

SMARTYPANTS

Buffalo Soldiers

There is a lot to learn from history and the people who lived in the days of the past. Have you ever thought, what would it be like to travel in time and experience the world as it was? The life of those who lived during those periods of time may seem amazing and heroic to us as we look back, but there were struggles we could never imagine. One of those times in American history are the days following the civil war. Young men of every race looked to the west to make their fortune, start a new life, and put their mark on the world.

Buffalo Soldiers were definitely one group to touch the lives around them, and they never knew they were changing history. After the emancipation proclamation put an end to slavery, many African Americans had nowhere to go, and many were released from slavery with just the clothes on their backs. When the United States made it legal for "colored men" to join the United States Army, many ex-slaves signed up. The soldiers rode horses across the hot, dusty plains, guarding stagecoaches, building roads and fighting outlaws. These soldiers wanted to earn respect, and build better lives for themselves and their families.

The name, Buffalo Soldiers, was given to the men by Native Americans. They believed the soldiers' curly brown hair, their courage, and their fighting ability made them equal to the buffalo which the "Indians" thought was a sacred animal. The soldiers believed it was an honor to be called by that name.

BUFFALO SOLDIERS

A Legacy of 85 Years

1866 - 1951

One of the most famous Buffalo Soldiers was Sergeant Major William H. Carney. He was super brave and was the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor, the highest award you can get in the military. He got the award because during a really dangerous battle, he saved the American flag and didn't let it touch the ground, even though he was wounded. Another famous Buffalo Soldier was Henry O. Flipper. He was very smart and he made history by becoming the first Black man to graduate from West Point Military Academy.

Sergeant Major William H. Carney

Second Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper

Check these books out at your favorite library!

Buffalo Soldiers and the American West by Jason Glaser
Buffalo Soldiers by Brynn Baker

VIDEOS!

Scan this to watch videos and learn more about Buffalo Soldiers

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ACROSS

2. A special job or task
6. Something holy
7. Large, flat areas of land
8. Not safe
11. Someone who serves in the military
13. To free from slavery
15. Money or wealth
17. A positive way of treating someone
19. Participation in events
20. Something really good and surprising
21. An award
22. Very brave and admirable

DOWN

1. Someone well known
3. To picture something in your head
4. Criminals
5. Unfair treatment based on race
7. An official public announcement
9. Another name for the American Bison
10. Having hard times
12. Past events
14. A horse-drawn passenger and mail coach
16. Having to do with the law
18. The practice of owning people

Even though they did the same hard work and fought just as bravely, Buffalo soldiers were not treated the same as white soldiers. They were often given missions that no one else wanted. At times, they would have to ride for days without any rest, and there were times they weren't even given food to take with them on their mission. The treatment they received was unfair, but they did their jobs with courage and pride. They patrolled huge, wild areas in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Buffalo Soldiers had to deal with a lot of racism but they showed the world that black men could be great soldiers and leaders. That's why, even today, they are remembered as heroes.

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