

CONSERVANCY

FOR CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

— CUYAHOGA CONNECTIONS —
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Buffalo Soldiers

Information for this journal is credited to the National Park Service. To learn more about Buffalo Soldiers, visit: www.nps.gov/subjects/buffalosoldiers/index.htm

The Buffalo Soldiers

African Americans served in the U.S. Military during the Civil War and continued to serve afterwards. When the Civil War came to an end, the war-torn nation was in need of rebuilding with a growing desire to expand into the Western Frontier.

In 1866, Congress established six all-Black regiments (consolidated to four shortly after) to help rebuild the country after the Civil War and to fight on the Western Frontier during the "Indian Wars."

It was from one of these regiments, the 10th Cavalry, that the nickname Buffalo Soldiers were born, a nickname given to them by the American Plains Indians. This nickname soon became synonymous with all African-American regiments formed in 1866.



The Nation's First Park Rangers

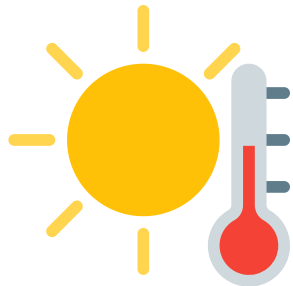
Before the National Park Service was established in 1916, the U.S. Army was responsible for protecting our first national parks.

Between 1891 and 1913, the U.S. Army served as the official administrator of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks. The Buffalo Soldiers were the nation's first park rangers, with duties including fighting wildfire, curbing poaching of the park's wildlife, ending illegal grazing of livestock on federal lands, and constructing roads, trail and other infrastructure.



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(Digital File Number: cph 3g06161)

Conditions on the Trail



Water on the Trail

It was said that water was a Buffalo Soldier's best friend. Why do you think water was so important?

Sometimes the Buffalo Soldiers may experience a "dry camp," meaning that there is no water at the campsite. Why is this a problem?

Fighting for Respect

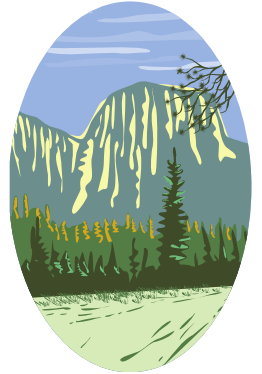
Even though the Buffalo Soldiers wore the uniform of the U.S. Army, their ethnicity combined with the racial prejudice of the time made their duties challenging. African-Americans were routinely abused, or even killed, for the slightest perceived offense. Yosemite and Sequoia's Buffalo Soldiers had to be both strong and diplomatic to fulfill the duties of their job without giving offense.

Even still, African Americans joined the U.S. Army for a better life and to fight for their country. They served valiantly on foreign battlefields and in the face of awful racism.

How do you show respect toward friends and classmates? What does respect mean to you?

Managing the Parks

Buffalo Soldiers on the western frontier had duties from evicting poachers and timber thieves to extinguishing forest fires. The way they managed the land built the foundation for how the National Park Service manages the land today.



What natural resource (plant, animal, water, soil or other natural resources) do you think is important to protect? How would you go about protecting it?

Saddlebags

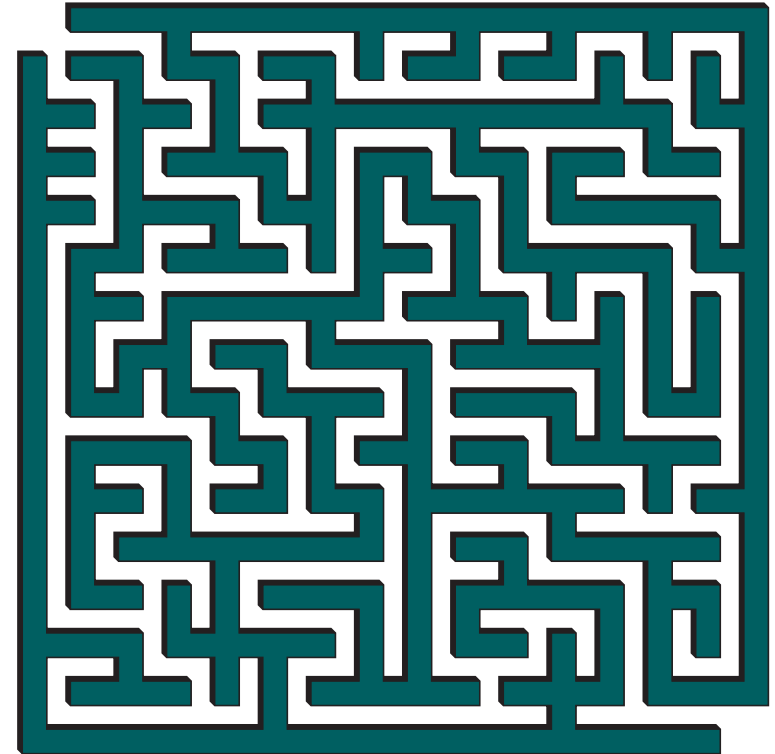
Buffalo Soldiers often traveled for days by horseback. Everything they needed would fit in their saddlebag.



Saddlebags are leather pouches that hang from the horse's saddle. What items would you want to have in your saddlebag?



Maze through the Western Frontier to find your very own National Park!



Draw your dream national park below!