

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***, fighting alongside the Union troops during the Civil War were more than 180,000 black volunteer soldiers (**Siber**). These African-American soldiers were officially established by Congress in 1866, the **article states**, in two infantry units and two cavalry units. 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, **writes Will Bagley of *The Salt Lake Tribune***, "they were sent to keep an eye on the Ouray and Uinta reservations" and established Fort Duchesne, near present-day Duchesne. **Bagley explains that** the African-American soldiers had to deal with a lot of prejudice and dislike, and from more than the Indians. In fact, **Bagley writes**, "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 says**. He describes 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—now called Buffalo Soldiers—was acting as the first national park rangers at Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, from 1899-1904. ***National Parks magazine notes*** that among their 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**). The men blazed routes and built roads into the parks and were among the first caretakers of the Giant Sequoias and Yosemite, one of America's most beautiful and iconic national parks.