

Sample Research Writing

Essential Skills:

- Summarizing sources
- Synthesizing summaries
- Integration of source material
- Citing source material

Many Americans may be surprised to learn that black soldiers have fought for America from its war of independence from British rule. **According to *National Parks* magazine**, more than 180,000 black volunteer soldiers fought alongside the Union troops during the Civil War (**Siber, 2012**). These African-American soldiers were officially established by Congress in 1866, the **article stated**, and were divided into two infantry units and two cavalry units. **Siber explained that** after their Civil War service, these regiments were employed to help open the West for settlers heading for new opportunities and unspoiled land offered in Homesteading Acts meant to push the United States across the continent.

One of the tasks of the black regiments was to clear Indians from the new settlements and chase Indians back onto reservations and out of the white man's way. This role brought companies of the cavalry and infantry to Utah Territory in the 1870s, where, **wrote historian Will Bagley (2015)**, "they were sent to keep an eye on the Ouray and Uinta reservations" and established Fort Duchesne, near present-day Duchesne. **Bagley explained that** the African-American soldiers had to deal with a lot of prejudice and dislike, and from more than the Indians. In fact, **Bagley wrote**, "their first commanding officer, Major Frederick Benteen did not hesitate to express his contempt for his men." Benteen had no use for Mormons, either, **Bagley said**. He described how the "black white man" kept the peace between the Colorado militia and the Utes in 1887 by pushing them back onto the Ute reservation and away from the militia's reach.

Another surprising role filled by these black troops—sometimes called Buffalo Soldiers—was acting as the first national park rangers at Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, from 1899-1904. ***National Parks* noted** that among the soldiers' accomplishments were chasing off poachers of wild game and dealing with illegal sheep grazing in the park. "They also constructed the first trail up 14,500-foot Mt. Whitney, the country's highest peak" before Alaska became a state (**Siber, 2012**). The African-American troops blazed routes and built roads into the parks and were among the first caretakers of the giant sequoias and some of America's most beloved and beautiful national parks.

References

Bagley, W. (2015, February 8). The Buffalo Soldiers in Utah. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.sltrib.com>

Siber, K. (2012, Fall). Standing guard: America's Buffalo Soldiers. *National Parks*. Retrieved from <https://www.npca.org/articles>