The Port Royal Experiment 1861-1866

The significance of the Port Royal Experiment in the American Civil War was that it became the vanguard in the effort to end the tyranny of slavery on behalf of enslaved Black Americans. It is little told as a part of America's story, but this five year period was a critical turning point in America's struggle to gain her identity: as a beacon of human liberty and equality. The Port Royal Experiment established the legitimacy of people of African descent to be part of the American family as equals. Because of the success of the Port Royal Experiment, the U.S. Constitution was reshaped to define and identify citizenship, who is entitled to call themselves an American, and what rights should belong such citizens.

The Port Royal Experiment forever changed the social structure of America. This effort established full legal rights and entitlements from the few upper class landed gentry - to the many, regardless of class, race, inheritance, or education. The Port Royal Experiment confirmed the value of human rights. People from across the globe point to these American standards of equality and human rights without knowing the story that shaped the nation.

The opportunity to strike a blow for freedom… and to end the tyranny of slavery came on November 7, 1861, when the combined Union forces attacked the quiet harbor of Port Royal, South Carolina.

The Federal Naval fleet consisted of some 60 ships under the command of Union Navy Admiral Samuel F. DuPont and some 20,000 men under the command of Army General Thomas W. Sherman.

The Confederate forces that were defending the Port Royal Harbor were based at Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard and commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton (a local plantation owner).

By noon, the union Naval bombardment was a success. Drayton's Rebel forces knew their battle to hold Hilton Head and Beaufort was lost and they fled inland - abandoning the forts. By 3:00 p.m., the Confederate forces had completely retreated.

When Union troops landed on Hilton Head Island, they encountered no resistance and discovered that the island's white inhabitants had already fled to the mainland, taking only what they could carry and leaving behind people who had been held in bondage for generations.
Over 10,000 blacks remained, eager for the refuge and protection the Federal military flag offered.

The foundation for the experiment would depend on the former agricultural success of Sea Island rice and cotton. The labor could be paid for by the selling of crops; that income could also sustain the Freedmen's education, their fledging enterprises and establish a sense of stability for the new citizens – or so the radical abolitionists thought. Education would replace ignorance; self-determination would replace dependence. The south would have a social and economic model to replace a slave labor system.

The Port Royal region was the seat of the Southern aristocracy. It was in this community – which had been sustained by slavery - and amid its wealth, power, fortune, and privilege, that this experiment was to be tried.

It became the battleground for the most radical of American ideals.

Abandoned lands were to be used to establish freedmen and women in a successful community to work the land left by plantation owners.

No More auction Block! Black People were to be paid for their work – own land and govern themselves.

Lincoln's cabinet set out to prove that people of African descent could learn, could fight for their own freedom, and make a positive contribution to the Republic.

In 1863, a second component of the experiment was introduced.

That was to recruit and train men of African descent to be soldiers in the military campaigns

and to have them fight next to white soldiers on equal footing of pay and promotions.

Northern abolitionists and their Anti-slavery organizations supported the freedmen and women in becoming self-sufficient and to at last make true the phrase in the Bill of Rights: “with liberty and justice for all.”

Some believed that the Port Royal Experiment was a failure, but for those who were a part of it, their letters, diaries, news reports and commentary tell a very different story – they express a sense of hope and reason to call it a great success; and so it was - for a time.

What went wrong? Where is the legacy now? Why do we know so little about the people in the story? There is a story.

The Port Royal Experiment In the American Civil War

by Ilene Evans and Connie Rice

On November 7, 1861, Union forces consisting of approximately 60 ships and 20,000 men under the command of Union Navy Admiral Samuel F. DuPont and Army General Thomas W. Sherman attacked Confederate forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton (a local plantation owner) who was defending Hilton Head Island at Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard. By 3:00 p.m., the Confederate forces had retreated from the forts. When Union troops landed on Hilton Head Island, they encountered no resistance and discovered that the island's white inhabitants had already fled to the mainland, leaving behind the people who had been held in bondage for generations. Over 10,000 blacks remained, eager for the refuge and protection the Federal military flag offered. The Port Royal Experiment began in November 1862 on Saint Helena Island, South Carolina, in Beaufort County.

The Port Royal Experiment was an effort to prepare newly freed people for full participation in post-Civil War society with educational and land ownership opportunities. The program was created during the American Civil War to establish freedmen and women in a successful community to work the land abandoned by plantation owners. A second component of the experiment was to recruit and train men of African descent for soldiers in the military campaigns and have them fight next to white soldiers on equal footing of pay and promotions. Northern abolitionists and their Anti-slavery organizations supported the the freedmen and women in becoming self-sufficient. It was their declaration of war against slavery; and a dream of an integrated social and political Union comprised of people from both races and cultures. Their intent was to prove the superiority of free labor and to transplant Northern values and remodel southern civil and social society.

At the same time, anti-Catholic bigotry inspired Republicans to promote public education throughout the South during the 1870s. As a result, Port Royal became a model of what Reconstruction could

have been. African Americans quickly demonstrated their ability to work the land efficiently and live independent of white control. With assigned daily tasks for growing cotton, the residents of Port Royal had extra time to cultivate their own crops, fish, and hunt. The sale of surplus crops provided the funds to acquire small amounts of property. Schools, open to all ages for reading and writing lessons, provided residents with the education they needed to make their community successful. Their achievements made at Port Royal between 1861 and 1865 proved that social, economic, and political equality was possible.

In 1863, General Ormsby M. Mitchel permitted African Americans to establish the town of Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Built on the former Drayton Plantation, the town was close in proximity to the military camps. Mitchelville became the heart of a program known as "The Port Royal Experiment." Mitchelville had neatly-arranged streets, one-quarter-acre lots, elected officials, a church, laws addressing such issues as community behavior and sanitation, taxes collections, and compulsory education law for children between the ages of six and fifteen, most likely the first such laws in the South.

This experiment was a major media event. Black family life and loyalty were on trial, as were Black soldiers and their manhood. There were two questions to be determined in the mind of the American Government: Will the people of African Descent work for a living? Will they fight for their freedom? The entire country continually scrutinized and assessed the "experiment." Newspaper journalists embedded with the quartermasters in charge of daily life and with troops during military action published reports in the weekly papers that altered public opinion and political policy throughout the war. Those who doubted the military success of Black troops in the field fighting alongside White troops were both surprised and impressed at the valor of the sable warriors. United in a common cause bigotry began to ease between the races – at least on the battlefield.

When the war ended in 1865, President Andrew Johnson ended the experiment and returned the land to its previous white owners, thereby ending the dream of a unified and egalitarian society.

The Civil War's Impact on Us Today

So what does the American Civil War have to do with me as a woman? What does the American Civil War have to do with me as a person of African descent and Native American ancestry? Each story is dramatically different and impactful to our modern perceptions and interpretations of freedom, equality and justice. The preoccupation of so many historians with battles and strategy left out a part of the story quite close to myself and most women. The attitude toward their contributions and aid, their capacity for planning, strategy and strength was never a part of the conversation that I heard in High school, nor in college.

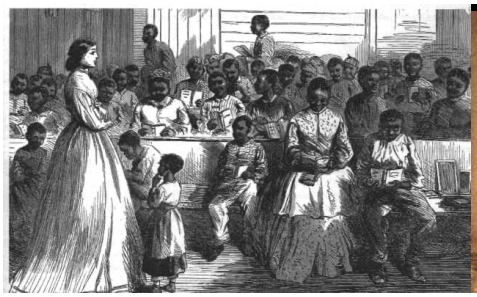
The Women of Port Royal

Harriet Tubman and the women she represented was an untapped story, a treasury of courage, creativity and compassion that I found pertinent to current problems facing America. It was my research about Harriet Tubman that I started to learn the vast resources that women offered the war effort I created an interactive play about her life and work to tour for elementary schools in Chicago. Telling these stories was necessary to correct the impression that women contributed little to the war effort and specifically the Union Victory to restore the republic. The narratives usually told carried forward false images of the contributions African American made to gaining their own freedom.

Women of African Descent participated and aided in the Union's success in establishing a standard for freedom and equality between 1861 and 1865. The role they played was more significant than is commonly thought. Harriet Tubman's life, activities and values provide a good way of looking at the various contributions and roles that women played in the Nineteenth century, especially in and around the time of the Civil War. I looked at her perspective from inside the slavery system, through self –emancipation, along the Underground Railroad, helping others escape, then as a freedom fighter with the Union army troops. Her activism is reflected in the millions of women for whom she spoke.

The story of the African Americans in the Civil War is not a well-known. In 1861 there were about four and a half million people of African descent held in bondage, most of them in the southern agrarian states. By the end of the war there were more than 200,000 men enlisted in the United States colored Troops of the federal Army (Union Forces). All told in 166 regiments who fought with the United States

Federal Armed Forces. They made up one tenth of the Lincoln's Army, 37,000 casualties among African American troops. Thousands more anonymous women served to restore the union and support the fight for their own freedom. African American men and women shared the same goals in the war. Their goals were not only freedom for all but for full equality and participation in the governance of their lives. African American activities and contributions were critically significant in the success of the restoration of the union and the establishment of the principles and ideals of full equality in America. Thousands of women's stories remain untold.



Harriet Tubman Called to Port Royal

On November 7, 1861 Union Navy ships fired on Port Royal, South Carolina. Within hours, the Union Army overwhelmed both Fort Walker in Hilton Head and Fort Beauregard in Beaufort. Harriet Tubman was called to fight for the Union and her people's freedom in the Southern Theater of the Civil War. Governor Andrew of Massachusetts wanted her to serve her country and use the skills she honed when she helped escaping slaves find their way to the freed states along the Underground Railroad. In April of 1862, she was given orders to report to General David Hunter, Commander of the Department of the South in Port Royal, SC. She left her home in Auburn New York and was assigned to Fort Beauregard in Beaufort. Her job was to support the Federal Union Army in their efforts in the Port Royal Experiment. Harriet Tubman served under General David Hunter and General Rufus Saxton in covert operations gathering information behind enemy lines, doing reconnaissance work with a team of nine scouts and riverboat pilots who worked under her command. By day Harriet Tubman was a nurse, a cook and a laundress, doing liaison work between the troops and the freedmen and women. By night she was a soldier. She was present at Fort Wagner when the Federal troops advanced under Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. She was on the front lines again and again, the only woman to lead and command troops behind enemy lines. She brought comfort to suffering soldiers in her capacity as a nurse and information to the generals in command of the Department of the South.

Tubman was not part of any single unit of the United States Colored Troops, but she work alongside them and supported their efforts, both as a field operative and behind enemy lines. Few saw the war from such a broad perspective as no other women of color did. Her story followed the progress and regress of race and gender relations suffrage, equality, discrimination in the nation at the turn of the century. The hope of the Port Royal Experiment was that the effort would definitively prove the value that African Americans offered to American society. The Port Royal Experiment offered the promise of freedom for all its citizens. Harriet represents the essence of all black women who viewed the Civil War not just a vehicle of freedom—but a means to real equality.

Historical Overview of The Role of African American Women During the Civil War

Harriet Tubman has been treated as an icon, the stuff of legends. I suggest that she had more in common with the women of her time than has been known. She shared experiences and a sense of mission that united many Black women in the 19th century. Through the lens of her life we can see issues all African American Women faced and the complex pressures that made them the center of their families and the core of the values that helped African Americans survive to struggle for freedom and

equality. Harriet Tubman moved among many cross sections of African American life. She was born in bondage in Maryland, became a fugitive hunted by bounty hunters in the Northern States. She learned the tales of others' escape and self – emancipation, sheltered by Quakers. She relocated her entire family in refugee camps and communities in Canada. And then in 1862, she headed behind enemies lines in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina, in the Deep South, where she was invited to confer on military strategy, held nine men under her command in the United States Colored Troops.

Harriet Tubman was a woman of her time. She participated in the discourse of the day, using her own stories to illuminate principles and problems regarding the cost and the importance of freedom for African Americans specifically and women in general. There were other outspoken women active in the struggle for emancipation and equality, suffrage and inclusion. Women tried to survive the forces that would tear their families apart, like Sister Lydia Penny and Susie King Taylor. There were African American women who ran newspapers and wrote articles and letters, like Mary Ann Shadd Cary, Harriet Jacobs and Rebecca Primus; women who spoke at public meetings like Frances Harper and Sojourner Truth; women who made homes and cared for family like Sarah Mapps Douglass and Sarah Remond. Harriet Tubman was subjected to the same political, racial and social threats as any other Woman of African Descent at the time. Whether in the Deep South or in New England, African American women shared the burden of the drudgery and labor, they bore the children, raised the crops, sewed and cooked and cleaned and managed large complicated systems of yearly agricultural cycles. This they did with humor, tolerance, hope and a belief that their condition was not their conclusion.

For Black women, the cause of the Civil War was always economic because they knew that African Americans were at the heart of the American economy in every conceivable way, free or slave male and female. They saw cause of the war as the greed that kept the people in power rich. Maintenance of a permanent source of cheap labor has been the genius of America's success and prosperity. The wealth of a few was the result of the labor of many; the privileged few had no moral compunction to share that wealth with those who labored to earn it. Slavery was one way to keep that wealth in place. Black women viewed the southern society's call for "States Rights" as a veil to continue the tyranny of a chattel system based on human bondage for profit: a slavocracy. Harriet Tubman was absolutely opposed to such privilege and its excesses. She bore the weight of such arrogance and pride in the scars on her back and forehead from the lash of former owners.

The life of African American women at the time of the Civil War was always precarious. Women lived with the uncertainty of constant change in all the areas of their lives in part because there were no laws to protect them and no recognition or legal status for them to claim. The Dred Scott Decision of 1857 brought the voice of the U.S. Supreme Court right into the hearth of their homes. It said, very clearly, that there were no rights that a Black person had that a White person needed to respect. It did not single out women as an exception. At any time, black women could be kidnapped, they could be bought, sold, forced to comply with the wishes of those in power, humiliated and terrorized with impunity. The work of their hands belonged to their owners and if they were free, it belonged to their husbands or fathers. They were considered part of the household goods. That was true whether they were bound or free, educated or illiterate, common or elite, in the North or in the South. The defining

factor for freedom of movement and access to resources was race and color. There was no legal appeal for Black women in cases of abuse or violence. They often were blamed for any misfortunes that were visited upon them. They were however, not passive in their condition and struggled to change it.

Harriet Tubman's life reflected the lives of all those women around her who plied their strength and gifts to the promise of freedom. Her voice spoke for millions of others who dreamed of a land of the free. The Civil War provided an opportunity to reach to a level of equality and self-determination that was unprecedented in America for people of color. Lincoln's legal action allowed women like Harriet Tubman to move the struggle for freedom from a whisper, a wish, a hope and a prayer into action. There was something women in the African American community could do. Some fought, some make flags and uniforms, some taught, some nursed the sick, washed their wounds and made medicines. Some prayed. Tubman was a leader for those women who struggled against sexual, economic and class related abuses. She place herself between those who would cause harm, spoke out for equal pay, equal treatment and equal rights, not only for the colored troops, but also the women. She not only brought people to a physical place of safety where they could practice living free, she also shared her knowledge to strengthen the understanding of the means by which to be free and stay free. She encouraged women to fight oppression wherever they found it, to speak for themselves and to believe in their value and rights.

Tubman's personal experience with slavery in Maryland gave her an understanding of some four and a half million people held in bondage in America, male and female, but especially female. Harriet Tubman was deeply affected by the suffering of her own loved ones, having watched her mother grieve the loss of two of her daughters as they were sold to slave traders, manacled to a chain gang, and taken away from the family, never to be seen again. She felt the cruelty of the lash. Even as a child, Harriet, herself suffered illnesses like bronchitis and diphtheria because of the neglect and abuse of overseers. The temporal lobe epilepsy that she had was a lasting result of a head injury she received as a girl from a driver who threw a lead weight at her in his attempt to escape. It would be a constant reminder of how low humans could sink to keep their position, property and power. The intoxicating effects of "Lordship and Ladyship" were the source of many secret sins and abuses within the southern households. Harriet avoided working in household settings for just such reasons.

The power of the promise of attaining freedom galvanized and mobilized men and women who longed to own the work of their own hands, to determine their own way of life, their marital partners and to follow their dreams. Harriet Tubman took it upon herself to take what was denied her by law, the ownership of herself. Most people know something about her work on the Underground Railroad, but few know of the circumstances of her heroic efforts in the course of the Civil War. Before Lincoln signed the promise of Emancipation, she worked undercover for the Union Army supplying the Generals with needed information to make further headway in the effort to reunite the sates and cripple the rebellion. She nursed the wounded soldiers, assisted in placing the "contraband" of war" and worked to protect young women from the lusts of intemperate Union soldiers and officers. She had organized wash houses, cook houses, schools, and, as so many women of her time, she envisioned the whole community and responded to its interconnected needs. She did not ascend into the upper classes with her added responsibilities, she did not seek fame or notoriety, but she did seek justice. She defined justice in the most biblical of terms. It was based upon the "Golden Rule": that one should do for another one would have others do for them, regardless of race, class, creed or gender.

Harriet Tubman was an adamant supporter of full equality and suffrage. During a suffrage meeting on March 14, 1888, almost seventy years old, a reporter from the Auburn Morning Dispatch asked her opinion about whether or not women should have the right to vote, she said there were… "brave and fearless women who sacrificed all for their country and moved in battle when bullets mowed down men. …were on the scene to administer to the injured, to bind up their wounds and tend them through weary months of suffering in the army hospitals. If those deeds do not place woman as man's equal, what do?" (Larson, 2004. p. 273)

Manhood was equated with landownership. Independence, having a voice in the affairs of states was based on land ownership and that land give men power the lesson was not lost on women. Women, too, understood the power of landownership as part of the formula to maintain freedom. Harriet Tubman purchased 30 acres in the effort to maintain her family and their independence. U. S. Senator William Seward of New York helped her buy land when he offered some of his own property to her at a reasonable mortgage. Through him she was afforded ownership. No woman could sit on a jury, vote or even keep her own children if her husband opposed her. A woman's children belonged to her husband just as she did. Women were brokered as property until the 20th amendment was added. Very few states allowed women to vote until that amendment was passed in 1920. Every step for inclusion of the modern body politic has come with conflict and resistance. Many battles have been fought and argued and petitioned and pleaded. Little by little the country has included all who have struggled to breathe free.

Clara Barton

By Karen Vuranch

As Clara Barton lay on her deathbed at the age of 90, her thoughts traveled back to her work on the battlefields of the American Civil War. To be sure, Barton's selfless service during the war earned her a place in the annals of American history. But, she continued to achieve recognition after the battlefields. Clara Barton was famous even in her lifetime. She was the first woman ambassador for the United States, representing the nation at the Geneva Convention, the first woman prison warden in America, the first woman hired by the federal government in her own name and, most importantly, the founder of the American Red Cross, as agency she created at the age of 60 and directed for over 20 years. This agency is her legacy and is still a driving force in the United States today. But, despite these achievements, it was her experiences as a nurse on the Civil War battlefields that she thought of as she lay dying. It was her memory of work at places like Antietam, Fredericksburg and Battery Wagner that she thought of on her deathbed.

However, while she served in the capacity of a nurse, Barton had no training in the field of nursing. Certainly her life had been one of service and hard work and she would define herself and her own worth through her service to others, according to her biographer Elizabeth Brown Pryor in Clara Barton: Professional Angel. But, with the exception of nursing her brother when Clara was only a child, Clara had no nursing experience. It was the horrific stories of suffering on the battlefield made her want to serve the wounded soldiers. She said, *"I may be compelled to face danger, but never fear it, and while our soldiers can stand and fight, I can stand and feed and nurse them."* It must be noted that Clara was not alone in her passion to end the suffering of the soldiers. There were many other women nurses working in the hospitals of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, led by Miss Dorothea Dix as well as countless unaffiliated women who took individual initiative. (Pryor, p. 101) What makes Clara Barton distinctive, according to biographer Stephen Oates, is her persistence in working on the actual battlefield. Before Clara served at the battles of Antietam, all battlefield nurses were male. Clara had to fight the propriety of the time and the commonly held belief that women could not endure the hardship of the battlefield, as well as society's strict moral code that frowned upon unchaperoned women in company of men.

But, fight she did. Instead of working for the Sanitary Commission, Clara launched a one woman campaign to gather supplies for the soldiers. Soon she was directing a group of volunteers to take supplies to evacuation sites. Eventually her good reputation allowed the US Army Quartermaster, Daniel Rucker, to give her a pass to the battlefield. The battle she made her way to became known as the Battle of Antietam and there she proved women could withstand the rigors of battlefield nursing. After word of her work became known, many women served their country as battlefield nurses and Clara continued to serve the Army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg.

But Fredericksburg would bring another change for Clara. After the Battle of Fredericksburg, several of Dorothea Dix's nurses from the U.S. Sanitary Commission showed up to care for the sick and wounded. Biographer Stephen Oates claims this was an ominous development for Clara, as Miss Dix

extended her sphere of influence and sought to exclude all unaffiliated female nurses like Clara from medical service. (p. 125) As a result, Clara left her beloved Army of the Potomac and went to serve the Army of the James, stationed in Hilton Head, South Carolina, further away from the reach of Miss Dix. Clara actually did have authorization from the Army Quartermaster to work with the Army of the James, but still served as a volunteer, without salary.

It was while she served in the Sea Islands of South Carolina that Clara tended the wounded after the horrific battle at Battery Wagner. As Stephen Oates puts it, many Union soldiers fought and died bravely there, but the regiments that won the highest accolades were the 54th Massachusetts and 33rd South Carolina, regiments comprised of African-Americans. Clara was as devoted to these soldiers as to any, praising their bravery and thinking that justice was served as the black man had been "*permitted to strike a lawful, organized blow at the fetters which bound him body and soul.*" (Oates, p. 174) Clara had been an ardent abolitionist before the war and the exemplary action of the 54th Massachusetts only served to reinforce her belief in the importance of racial justice.

Of course, Clara's service to humanity did not end with the Civil War and the ensuing work with the Office of Missing Soldiers. Her first-hand experience with the desperate need for supplies and medical help in the face of disaster led her to create the American Red Cross, an agency that continues to this day to provide war and disaster relief.

Although Clara Barton was responsible for the success of the American Red Cross, it was her days nursing on the battlefields of the Civil War that remained her glory days and she often recalled those experiences throughout her life. As she lay dying, it was the battlefields of the Civil War that she relived in her mind. She had fallen ill with pneumonia shortly after celebrating her 90th birthday and, as the days progressed, she grew worse, drifting in and out of consciousness. On April 10th, according to her biographer Pryor, she suddenly awoke and told of a dream she had where she was again on the battlefield, wading through blood and watching the men in agony. She said, "*I crept round once more, trying to give them a least a drink of water to cool their parched lips*." Two days later, the beloved heroine of the battlefield passed away, leaving a legacy of selfless commitment to the service of others.

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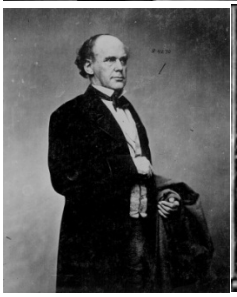
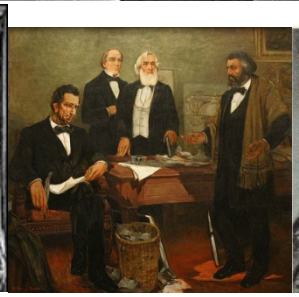
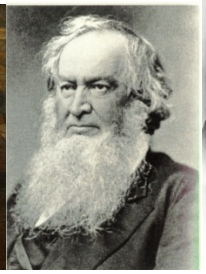
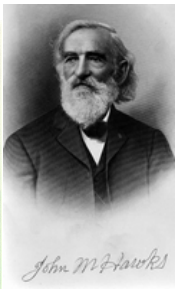
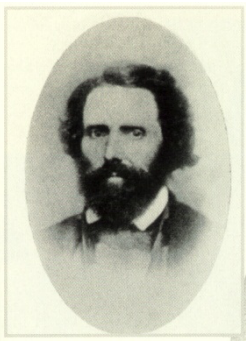
People who have made a difference in your life who you may not have met yet…

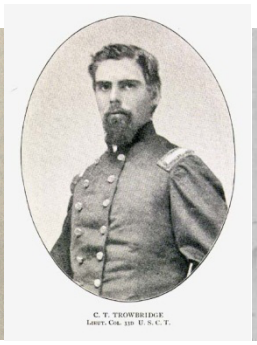










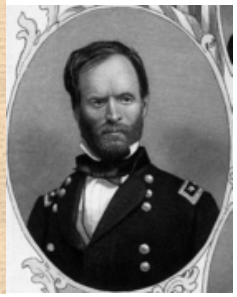
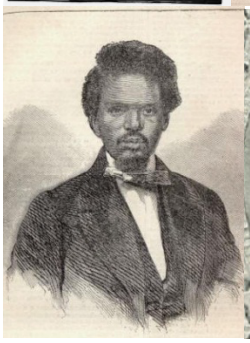


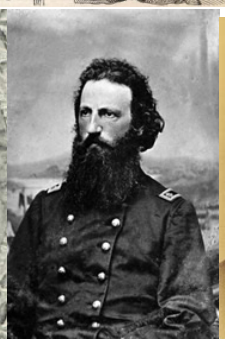
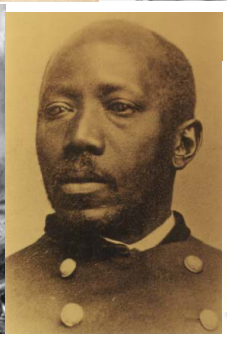


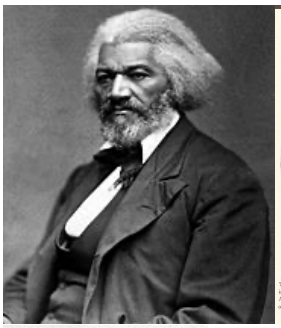








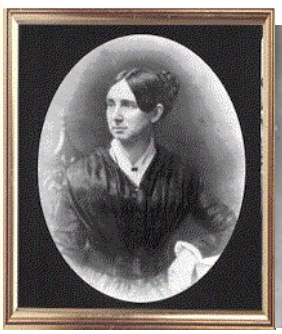
Though appointed as a nurse, Esther Hill Hawks was able to practice medicine in a contraband hospital in the Sea Islands. Among her patients were African American soldiers wounded in the July 1863 assault on Fort Wagner. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)



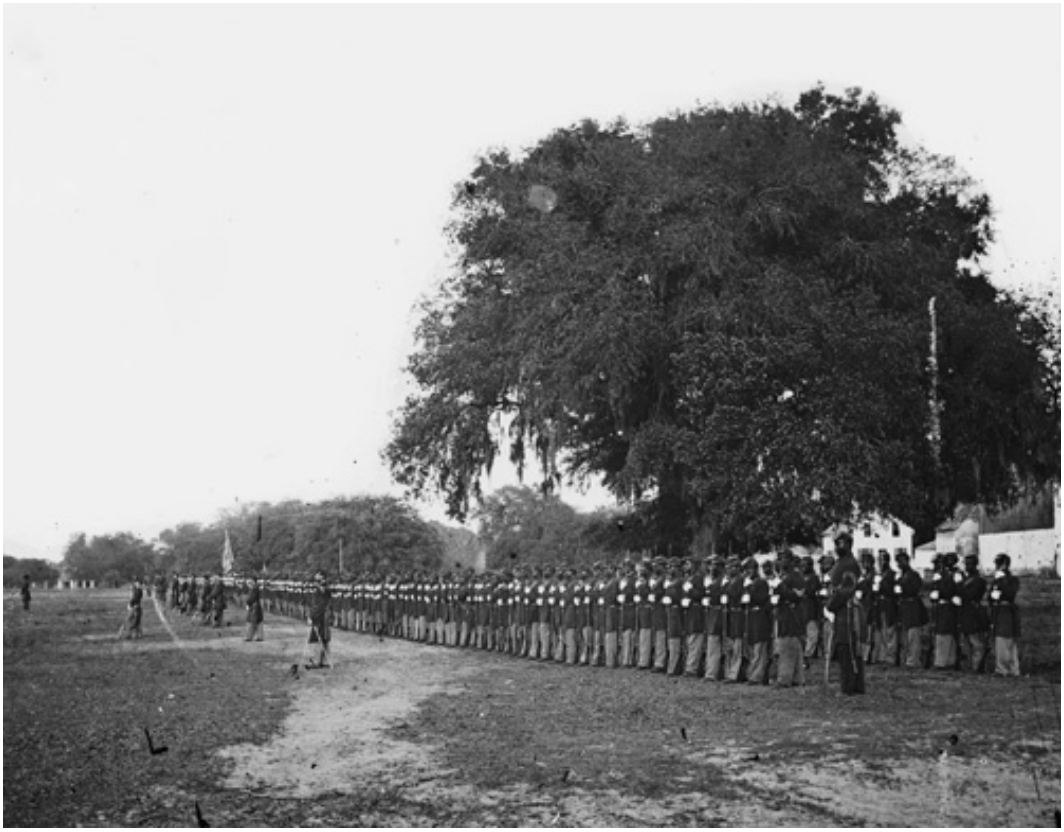
Feb. 1866 - Laura M. Towne


Susie King Taylor.




Hannah Ropes, a Massachusetts native with abolitionist leanings, complained to the secretary of war about the cruelty of the surgeon and steward at Union Hotel Hospital. Afterward, the hospital staff shunned her. Ropes died of typhoid in Union Hotel in January 1863. (Courtesy of U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.)


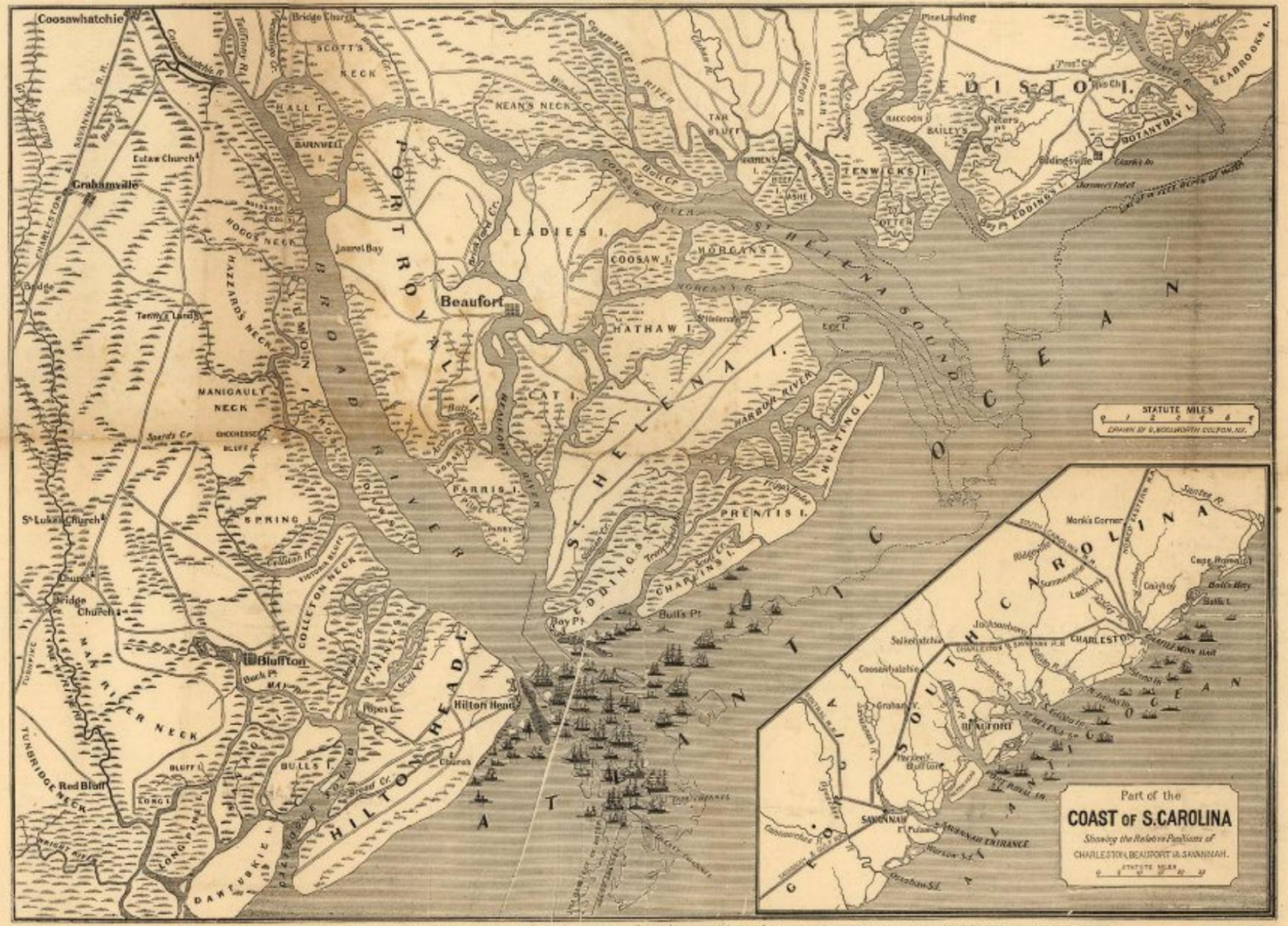
What are their names?
Gen. Rufus Saxton; General; Gen. David Hunter; Gen. Ormsby Mitchel; Col. James Beecher; U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Samuel Chase; U.S. President Abraham Lincoln; Frederick Douglass with Lincoln and Seward and Chase calling for Black enlistment in the Military; William Garrett; Surgeon john Milton Hawks; Col. James Montgomery; Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson; Lt. Col. Trowbridge; Capt. Needles Hallowell; Gen. Strong; Gov. John Andrew of Massachusetts; Col. Robert Gould Shaw; Carney; Mercer Langston; Christian Fleetwood; Sgt. Major Lewis Douglass; Gen. Quincy Gilmore; Gen. Butler; Gen. Thomas Sherman; Gen. Tecumseh Sherman; Robert Smalls; Capt. Luis Emilio; Surgeon Seth Rogers; Major Martin Delaney; Henry Ward Beecher; Frederick Douglass; Esther Hill Hawks; Clara Barton; Charlotte Forten; Laura Towne; Harriet Tubman; Suzie King Taylor; Frances Harper; Sarah Remond; Mary Ann Shadd Cary; Hannah ropes; Dorthea dix; Harriet Beecher Stowe; Frances Beecher Perkins



What did these people do? Where are their stories? How would America be different without them?

By March 1863, the town of Mitchelville, at Hilton Head, was established to provide newly freed persons the opportunity to practice self-governance. (Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77)

PUBLIÉ PAR LE COURRIER DES ÉTATS-UNIS.



CARTE DE PORT ROYAL ET DES ENVIRONS, AVEC UN PLAN DE LA CÔTE DU SUD, DEPUIS BULL'S BAY (CAROLINE DU SUD), JUSQU'A BRUNSWICK (GEORGIE), INDIQUANT LES MOYENS DE COMMUNICATION ENTRE BEAUFORT, SAVANNAH ET CHARLESTON.

The Long Watch Night: The Women of Port Royal

Stories From The Diaries And Memoires Of Women Who Helped Change America In A Radical Rehearsal For The Racial And Economic Reconstruction Of The South.

By Ilene Evans, Karen Vuranch, and Dr. Connie Park Rice
Traditional Music arranged by Ilene Evans

The Port Royal Experiment forever changed the social structure of America. This effort established full legal rights and entitlements from the few upper class landed gentry - to the many, regardless of class, race, inheritance, or education. The Port Royal Experiment confirmed the value of human rights. People from across the globe point to these American standards of equality and human rights without knowing the story that shaped the nation.

Susie King Taylor (1848-1913) -Susie was born on the Grest Farm in Liberty County, Georgia, on August 6, 1848. At the age of 7, Baker and her brother were sent to live with their grandmother in Savannah. Even with the strict laws against formal education of African Americans, they both attended two secret schools taught by black women. Baker soon became a skilled reader and writer. When nearby Fort Pulaski was captured by the Union Army, Baker fled with her uncle's family and other African Americans to Union-occupied St. Simons Island. Since most African Americans did not have an extensive education, word of Baker's knowledge and intelligence spread among the Army officers on the island. Five days after her arrival, Baker was offered books and school supplies by Commodore Louis M. Goldsborough if she agreed to organize a school for the children on St. Simon's Island. Baker accepted the offer and became the first black teacher to openly instruct African American students in Georgia.

Esther Hill Hawks - Dr. Esther Hill Hawks (1833-1906) was hired as a teacher for the Port Royal Experiment by the Gideonites. After marrying Dr. John Milton Hawks, Esther Hill Hawks studied his medical books and decided to go to medical school. Graduating from New England Medical College for Women in 1857, she practiced in various locales with her husband. He was an ardent abolitionist, and, after Hilton Head and the surrounding areas were occupied by Union forces, he obtained a job providing medical care and running a plantation set up for freed slaves along the coast of South Carolina. Esther joined him there and helped provide medical care to the blacks. She worked as a contract physician in General Hospital Number 10, which was established for black soldiers in Beaufort, South Carolina. Hawks helped care for soldiers from the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry after its famous ill-fated attempt to take Morris Island under Col. Robert Shaw. After the war, she continued to work in the area, caring for former slaves and teaching school.

Charlotte Forten – (1838-1914) With the outbreak of the Civil War Forten sought out an opportunity to teach her own people in Port Royal, South Carolina. She was accompanied by abolitionist John Hunn, who ran a general store while there. Forten was pleased to educate the children of recently freed slaves who would otherwise not have had any educational opportunity. She met Clara Barton, Harriet Tubman and attended the first reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, all documented in her diary. In 1864, Charlotte returned to Philadelphia and spent the next twelve years writing and publishing poems and essays including two articles about her South Carolina experiences in the Atlantic Monthly. Charlotte also returned to teaching, and in 1878 she married Francis Grimké, the nephew of Sarah and Angelina Grimké.

Harriet Tubman (1820-1913

Harriet Tubman was part of the Anti-slavery resistance network was known as the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland but escaped through the Underground Railroad to Pennsylvania in 1849. She then became the most famous leader of that network, aiding slaves in their escape to Free states and Canada. She was known as "Moses" to the hundreds of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Tubman helped to free hundreds of people held in bondage and inspired thousands of others. She was never caught and never lost anyone on the route to freedom. She served as a spy, nurse, scout, and guide for Union troops and was present at the ill-fated assault of Fort Wagner by the 54th Massachusetts in South Carolina.

Clara Barton (1831-1912)

Barton was the first woman allowed to tend the wounded on the front lines during the Civil War and became known as “The Angel of the Battlefield.” She delivered medical supplies, established field hospitals, cooked for the wounded, cleaned operating rooms and cared for the suffering from both North and South. After the war she led a four year search for missing soldiers. She is well known as the founder of the American Red Cross. Her work at Port Royal in the South Carolina Sea Islands gave her a chance to see the suffering, courage and valor of both men and women of African Descent serving the Union.