



## Curriculum Connections

### *History & Social Studies*

In the Washington DC metropolitan area alone, historic sites and districts significant to the African American experience are numerous. The Shaw neighborhood of the District (named for Colonel Robert Gould Shaw) was a temporary encampment of displaced blacks and freedmen, and later evolved into a more permanent African American neighborhood. Black Union scout Harriet Tubman and nurse and humanitarian Clara Barton both helped treat the wounded after the battle at Fort Wagner, and both women are associated with local sites. Frederick Douglass, whose two sons served in the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, lived in Anacostia from 1877 to 1895. His home there is now a National Historic site. Consult the National Park Service for other notable sites and Civil War history (<http://www.nps.gov/cwindepth/cwparks.html>).

### *Language Arts*

The Shaw Memorial has inspired more than thirty poems including Robert Lowell's *For the Union Dead*, Charles Ives' *Moving, Marching, Faces of Souls*, John Berryman's *Boston Common*, and Paul Lawrence Dunbar's *Robert Gould Shaw*. Students might analyze and compare poems, considering how each writer drew inspiration from the men of the regiment, or from Saint-Gaudens' sculpture.

The writings of Walt Whitman and Louisa May Alcott, stemming from their years ministering to the Civil War wounded in Washington, DC, offer connections to language arts and social studies. Alcott's *Hospital Sketches* and Whitman's *Drum Taps* make good primary source materials for upper level students. The memoirs of Susie King Taylor might also appeal to high school students. Taylor's *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp* chronicles significant moments in her youth as a slave and her adult life as a wartime nurse and educator.

### *Geography*

Tracking the battle campaigns of the Fifty-fourth can help develop skills in mapping and geography, while yielding insight into military maneuvers and strategies. A period map of Charleston harbor and its intra-coastal waterways can demonstrate the city's importance to both the North and South as an economic and transportation network. Mapping routes

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along the underground railroad allows students to consider features of the terrain to be dealt by those fleeing north.

### *Music*

The memorial's soldiers, marching to the rhythms tapped out by the young drummer boy, invite connections to music. Saint-Gaudens' sculpture inspired composer Charles Ives to create his own tribute that became the first movement of *Three Places in New England*. Woven through the assertively modern orchestration are echoes of the past: plantation song "Old Black Joe," and patriotic Civil War tunes "The Battle Cry of Freedom," "Marching through Georgia," and "Reveille." Students might listen to Ives' music while looking at a reproduction of Saint-Gaudens' monument and then discuss the composer's deep-felt response to the sculpture.

### *Visual Art*

Comparisons of Saint-Gaudens' work with that by his American contemporaries might offer insight into his success as a sculptor—in particular as a sculptor of public monuments—in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The artist created six Civil War memorials. The lifelike realism of his figures and descriptive detail made his work popular, as did his ability to meld this realism with idealized, allegorical elements.

Sculpture depicting abolitionist themes might also be explored. Edmonia Lewis sculpted a portrait bust of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw in 1864 and celebrated emancipation with the sculpture *Forever Free* (1867). Many of Lewis' sculptures address themes relating to her dual African American and Native American heritage.

Some have called the memorial to Shaw and the 54th the finest memorial sculpture ever produced in the United States; certainly it has inspired a host of artistic tributes since its unveiling in 1897. Comparisons between it and other memorial sculptures offer an opportunity to consider what makes a great memorial—one that stands the test of time.