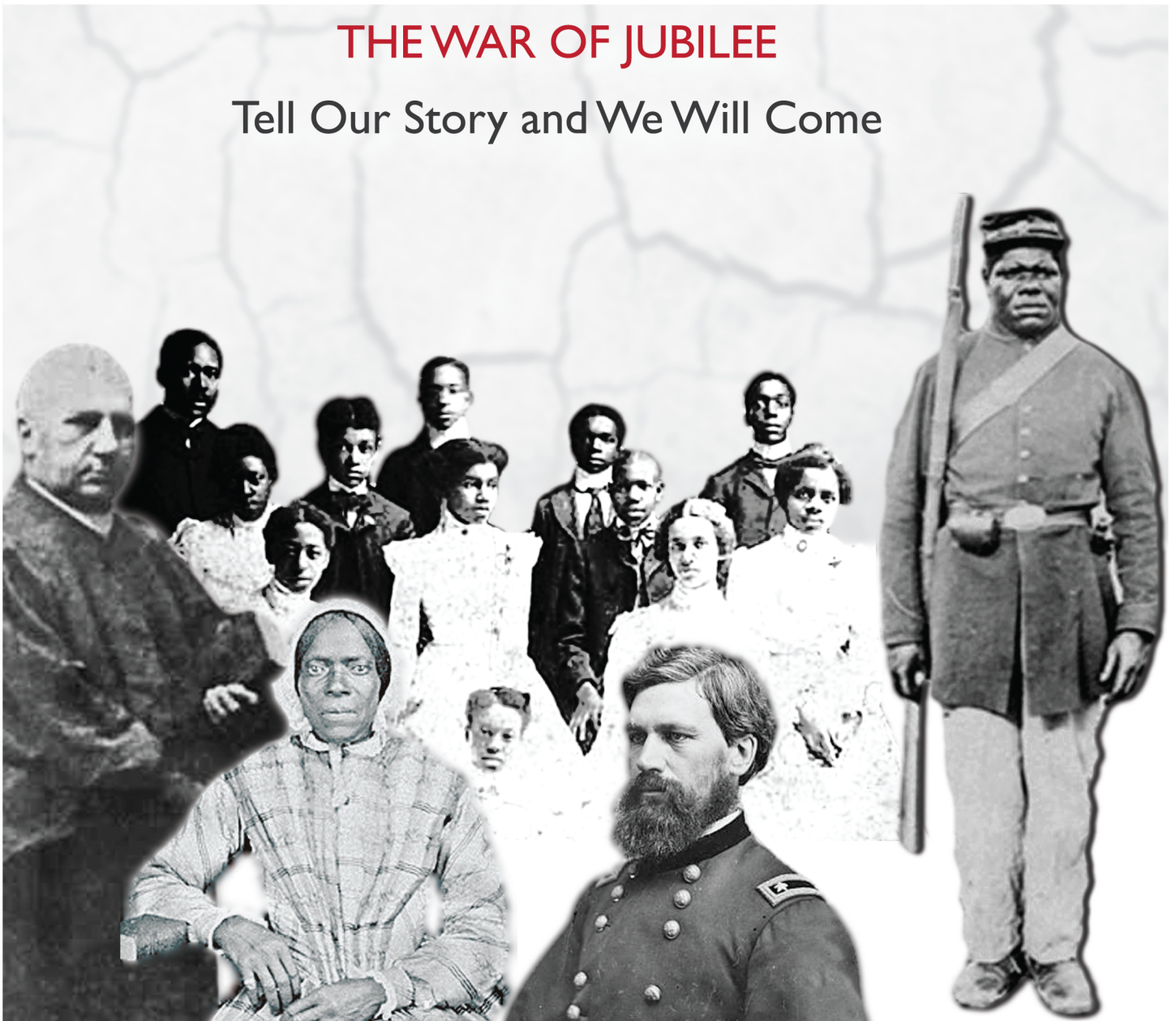




Assessing African American Attitudes Toward the Civil War

THE WAR OF JUBILEE

Tell Our Story and We Will Come



Prepared by Hermina Glass-Avery, MHP
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For Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
National Park Service

Focus Group Final Report

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This summary report was conducted and prepared by Hermina Glass-Avery, Associate Director of the Center for
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2010 FOCUS GROUP FACILITATION TEAM



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The United States Colored Troops (USCT) were regiments of the United States Army during the American Civil War. They were composed of African-American (“colored”) soldiers. The men of the USCT were the forerunners of the famous Buffalo Soldiers.



Above: Sergeant William H. Carney (1840-1908), Company C, 54th Massachusetts (Colored) Infantry; Place of Action: Fort Wagner, South Carolina, 18 July 1863. Carney was the first African American awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

William Carney was born a slave March 28, 1842 near Norfolk, Virginia. His father, also named William, used the Underground Railroad to escape, then sent word back to him. Then he escaped using the same route, and joined his father in New Bedford, Massachusetts. William and his father worked on the docks and went to sea in whaling and cargo ships. They saved their money and were able to buy the freedom of his mother and his sister. He worked mostly as a sailor up until the outbreak of the Civil War. He joined the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and served in Company C. When the 54th made the first assault on Fort Wagner in Charleston Harbor, S.C. on July 18, 1863, he seized the Colors (flag) from the fallen color bearer, held it aloft, and was immediately wounded four times. When the order to retreat was given, he was one of the last to leave the fort. Although seriously wounded, he was able to make it back. When he arrived at the hospital tent, he said, “Boys, the old flag never touched the ground!”

History of African Americans in the Civil War



“Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States.” ~ Frederick Douglass

These words spoken by Frederick Douglass moved many African Americans to enlist in the Union Army and fight for their freedom. With President Abraham Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the Civil War became a war to save the union and to abolish slavery. Approximately 180,000 African Americans comprising 163 units served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and many more African Americans served in the Union Navy. Both free African-Americans and runaway slaves joined the fight.

On July 17, 1862, Congress passed two acts allowing the enlistment of African Americans, but official enrollment occurred only after the September 1862 issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. In general, white soldiers and officers believed that black men lacked the courage to fight and fight well. In October 1862, African American soldiers of the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers silenced their critics by repulsing attacking Confederates at the battle of Island Mound, Missouri. By August 1863, fourteen Negro Regiments were in the field and ready for service. At the battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana, May 27, 1863, the African American soldiers bravely advanced over open ground in the face of deadly artillery fire. Although the attack failed, the black soldiers proved their capability to withstand the heat of battle.

On July 17, 1863, at Honey Springs, Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, the 1st Kansas Colored fought with courage again. Union troops under General James Blunt ran into a strong Confederate force under General Douglas Cooper. After a two-hour bloody engagement, Cooper’s soldiers retreated. The 1st Kansas, which had held the center of the Union line, advanced to within fifty paces of the Confederate line and exchanged fire for some twenty minutes until the Confederates broke and ran. General Blunt wrote after the battle, “I never saw such fighting as was done by the Negro regiment....The question that negroes will fight is settled; besides they make better soldiers in every respect than any troops I have ever had under my command.”

The most widely known battle fought by African Americans was the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, by the 54th Massachusetts on July 18, 1863. The 54th volunteered to lead the assault on the strongly-fortified Confederate positions. The soldiers of the 54th scaled the fort’s parapet, and were only driven back after brutal hand-to-hand combat.

Although black soldiers proved themselves as reputable soldiers, discrimination in pay and other areas remained widespread. According to the Militia Act of 1862, soldiers of African descent were to receive \$10.00 a month,

plus a clothing allowance of \$3.50. Many regiments struggled for equal pay, some refusing any money until June 15, 1864, when Congress granted equal pay for all black soldiers.

African American soldiers participated in every major campaign of 1864-1865 except Sherman's invasion of Georgia. The year 1864 was especially eventful for African American troops. On April 12, 1864, at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest led his 2,500 men against the Union-held fortification, occupied by 292 black and 285 white soldiers. After driving in the Union pickets and giving the garrison an opportunity to surrender, Forrest's men swarmed into the fort with little difficulty and drove the Federals down the river's bluff into a deadly crossfire. Casualties were high and only sixty-two of the U.S. Colored Troops survived the fight. Many accused the Confederates of perpetuating a massacre of black troops, and the controversy continues today. The battle cry for the Negro soldier east of the Mississippi River became "Remember Fort Pillow!"

The Battle of New Market Heights, Virginia (Chaffin's Farm) became one of the most heroic engagements involving African Americans. On September 29, 1864, the African American division of the Eighteenth Corps, after being pinned down by Confederate artillery fire for about 30 minutes, charged the earthworks and rushed up the slopes of the heights. During the hour-long engagement the division suffered tremendous casualties. Of the sixteen African Americans who were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Civil War, fourteen received the honor as a result of their actions at New Market Heights.

In January, 1864, General Patrick Cleburne and several other Confederate officers in the Army of the Tennessee proposed using slaves as soldiers since the Union was using black troops. Cleburne recommended offering slaves their freedom if they fought and survived. Confederate President Jefferson Davis refused to consider Cleburne's proposal and forbade further discussion of the idea. The concept, however, did not die. By the fall of 1864, the South was losing more and more ground, and some believed that only by arming the slaves could defeat be averted. On March 13, the Confederate Congress passed General Order 14, and President Davis signed the order into law. The order was issued March 23, 1865, but only a few African American companies were raised, and the war ended before they could be used in battle.

In actual numbers, African American soldiers comprised 10% of the entire Union Army. Losses among African Americans were high, and from all reported casualties, approximately one-third of all African Americans enrolled in the military lost their lives during the Civil War.

**** This article is courtesy of the National Park Service's "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" website.**



Private Hubbard D. Pryor, a runaway slave, age 22, from Polk County, Georgia. ca 1864. *Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration Collection*

African American Perspectives on the Civil War and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

INTRODUCTION

The period 2011 through 2015, commonly referred to as the “Civil War Sesquicentennial” or “Civil War 150”, marks the 150th commemoration of the Civil War, a watershed in American history. Throughout the country, national parks, battlefields, and other National Park Service (NPS) sites will offer interpretations of Civil War activity and reflect upon the theme “From the Civil War to Civil Rights,” an idea that requires specific recognition of the change in attitudes of groups impacted by the war over time. In *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965*, Robert Cook asserts, “...race was a principal fault-line. The centennial was built on a racially exclusive interpretation of the Civil War era. This interpretation denied agency to blacks and downplayed the significance of those events, notably emancipation and Lincoln’s use of African American troops, which dominated the marginalized black folk memory of the Civil War.” Given the intersection of the centennial commemoration of the Civil War with the Civil Rights movement, the emancipationist narrative became lost in the pageantry of the Lost Cause and in segregationists’ attempts to link the glory of the past with the then present. This is evident in the multitudinous memorials and statues that commemorate the role of Confederate forces on the battlefields of Chickamauga and Kennesaw Mountain in Georgia, Shiloh in Tennessee, Vicksburg in Mississippi, and Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. The Civil War Sesquicentennial aims to address these issues of the past and to provide a means of ensuring that all histories are adequately represented for modern public audiences.



Cold and hungry, Private Hubbard D. Pryor made his way to Federal lines in Chattanooga, where after a few square meals and a day of recuperation, he joined the 44th USCI, ca. 1864. Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration Collection

Hereto Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (KEMO) in Cobb County, Georgia is initiating plans to expand its current interpretive program to an inclusive model that is more culturally and ethnically diverse. This idea follows a congressional charge in 2000 that advised NPS sites to explore slavery as a causality of the Civil War and to find ways to increase access and relevance to underserved populations. To meet these two goals, KEMO partnered with the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era (Center) at Kennesaw State University to research the attitudes of African Americans toward the Civil War. Central to this quantitative research is the understanding that while African and African American slaves were two of the populations most affected by the Civil War, their stories are often absent from Civil War battlefield site interpretations. As a vital starting point, the Center hosted focus group sessions with important African American community organizations in the Metropolitan Atlanta area.

FOCUS GROUP GOALS

The three goals of the focus groups are to:

1. Increase understanding of the local African American community's perspectives on the Civil War
2. Determine how African Americans would like the African American experience interpreted to the broader public
3. Gain insight on how to incorporate the African American narrative into park interpretations

METHODOLOGY

(a) Respondent Universe:

Five African American community organizations in the metropolitan Atlanta area will assist the park in recruiting focus group participants. These organizations are:

1. Cobb County NAACP
2. African American Historical and Genealogical Society -Metro Atlanta Chapter
3. Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network
4. Friends of West End Neighborhood Development, Inc
5. Diverse group of professional historians, preservationists and other cultural workers

(b) Sampling Plan/Procedures:

Recruiting will be done through presentations to each community organization, followed by an invitation letter to individuals who express an interest in participating. The five focus groups will consist of 8 to 10 participants, with one focus group from each of the 5 community organizations. Respondents will not be required to fill out any form or do any type of paperwork except give their names and contact information. Each focus group should last 2 hours.

(c) Instrument Administration:

All focus groups will be facilitated by Hermina Glass-Avery of Kennesaw State University. Ms Glass-Avery is familiar with the civil rights community that the focus groups are accessing. The discussions will be recorded, and a student intern will take notes. In addition, major points and themes will be written by the facilitator on a flip chart so focus group participants will be able to see a record of the discussion. The focus groups will be held at locations and on dates and times convenient to the participants. Light refreshments will be served, but no other incentives will be offered. The following script of open-ended questions will guide the individual focus group discussions.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Why are you interested in participating in this discussion?

What are your feelings or attitudes about the American Civil War?

Do you see the Civil War as part of the larger struggle for Civil Rights?

Have you ever visited a Civil War battlefield, such as Kennesaw Mountain, or any other location associated with the Civil War?

What aspects of a Civil War site, such as Kennesaw Mountain, are (or would be) important to you?

PROBE QUESTIONS

What did (would) you find most interesting about the stories or history told at the site?

What didn't (wouldn't) you like about the way the story of the Civil War was told at the site?

Is there anything that could improve the interpretation at this or other Civil War sites?

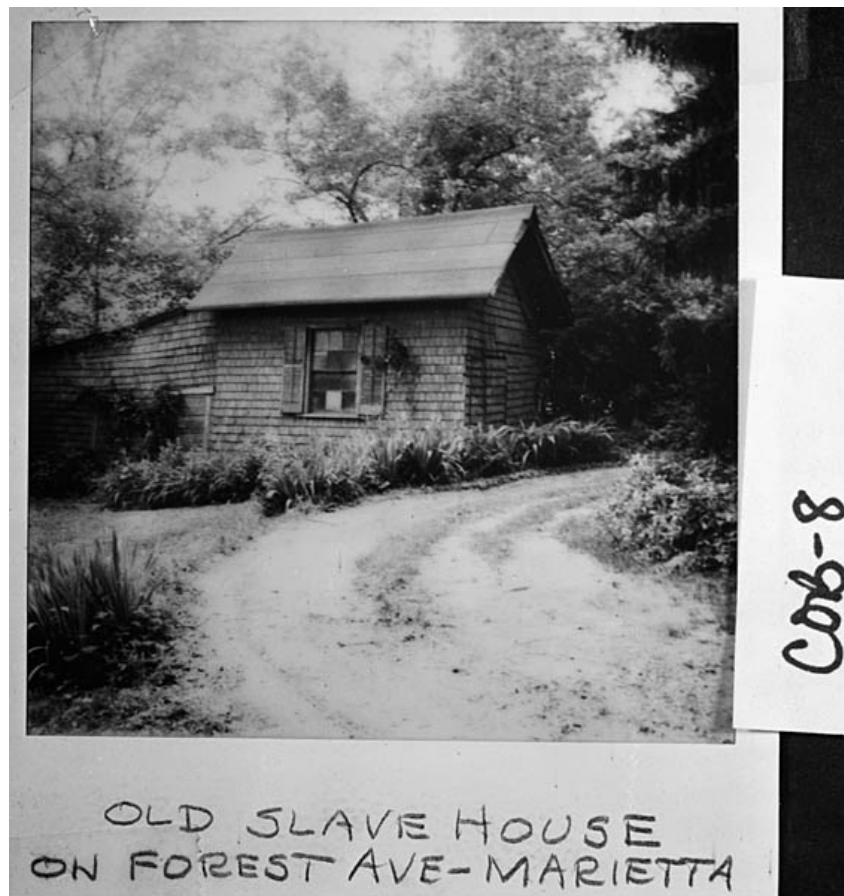
If you visited Kennesaw Mountain or another Civil War site today, what would be your expectations regarding the historical and cultural interpretation of the American Civil War?

FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION

“Thank you for participating in this discussion. The staff at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and Kennesaw State University are interested in your opinions about the Civil War and how African American perspectives on the War, slavery, and the Civil Rights movement should be presented to the public. This information will help the park by making sure that African Americans’ views are represented in the upcoming observation of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, which will take place from 2011 to 2015. So what we hear from you today will help shape Civil War interpretation at the park for the next several years.

“This session should last about 2 hours, and has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act. The Office of Management and Budget control number and expiration date are available at your request. As mentioned in the letter we sent you, I’ll be recording the discussion so that I can write a report for the park. However, your comments are voluntary. Your names will not be included in the report, and your identity will not be linked in any way to your answers.”

“We’d like to hear everything you have to say, so I’ll ask you to speak one at a time. Finally, there are no right or wrong answers. All of your comments will be helpful to the park as it develops its interpretive programs. Does anyone have any questions before we start?”



Courtesy Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives

QUESTION AND RESPONSE SUMMARY

Question 1: Before we start recording, let's go around the room and have each of you introduce yourself and briefly tell us why you were interested in participating in this discussion.

Each session commenced with the lead facilitator explaining the project and reading the NPS's scripted "Introduction."

Focus group participants expressed a unanimous appreciation in participating in the focus group and in the opportunity to contribute their individual and collective opinions. Approximately ten participants expressed some skepticism toward KEMO and NPS's current efforts to include the African American experience at this specific time. All participants vocalized an eagerness to see whether KEMO would actually implement their ideas as well as a willingness to withhold judgment. Each group expressed appreciation for the focus group outreach process and verbalized an eagerness to visit Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park themselves once the expanded interpretive plans were implemented at the park.

Question 2: What are your feelings or attitudes about the American Civil War?

An association exercise served as a soft lead-in for the session. The facilitators asked respondents to offer one word or a short phrase association for the term "Civil War." While the majority of respondents offered terms that were typically associated with the Civil War such as war, emancipation, slavery, Lincoln, cotton and Gone With the Wind, a few of the participants offered atypical responses to the question:

"The Civil War was a war of Jubilee."

"African Americans suffer unnecessarily from the shame of slavery and need to rid themselves of the embarrassment of slavery."

"The NPS should have discussions on contraband."

"Shackles of the mind," another voice said.

One participant, a Philadelphia native, stated: "I learned in school that the North came to the rescue of the blacks in the south. I did not have a good understanding of what the Civil War was about...because I did not know where blacks stood."

Throughout the focus groups, participants reflected on their feelings about the Civil War. The following are representative of the majority of the opinions.

Sub-Question: Is the Civil War still relevant today?

"I think [the Civil War] is. I think the problem is the focus, especially since we are talking about schools. One thing I will give the Confederate advocates is that they really know how to get their point across. They know how to get it across to their children, their grandchildren, and so on. It is keeping the memory alive. They are going off of their emotions, so facts are not always present. You will hear about the glory, locations, and you hear about who won and who lost and names. You won't hear about concepts leading to what happened afterwards. Usually, the next unit after that is Reconstruction. That doesn't say anything about African Americans families and African

HARRIET POWERS

Harriet Powers, an African American farm woman of Clarke County, Georgia, made this quilt (below) in about 1886. She exhibited it at the Athens Cotton Fair of 1886 where it captured the imagination of Jennie Smith, a young internationally-trained local artist. Of her discovery, Jennie later wrote: "I have spent my whole life in the South, and am perfectly familiar with thirty patterns of quilts, but I had never seen an original design, and never a living creature portrayed in patchwork, until the year 1886, when there was held in Athens, Georgia, a 'Cotton-Fair,' which was on a much larger scale than an ordinary county fair, as there was a 'Wild West' show, and Cotton Weddings; and a circus, all at the same time. There was a large accumulation farm products--the largest potatoes, tallest cotton stalk, biggest water-melon! Best display of pickles and preserves made by exhibitor! Best display of seeds &c and all the attractions usual to such occasions, and in one corner there hung a quilt-which 'captured my eye' and after much difficulty I found the owner, a negro woman, who lives in the country on a little farm whereon she and husband make a respectable living The scenes on the quilt were biblical and I was fascinated. I offered to buy it, but it was not for sale at any price."

Source: Smithsonian National Museum of American History



Above: Photograph of Harriet Powers (1837-1911), born enslaved in Athens, Georgia and known for her "Bible quilts", one the greatest examples of African American folk art.



Above: Bible Quilt, made circa 1895-98. *Courtesy Smithsonian National Museum of American History*
 Right: Pictorial Quilt, made circa 1885-1886. *Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts Boston*



Americans unless it's the African American men who got in the Senate.”

Another voice said: “In watching the news lately and framing [this] in the context of what’s happening lately... the history books in Texas regarding slavery and the civil war, in a way are sanitizing it. I think this program will rewrite history. So I think this program is very significant of what is going on.”

One participant viewed history as depicted in popular culture culpable for the limited understanding of the Civil War:

“It seems history skips from Reconstruction and bam we are in the Twenties. And even some of the specifics, if you ask a southern student, Black or White, something specific, a neutral or Confederate, what types of crops were talked about during the Civil War, you are going to hear about cotton. Why? Because movies and the pictures show Black people picking cotton. You don’t hear about anything else.”

Question 3: Do you see the Civil War as part of the larger struggle for Civil Rights?

Once again the focus groups were unanimous in their opinion that the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement are linked. Some participants described the association without any prompting. Others made the correlation after recalling the steps from slavery to emancipation through reconstruction and Jim Crow to the Civil Rights era. The following are representative statements:

“The Civil War was a big, bloody war... [which] led to emancipation.”

“ If not for the war, how long would it have taken for emancipation?”

“In spite of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, the U.S. aborted freedom... After the 1860s African Americans were held in semi-slavery.”

“1850-1860s was a Civil Rights [movement] that was fulfilled in 1960’s.”

“Yes, the Civil Rights Movement is connected to the Civil War. Martin Luther King Jr. made several correlations between the movement and the war. He stated the same thing. States rights is the right to do what? To continue to subjugate black folks like they had been doing for centuries.”

“The civil rights movement was an effort to show that blacks are human. The Emancipation Proclamation ensured freedom for blacks, that we were no longer 3/5 of a person, but whole human beings.”

“Like the Constitution gave the forefathers the right to freedom of speech. Now, during the Civil Rights movement, we could say what we wanted to say and somebody was bound to listen to us...the world listened to what we had to say.”

One participant moved beyond the Civil Rights movement and offered a nuanced view of labor conditions then and now.

“Looking at the Civil War, it was a battle for cheap labor – low wage labor. In the south, the Blacks were working for free with a gun to their heads. In the North, you had the low wage Irish immigrants who came in and

worked in the factories. After the war, the Blacks still worked for low wages, cheap labor.”

“In the north, they lived in the ghettos and were domestics and for cheap labor again. Today, cheap labor comes in every shape and color in the rainbow. In Cobb County, the low wage labor lives in the southwest district and during the day, they cross over to East Cobb and work.”

Question 4: What aspects of a Civil War site, such as Kennesaw Mountain, are (or would be) important to you?

One-third of the total participants had visited a Civil War site and the remaining two-thirds had not. Of the one-third, 75% had visited more than one site. A few individuals had traveled extensively visiting Civil War sites and other sites of historical significance to African Americans. The majority of the groups had not visited KEMO. Of the few participants who had visited KEMO, they had visited as part of a church group and one individual had visited the park on a date many years ago.

When asked why they had or had not visited KEMO, respondents offered the following:

“Kennesaw was critical to the taking of Atlanta during the Civil War battles.”

“African American history is not a part of that park.”

“Curious.”

“The Mountain was there as a strategic point.”

“Rail heads located there were related to the taking of Atlanta.”

“Politics got me interested in the Civil War – around the time the (Georgia) flag was changed. Kennesaw was one of the places that I was interested in.”

“Church took us to an exhibit and one of the games the children played was supposedly from the Civil War times.”

“Black people died trying to take that mountain.”

“Didn’t have a reason to come to Kennesaw Mountain.”

When asked why they had or had not visited other Civil War sites, respondents offered these answers:

“My community was settled by Black soldiers of the Civil War, Orange Mound near Memphis, TN.”

“We lived in Mississippi and we both come from very educated families...Black teachers took us to Vicksburg.”

“McAllister State Park [is a] fortification site built by African Americans.”

“My favorite Civil War spot is McAllister State Park. Everybody should go. It was pretty simple. Most of the White men were not well. With their health conditions it made more sense to use labor in the area. Logic dictated that it was probably the Blacks who built the miniature mountain. They almost looked like Native American mounds.”

One participant mentioned that the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network had visited every national park in the state of Georgia over 20 years ago.

Question 5: If you visited Kennesaw Mountain or another Civil War site today, what would be your expectations regarding the historical and cultural interpretation of the American Civil War?

One participant spoke eloquently on the topic:

“What I see lacking is a passion to interpret fully. I’m talking about interpretation. What I find missing are the biographies. The stories behind people’s lives. One good example of that is an interpretation at a park that is near Thornton Road – Sweetwater Creek State Park. They have a wonderful interpretation of African Americans families in the Civil War. I have not seen that kind of attention [paid] to African Americans families. That is a well-done interpretation. It was the first time I ever really saw the documentation in the stories, and there was a button you could push and someone’s diary is read. They talked about women and children being taken up to Tennessee to work, and I believe it was to work in factories. My point is that we have enough interpretation with [Herbert] Guttman and other people to use the documentation for the interpretation. That is my point. We should use the document for interpretation”.



Daguerreotype of a slave woman in Georgia. *Courtesy Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives*

Another voice recalled why education about the African American experience in the Civil War matters:

“I was in the service in 1963 stationed in Germany and right after President Kennedy was killed. There were only two folks of color and I happened to be one of them. I was ostracized - made to feel uncomfortable. I was too young to know what was going on. I was just fighting to be fighting. I found myself thinking about earlier wars – like the Civil War era. I used to read a lot and still read a lot. The bottom line is when President Lincoln allowed Blacks into the Civil War, originally they were in positions of maintenance and support. Blacks had to fight within the Union Army to be able to fight. We today, our folks, do not have a clue, down through the years, don’t have a clue of what has been done for us and these are the stories that do not get around. I am just so glad that you are doing what you are doing.”

Again referring to McAllister State Park, one speaker stated:

“The atmosphere felt like there had not been a lot of intrusion. It was a better example of how a park should be kept.”

The following comments are drawn from all the focus groups. Individuals were passionate about change and the need for an inclusive re-interpretation of the African American experience at most relevant NPS sites.

“The Civil War is part of the South’s DNA.”

“We need a way to overcome the shame or embarrassment of slavery - to see humanity. We need a picture to see humanity.”

“There has to be a desire to see the human aspect of the Civil War - including stories of African Americans in the war and afterwards.”

“Mose Hayes. What else was he going to do as a slave but fight in the Confederacy with his master? Follow up with his progeny’s success in Mississippi.”

“One Civil War site offers confirmation of the family history of a cannon-loader in Vicksburg.”

“A park should not over-intellectualize. We want to see human emotions.”

Contrasting views were also vocalized:

“We need to stop with the ‘feelings’ ... we need proper information.”

“A site should not be entertainment like Stone Mountain, a tourist site...It’s unfair... Give us the facts.”

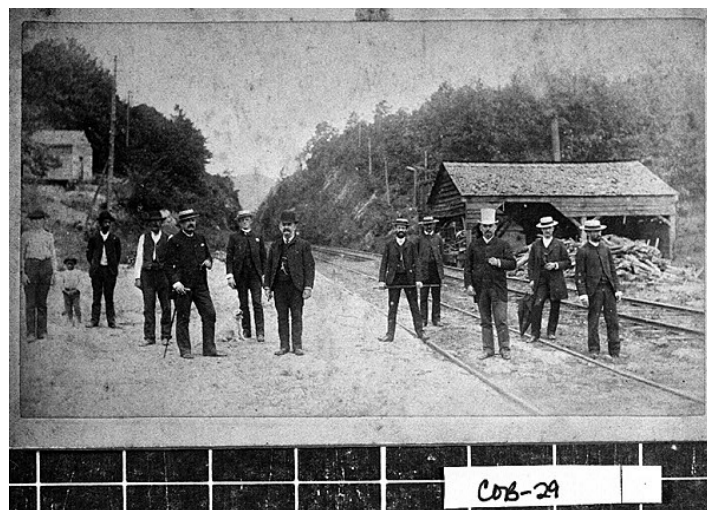
“A park should engage in living history and storytelling that provide a knowledge of Black sacrifice of life.”

“Imagery. We need to see people who look like us - Black people - to feel comfortable. They need to be part of the staff and decision-makers.”

“The truth of the battles needs to be known.”

Additionally, the groups wanted local people to be included in the re-interpretation.

“We keep getting people from, no offense, these big universities up north somewhere to come down and to tell us about the South. We need to invite people who look like African Americans – not just our White friends. We need people from the Talladegas, the Tugalooos, the Tuskegees, because they have kept a record of this history... We really need to bring the people who have lived these experiences.”



Cabinet Card of General Corse, Joe M. Brown, and others at Allatoona, Cobb County, Georgia, ca. 1890.

Courtesy Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives

When asked if they would want to have a discussion at KEMO about the contested history and to actually engage in dialogue –tough dialogue – possibly with those who hold different views, the responses were overwhelmingly affirmative.

“Yes, I would love to be there.”

“You can call me anytime.”

“Just let me know the time and place.”

“We all would.”

“I would like to.”

“It is one thing to talk amongst ourselves, but we need to let them know how we feel.”

“I would like to be a part of that.”

One participant stated: “Tell our story, then we will come.”

DIED, ATTENDED BY EX-SLAVE

“ Ten-Cent Bill ” Yopp Served Aged Confederate Veteran to the End.

ATLANTA, Ga., Jan. 24.—With “ Ten-Cent Bill ” Yopp, his former slave at his bedside, Captain Thomas M. Yopp died today at the Confederate Soldiers' Home here.

Because of his love for his former master “ Ten-Cent Bill ” had collected dimes and bought each inmate of the Confederate Home a Christmas present annually for the last ten years.

Three days ago the Trustees of the home gave the ex-slave a lifetime job at the institution, and he was thus able to be at the deathbed of his master.

The New York Times

Published: January 25, 1920

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WPA EX-SLAVE NARRATIVE



Wallace Quarterman, Age 87, Fort Frederica, St. Simon Island, Georgia, 1935. This photo was taken during the Alan Lomax, Zora Neale Hurston, and Mary Elizabeth Barnicle recording expedition to Georgia, Florida, and the Bahamas. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C., Lomax Collection

Wallace Quarterman: And he call me and told me to run down in the field and tell Peter to turn the people loose, that the Yankee coming. And so I run down in the field and, and whooped and holler, they done, he done told them Mr. [unclear] said turn the people loose because the Yankee coming.

Transcript excerpt taken from "Interview with Wallace Quarterman, Fort Frederica, St. Simons Island, Georgia (Gullah), June 1935", Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center *Voices from Days of Slavery: Stories, Songs and Memories - Wallace Quarterman*.

FINDINGS

An analysis of the audio-recorded focus group sessions demonstrates varying levels of skepticism and optimism among respondents regarding the Civil War museum interpretations at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and other historical sites. Initial skepticism about KEMO and NPS's willingness to expand its interpretation is compounded by a suspicion of the nature of that historical interpretation. While the different groups demonstrated a strong desire to know more about the African American experience during the Civil War, there were strong feelings amongst the participants that the history of African Americans and the Civil War will continue to be misinterpreted in the South.

The predominance of the Southern Civil War "Lost Cause" narrative presented a second area of concern. The groups suggested that the Civil War, as it is taught in the South, offers a one-dimensional look at African Americans and reduces the conflict's complexities to a "memorial" of a distant and better time.

Participants remarked that African Americans are largely written about as passive spectators, if they figure at all into the official Southern histories. This enervating representation frustrated most participants and angered several within the groups. One college-educated participant felt outraged that he had no knowledge of the USCT or his own family's participation in the war until he heard an elderly relative reference that "Grandpa Ed with big sticks in the big war" – the Civil War. Another participant shared the story of a "great-great grandfather who drove wagons for Sherman."

Many of the participants felt that the implementation of a potentially new interpretation inclusive of the African Americans experience would elicit controversy about the legitimacy of such a "new" interpretation by the white public.

There was also concern of backlash from traditional, white Southerners that may lead to confrontation with African American visitors at KEMO and in other places. Participants across the groups stated that KEMO should implement strategies to make African Americans feel safe and welcome at the battlefield.

However, many individuals also expressed hope that a more accurate view of history could emerge if historians would move beyond traditional viewpoints and methodologies to capture stories told within African American families, churches, and social organizations. It was suggested that Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park include micro-histories (versus macro-histories) of individuals and families in specific geographic locations within Cobb County.

Still others used the focus groups as a forum to relate significant African American Civil War efforts. As the participants shared family memories and accounts of war activity, each of them reinforced the belief that their history exists and that it needs to be gathered piecemeal from their families and kinship networks.



Photograph of African American graduating class, Marietta, Cobb County, Georgia, ca. 1901. *Courtesy Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives*



Negro G.A.R. [Grand Army of the Republic] veterans parading with young girls leading the procession, New York City, May 30, 1912. *Courtesy George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress*

History of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.)

After the end of American Civil War, organizations were formed for veterans to network and maintain connections with each other. Many of the veterans wished to keep in contact with each other, using their shared experiences as a basis for fellowship. Groups of men began joining together, first for camaraderie and later for political power. Emerging most powerful among the various organizations was the Grand Army of the Republic, founded on the principles of "Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty," in Decatur, Illinois, on April 6, 1866, by Benjamin F. Stephenson. The GAR initially grew and prospered as a de facto political arm of the Republican Party during the heated political contests of the Reconstruction era. The commemoration of Union veterans, black and white, immediately became entwined with partisan politics. The GAR did promote voting rights for black veterans, extolling their demonstrated patriotism. Black veterans, who enthusiastically embraced the message of equality, shunned black veterans' organizations in preference for racially inclusive groups. But when the Republican Party's commitment to reform in the South gradually decreased, the GAR's mission became ill-defined and the organization floundered. The GAR almost disappeared in the early 1870s, and many departments ceased to exist.

In the 1880s, the organization revived under new leadership that provided a platform for renewed growth, by advocating Federal pensions for veterans. As the organization reestablished itself, black veterans joined in significant numbers and organized local posts. Unfortunately, the issue of pensions for black soldiers was not pressed. Most black troops never received any pension or remuneration for wounds incurred during their service. The GAR was organized into "Departments" at the state level and "Posts" at the community level, and military-style uniforms were worn by its members. There were posts in every state in the U.S., and several posts overseas. The pattern of establishing departments and local posts was later used by other veteran's organizations such as the American Legion (WWI) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (WWII). In 1867, Commander-in-Chief General John A. Logan established May 30 as Decoration Day, later known as Memorial Day. It was originally intended to commemorate the dead of the Civil War by decorating their graves with flowers and flags.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2010 Focus Group experience produced the following recommendations for Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. Efforts to address the idea of African American inclusion in interpretive narratives and exhibits Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park must include the following:

I) Culturally Relevant and Enriching Interpretive Strategies

- A. Explain the roles of enslaved African Americans in the South
- B. Describe a typical day in the life of an enslaved person in the Piedmont region
- C. Convey how slaves understood the Civil War using WPA Ex-Slave Narratives
- D. Provide context for the formation of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) and Sailors
- E. Clarify and address the topic of “Black Confederates”
- F. Amplify the lives of specific USCTs

Example 1: Select a soldier from the 258 unknown USCTs buried at Marietta National Cemetery; research and develop a biography

Example 2: Develop a biography of Civil War nurse Emma Stephenson, the only known female USCT buried at Marietta National Cemetery

Example 3: Develop a biography of William H. “Ten Cent Bill” Yopp, the only African American Confederate veteran buried in the Confederate Cemetery in Marietta, Georgia

Example 4: While in Washington, D.C. in 1863, Henry McNeal Turner personally helped to influence President Lincoln to accept Black soldiers into the Union Army. He held the chaplaincy of the First Regiment, U.S.C.T, becoming the first African American commissioned officer in the Civil War. He helped to organize Georgia’s Republican Party. In 1868 Turner along with twenty-six other African American politicians of the Republican Party was elected to the Georgia Legislature. They were eventually expelled by white Democratic legislators on the grounds that office holding was not a privilege for those from servile backgrounds. In 1880 he was elevated to bishop by the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and organized several churches in and around Acworth, Marietta, and Atlanta, Georgia. He later became a champion of the Back to Africa and African American Colonization movements.

- G. Articulate ante- and post-bellum education for African Americans in the area, including secret schools, Reconstruction era schools

- H. Document African American community formation patterns in the region including residential neighborhoods, churches, masonic lodges and fraternal organizations, as well as burial and women's aid societies
- I. Incorporate the Wallis House, the home occupied by General Oliver O. Howard during the Battle of Cheatham Hill, into KEMO's heritage tourism plan

Example: Explain the significance of Howard University, a leading HBCU in Washington, DC., which is named after General Oliver O. Howard, an officer in the Union army who, after the war, became head of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Lands

- J. Explain the correlations between the Civil War and the development of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs)

Example 1: Identify the network of HBCUs across the state of Georgia and/or throughout the South

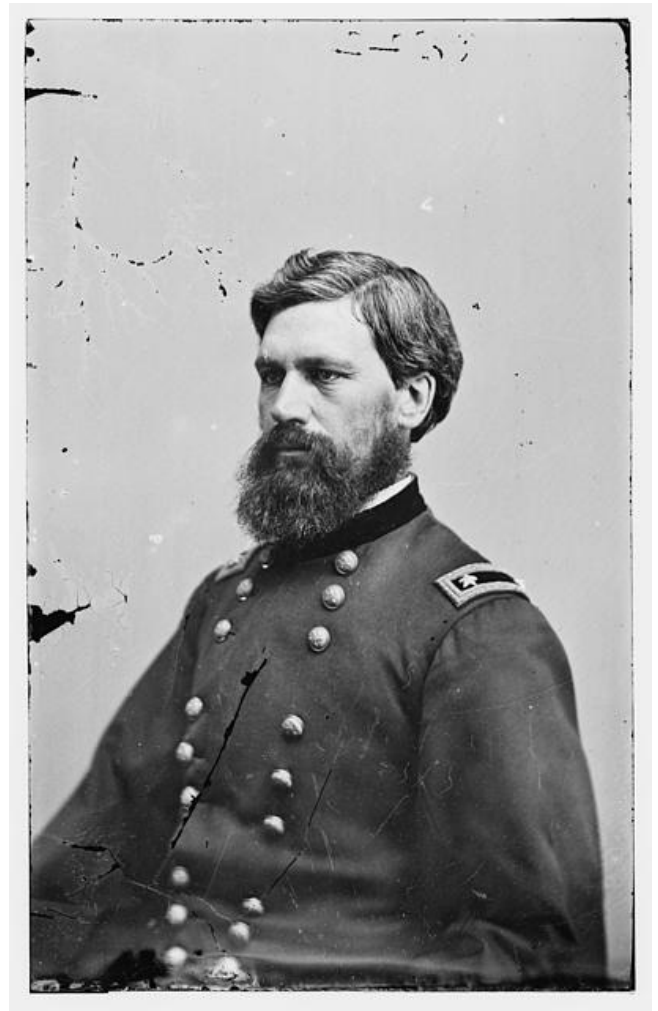
Example 2: Specify historically black colleges and universities in the metro Atlanta region, how they emerged immediately after the Civil War due to wartime and post-bellum efforts of the American Missionary Association and prominent black churches

Example 3: Link blacks in Cobb County who acquired higher education at Atlanta area HBCUs, i.e. Spelman, Morehouse, Morris Brown, Clark University, or some other HBCU in the South

- K. Demonstrate the formal and informal affiliations between black and white religious congregations in the local areas

Example: In 1866 First Baptist Church in Marietta, a white congregation provided a letter of dismissal to its eighty-eight black members to form Zion Baptist Church, an all black congregation near downtown Marietta. Today, the two congregations acknowledge their contentious but shared past.

- L. Identify through the 1850 U.S. Federal Slave Schedules and 1860 U.S. Federal Census Records-Population Schedules a realistic depiction of the number of African Americans in Cobb county and the surrounding cities and towns



Union General Oliver Otis Howard. After the Civil War he was appointed Commissioner of the newly created Board of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.
Courtesy Library of Congress



Top: Law graduating class at Howard University, Washington, D.C., ca. 1900.
Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division

BACKGROUND OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Prior to the Civil War, there was no structured higher education system for black students. Public policy and certain statutory provisions prohibited the education of blacks in various parts of the nation. The Institute for Colored Youth, the first higher education institution for blacks, was founded in Cheyney, Pennsylvania, in 1837. It was followed by two other black institutions--Lincoln University, in Pennsylvania (1854), and Wilberforce University, in Ohio (1856).

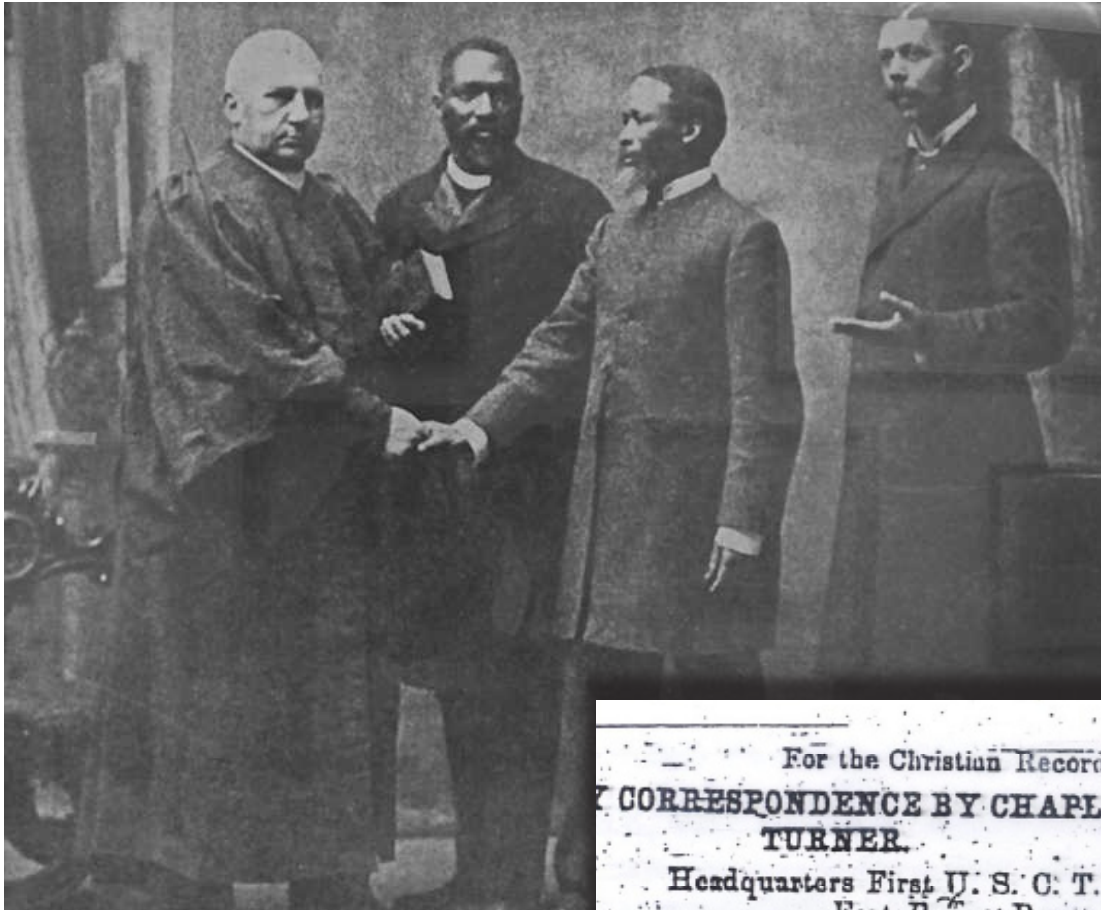
Following the Civil War, public support for higher education for black students was reflected in the enactment of the Second Morrill Act in 1890. The Act required states with racially segregated public higher education systems to provide a land-grant institution for black students whenever a land-grant institution was established and restricted for white students. After the passage of the Act, public land-grant institutions specifically for blacks were established in each of the southern and border states. As a result, some new public black institutions were founded, and a number of formerly private black schools came under public control; eventually 16 black institutions were designated as land-grant colleges. These institutions offered courses in agricultural, mechanical, and industrial subjects, but few offered college-level courses and degrees.

By 1953, more-than 32,000 students were enrolled in such well known private black institutions as Fisk University, Hampton Institute, Howard University, Meharry Medical College, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Tuskegee Institute, as well as a host of smaller black colleges located in southern and border states.

Source: *Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Higher Education: Desegregation*. 01/03/1991. Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education

Example: According to the census, after the Civil War the population of Cobb County decreased slightly from 14,242 in 1860, to 13,814 in 1870.

M. Explore land ownership by African Americans in the area after the war



Above: Bishop Henry McNeal Turner (left), was a prominent minister, church organizer, and missionary in the African Methodist Episcopal Church throughout the South and Georgia. Between 1865 and 1866, he became the first pastor of now historic Mt. Zion AME Church located on Wade Green Road in Kennesaw, Georgia. Turner supported the back-to-Africa movement. In 1865 Turner became the first black minister of Marietta's Turner Chapel AME Church.

Right: Henry McNeal Turner's army correspondence for the Christian Recorder, March 28, 1865. In 1863, when the Union army began accepting African American enlistments, Turner raised the first black regiment of the Civil War in Washington, D.C. and was commissioned by President Abraham Lincoln as the first Negro Chaplain in the U.S. Army.

For the Christian Recorder.
CORRESPONDENCE BY CHAPLAIN
TURNER.
Headquarters First U. S. C. T.
Fort Ransom Depot.
March 28, '65.

Mr. Editor:—I would have written a few days sooner, but for the fact that a thieving scoundrel, under the clandestine cover of night, came, and, with roguish hands, stole one of my horses, valued at \$200. But as this dirty wretch has been overtaken, and my mind relieved by the return of my servant's horse, I trust I can now frame myself into writing humor sufficiently to throw a few facts together for the benefit of the many friends who are ever anxious to know our whereabouts.

On the morning of the 15th of March, at the command to march, we broke camp; and all portable comforts were girded on by the soldiers, and lashed to horses, or packed in wagons by

II) Educational Outreach

- A. Include storytelling as an interpretive strategy, like Colonial Williamsburg and perhaps include different characters representing different viewpoints. For example, have a black Confederate soldier explaining why he went to battle; or two brothers discuss why they joined different sides; or an enslaved and free woman talk about what the Civil War meant to them; or talk about the life of free and enslaved children during war

Example: The proportion of African Americans decreased more, from 27% to 23%. This means that there were approximately 4,000 enslaved persons in the Cobb County area, including the cities of Marietta, Acworth, Kennesaw, Smyrna, and Powder Spring

- B. Provide re-enactments or living histories that include the United States Colored Troops; why they did not participate in the Battle of Kennesaw
- C. Implement interactive kiosks rather than traditional textual references on markers
- D. Consult with researchers, local historians and experts at HBCUs for consultancy opportunities to uncover African American history
- E. Create public dialogue opportunities or programs between groups with different interpretations of the Civil War
- F. Prepare curriculum materials for public school and home school educators

III) Public Engagement

- A. Provide public dialogue forums with African American civic and religious organizations
- B. Invite African American storytellers and poets to dramatize black folk traditions
- C. Employ local hip hop artists create a Civil War modern jingle and perform it at KEMO
- D. Create opportunity for family “show and tell” – similar to Antique Road Show
- E. Conduct oral history projects of prominent local African American churches and families

IV) Affinity-Driven Marketing Across Print, Internet, and Broadcast Media

- A. Develop multicultural marketing/collateral materials
- B. Prepare a short DVD video for distribution to schools, libraries, and churches or membership organizations
- C. Prepare a YouTube Internet-accessible video project

- D. Invite African American fraternities and sororities to partner with KEMO on marketing strategies and support
- E. Purchase television and newspaper advertising in African American publications
- F. Purchase advertising space in Atlanta and Cobb Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- G. Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc) to heighten awareness among younger members of the African-American community



“JUBILEE”

One of the most significant historical experiences for Americans of African descent in the United States is the long road leading to the end of slavery. The enslaved had awaited a day when freedom would come. This day they called the “day of Jubilee.” The modern term means a season of general joy, a state of exaltation, or a celebration. It is adapted from the biblical allegory that references the Hebrew exodus and emancipation from Egyptian rule. In this sense, “jubilee” means liberty. In Chapter 25 of the Book of Leviticus, at the fiftieth year, or jubilee year, all Hebrew slaves were to be liberated, the people were to be returned to their lands and families, the fields were to be left untilled, and all agricultural labors were to be suspended. Toward the end of the eighteenth century African American spokesmen began to identify publicly with the linkages between Hebrew slavery and the enslavement of African people. This is evident in the powerful Negro Spiritual “Go Down, Moses.”

During the Civil War the celebratory “day of Jubilee” would come at the official execution of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. By the war powers given to the president by the Constitution the proclamation declared freedom of all slaves in the Confederate states which had seceded from the United States of America. Each day that Union forces advanced hundreds of thousands of slaves were liberated--until they were nearly all free in the summer of 1865. In *Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States* McKissack and McKissack state that “...There wasn’t one day when all the slaves were freed at the same time... Whenever slaves learned they were free, that day became their Jubilee.” The Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution declared that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude...shall exist within the United States.” Formally abolishing slavery in the United States, the 13th Amendment was passed by the Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified by the states on December 6, 1865.

CONCLUSION

This assessment fulfills the initial aims of the National Park Service/Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park: to capture and understand the attitudes, opinions and perspectives of the local African American community as integral stakeholders in the milieu of American histories, specifically the history of the American Civil War; to assess expectations of African Americans as park users in regard to content and interpretation of the African American experience prior to, during, and after the Civil War; and to evaluate the methods by which the local African American community desires to incorporate its narrative within the existing cultural landscape and museum exhibit.

In order to meet the objectives of this focus group project, the National Park Service/Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is advised to take into serious consideration the findings and recommendations delineated above. The value of the collective memories and historical awareness articulated in this research by focus group participants are key to understanding how the American Civil War and the African American Civil Rights Movement, two of the most defining moments of our nation's history, link the past to the present.

The findings indicate that participants of this focus group research are knowledgeable of various aspects of the Civil War and its social, political, and economic impact on the lives of African Americans during the antebellum period, through the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, to the modern Civil Rights movement. The responses suggest that there has been a continuous conduit of historical knowledge about the Civil War transmitted both formally and informally through family and intergenerational learning, community lore, schools, and religious institutions. The responses also suggest that while the respondents may differ in their places of birth and educational levels, the majority of them agree that African Americans as a group with common ethnic and cultural experiences have been historically marginalized and alienated from the regional and national conversations around the Civil War.

Unlike other groups of park users and museum consumers, the findings communicate a hope that Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park will develop a museum that is interactive with the audience and utilizes all available technologies to tell the story of African Americans and the Civil War. The findings also indicate that African Americans overall desire an innovative experiential museum that relies on multimedia exhibits to convey a message of struggle, perseverance, triumph, and achievement. Likewise, the content of such interpretations should be based on sound historical research.

If the National Park Service/Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park aspires to increase the visitation rates of African Americans as park users and as a targeted museum audience, it will have to plan and engage an aggressive campaign to attract this group to the site. The recommended actions should include: culturally relevant and enriching interpretive strategies; educational outreach; public engagement; and affinity driven marketing across print, Internet, social and broadcast media. While these recommendations are in no way an exhaustive evaluation of the entire group's attitudes, opinions and perspectives, it is important to view this project as a cultural data gathering tool for which to guide the National Park Service/Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, in the appropriate methods of integrating the African American narrative into existing interpretive plans.

FOCUS GROUP DETAILS

Group Name	Date	# of Participants	Recording Length	Facilitators
NAACP - Cobb County Chapter Location: NAACP Office Marietta, GA	May, 26, 2010	25	115 minutes	Hermina Glass-Avery Dr. Leslie Harris Jyotsna Vanapalli
Friends of West End Neighborhood Development, Inc Location: Private Residence Atlanta, GA	June 3, 2010	8	65 minutes	Hermina Glass-Avery
Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network Location: Our Place Cafe College Park, GA	June 9, 2010	8	75 minutes	Hermina Glass-Avery
African American Historical and Genealogical Society - Metro Atlanta Chapter Location: Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American History and Culture Atlanta, GA	June 19, 2010	15	40 minutes	Hermina Glass-Avery
Diverse Group of Cultural Workers including historians, preservationists, archaeologists, educators, sociologist, artists, etc Location: Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American History and Culture Atlanta, GA	June 25, 2010	1	Postponed	Hermina Glass-Avery Jyotsna Vanapalli

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