs, including Cooley's images, can be viewed online through the Library of Congress or the National Archives and Records Administration.



Samuel A. Cooley, official photographer with the US Army.

Samuel Cooley took eight known photographs of Mitchelville in 1864. These photographs show the small, modestly constructed Mitchelville houses that are described in the photo legends as “refugee quarters.” We are fortunate Cooley took the time to visit Mitchelville and take these photos. Perhaps his interest speaks to the importance and uniqueness of this experimental community. The images show the individuality of residences. Some are symmetrical and front-gabled; others are asymmetrical or have multiple doors on the façade. Most were framed houses clad in weatherboard siding with raised wooden floors. Some have glazed windows, board doors, and tar paper roofs while others have unglazed shuttered windows, and wood shingled roofs. Most buildings seem to have only one room although several houses appear to have small additions. The photographs show an assortment of fences, canvas lean-tos, and other outdoor fixtures. One home seems to have a privy.

The photographs also confirm historical accounts that the village was comprised of rows of regularly spaced houses on broad streets, with each house at the front of a small lot. As illustrated in the 1865 map, the irregular spatial arrangement of houses on the southern, eastern and western fringes suggests these areas may have been developed later as the population reached its peak in late 1864 and 1865. With much of the population seeking employment at the military depot, the first homes would have been constructed close to the bridge over the marsh at the north end of the island. Indeed, these areas in the northeastern fringe toward the shore appear far more orderly with a more evenly distributed pattern within the blocks.

LESSON ACTIVITIES:

ACTIVITY ONE: HOW DO HISTORIANS LEARN ABOUT THE PAST?

- The teacher will introduce students to the general history of Mitchelville using the background information and the Historical Timeline provided in the Lesson Plan Documents or on the Finding Freedom's Home website.
 - o What happened at the Battle of Port Royal?
 - o Who are the Contrabands who come to the Union encampment?
 - o Why does General Mitchel create Mitchelville?
 - o Why does Mitchelville disappear?
- The teacher will lead a discussion about how historians undertake research to learn about the past using the Sample Archival Documents. As a teacher-guided classroom activity students will assess projected images of different kinds of documents. Students will identify primary and secondary sources.
 - o How do we know about Mitchelville if it no longer exists?
 - o How do historians learn about the past?
 - o What are primary and secondary sources?

ASSESSMENT:

Students will complete the Historical Research Worksheet.

MATERIALS:

Historical Timeline; Sample Archival Documents; Historical Research Worksheet

ACTIVITY TWO: USING HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS TO LEARN ABOUT MITCHELVILLE

- The teacher will continue to the discussion about the history of Mitchelville.
- As a teacher-guided classroom activity, students will review three sources including a description of Mitchelville from the *Finding Freedom's Home* website (or printout); a historic illustration the Contraband camp from Harper's Weekly; and a historical newspaper account of the camp (printout provided). For each source students will:
 - o Identify six facts (to distinguish between fact and opinion)
 - o Connect the information (to another text; to themselves; to another historical event)
 - o Identify three questions they want to answer (to improve comprehension by fostering interaction with the text; to clarify the text)
 - o Identify possible resources for answering the class questions
- Facts, questions, and answers are recorded by the teacher or each student and are referred to throughout the lesson. The class builds the list of facts as they complete each source analysis.

ASSESSMENT:

Students will complete the Document Analysis Worksheet.

MATERIALS:

Description of Mitchelville (website home page or PDF); Harper's Weekly Illustration: Contraband Barracks; Newspaper Article: New South, October 1862; Document Analysis Worksheet

ACTIVITY THREE: UNDERSTANDING CHRONOLOGY

- The teacher will lead a discussion about chronology to help students understand how events are ordered.
- The teacher will invite students to imagine they are a historian that has found a box filled with documents in the dusty attic of a distance relative. They must try to understand what event, person or place these documents record.
- Students will work in groups or individually to place historical documents in chronological order to better understand the connection between the events (Chronology Worksheet).

ASSESSMENT:

Students will complete the Chronology Worksheet.

MATERIALS:

Chronology Worksheet

ACTIVITY FOUR: BUILDING A TIMELINE OF EVENTS AT MITCHELVILLE

- The teacher will lead a discussion about timelines to help students understand how events are ordered.
- The teacher will provide a handout or project a series of events associated with the history of Mitchelville. As a classroom activity, the teacher and students will work together to place the events in chronological order. A PDF of these events is provided in Activity Four Timeline Events. Events include:
 - o Union Army leaves Mitchelville
 - o Secession of South Carolina
 - o Passage of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution
 - o General Ormsby M. Mitchel's speech at the dedication of the First African Baptist Church on Hilton Head Island, calling for the creation of Mitchelville
 - o 32nd USCT begins construction on Fort Howell August 19, 1864
- Students will work in groups or individually to combine their Document Chronology Worksheet (from Activity Three) and the new classroom chronology to build a timeline.
- Students can use the Finding Freedom's Home website for guidance.

ASSESSMENT:

Students will combine events in chronological order from their Document Chronology Worksheet and the classroom chronology to complete the Timeline Worksheet.

MATERIALS:

Activity Four Timeline of Events; Timeline Worksheet

ACTIVITY FIVE: WRITE LIKE A HISTORIAN

- Students will select an event or document from their timeline and write a story about the event as a historian.
- Students should think about their point of view, how to describe the event without bias, and who they think will read their story.
- Students should think about whether they need additional sources or research to write an accurate story.

TEACHER GUIDANCE QUESTIONS:

1. Who created the various forms of information? The laws governing the community? The sketch? The photograph?
2. What were they trying to say? What was their view point? Is anyone's view not represented?
3. What information do you want to know that these sources can't provide?
4. What other lines of evidence would you explore to find answers to your questions? Are there other documents you would want to examine? People you would talk to? If you could travel back in time to Mitchelville, what do you think you would find?
5. What problem was Mitchelville created to fix? What evidence is there that Mitchelville was the solution? What additional information could you look for to prove its success or failure?

STANDARDS:

Standard 3-4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of life in the antebellum period, the causes and effects of the Civil War, and the impact of Reconstruction in South Carolina.

3-4.1 Compare the economic conditions for various classes of people in South Carolina, including the elite, the middle class, the lower class, the independent farmers, and the enslaved and free African Americans.

3-4.5 Explain how the destruction caused by the Civil War affected the economy and daily lives of South Carolinians, including the scarcity of food, clothing, and living

- essentials and the continuing racial tensions.
- 3-4.6 Summarize the positive and negative effects of Reconstruction in South Carolina, including the development of public education; the establishment of sharecropping; racial advancements and tensions; and the attempts to rebuild towns, factories, and farms.
- Standard 4-6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the causes, the course, and the effects of the American Civil War.
- 4-6.5 Explain the social, economic, and political effects of the Civil War on the United States.

RESOURCES:

National Register of Historic Places <http://www.nps.gov/nr/>
Mitchelville Preservation Project www.mitchelvillepreservationproject.com
Coastal Discovery Museum www.coastaldiscovery.org
Hilton Head Island Heritage Library www.heritagelib.org
Penn Center www.penncenter.com
South Carolina Department of Archives and History www.scdah.sc.gov
Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org
Ancestry www.ancestry.com
Library of Congress www.loc.gov
National Archives and Records Administration www.archives.gov

FURTHER READING:

The Battle of Port Royal by Michael Coker
The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina 1514-1861 by Lawrence Rowland
Freedom National by James Oakes
Mitchelville: Experiment in Freedom by Michael Trinkley