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## Landscape Imagery in Popular Representations of African American Soldiers during the Civil War

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Abstract:

This article analyzes popular images created during the American Civil War that used the symbolic language of landscape to signal a newly empowered social position for African American soldiers. Such images are particularly significant given the erasure of black soldiers from post-war commemorative art.

## Landscape Imagery in Popular Representations of African American Soldiers during the Civil War

by Maura Lyons

In 1864, *Harper's Weekly* magazine published a powerful visual narrative of transformation (fig. 1). The upper half of the illustration depicts a man who had recently escaped from slavery in Georgia to Union lines in Tennessee, while the bottom pictures the same man after his enlistment in the Union army. As Frederick Douglass (ca. 1818–95) famously remarked in advocating for black enlistment, “Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters U. S.; let him get the eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on the earth, or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.”<sup>[1]</sup> Dramatic differences in clothing and pose signal the changed status of the man, who has since been identified as Hubbard Pryor (?-1890).<sup>[2]</sup> Equally important is the setting that underlines Pryor's transformation. In the first image he sits in front of an agricultural landscape, in a composition characterized by visual constraint. Pryor appears well below the horizon with his figure enclosed by the barn in the distance. The dilapidation of the farmstead parallels his ragged clothing, further linking man and landscape, and reminding *Harper's* Northern readership of his recent forced labor under the corrupt system of slavery. The second image heralds Pryor's liberation from the landscape. He is shown standing in full uniform and towering over the horizon line. Behind him an active battlefield has replaced the farm, complete with massed troops and the smoke of artillery fire. Even more telling of the symbolic significance of the landscape is the fact that the battlefield scene was invented by the *Harper's* illustrator. Comparing the illustrations with the surviving photographs on which they were based reveals that the artist fabricated the landscape in the lower image in order to present the black recruit as a confident contributor to the war effort.<sup>[3]</sup>



Fig. 1, “The Escaped Slave—Photographed by T. B. Bishop” and “The Escaped Slave in the Union Army,” *Harper's Weekly*, July 2, 1864: 428. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.

[\[larger image\]](#)

This essay analyzes images created between 1863 and 1865, particularly within the graphic arts, and argues that the symbolic language of landscape was pressed into service to signal a

newly empowered social position for African American soldiers. It is to popular imagery that we must turn to find such redefinitions of black autonomy, given their absence from contemporary easel painting or sculpture.<sup>[4]</sup> It was commercial artists, not fine artists, who grappled week to week with representing the radical social changes precipitated by the war, including reformulations of black identity following the Emancipation Proclamation and African American enlistment.<sup>[5]</sup> Because they were published in illustrated magazines such as *Harper's Weekly*, issued as collectible prints, displayed as recruitment posters, and carried onto the battlefield, depictions of black soldiers reached hundreds of thousands of viewers.<sup>[6]</sup> The images emerged out of established networks of Northern artists and publishers that expanded to meet the growing public demand for information and encourage African American recruitment. To ignore these broadly circulating depictions is to possess an incomplete portrait of the visual culture of the American Civil War.

Although some artists trafficked in stereotypes for popular audiences, others fashioned a new iconography by pairing black soldiers with particular landscape settings. The deployment of landscape to empower traditionally marginalized figures departs from the more frequent practice of using landscape imagery to support the ideological status quo.<sup>[7]</sup> Dressed in their Union uniforms, African American men serve on picket duty in remote areas, scale mountains in battle, and occupy contested territory. Such images countered racist visual discourses that associated black men with the wild, uncivilized, and bestial elements of nature. The soldiers' capable responses to nature's challenges in these landscapes demonstrated their humanity, as well as the valued masculine qualities of discipline, camaraderie, protectiveness, bravery, and spirituality.<sup>[8]</sup>

As the visual record suggests, African American men joined white men in the ranks of the Union Army, but their experience of the war remained distinct.<sup>[9]</sup> Black soldiers served in segregated units under white officers, received unequal pay, were often assigned the most menial labor, and went into battle with the knowledge that Confederate troops would offer them no quarter in defeat.<sup>[10]</sup> Despite these hardships, many African American soldiers viewed their military service as transformative. George Washington Williams (1849–91) summarized this sentiment dramatically in his history of the war published in 1888:

It was midnight and noonday without a space between; from the Egyptian darkness of bondage to the lurid glare of civil war; from clanking chains to clashing arms; from passive submission to the cruel curse of slavery to the brilliant aggressiveness of a free soldier; from a chattel to a person; from the shame of degradation to the glory of military exaltation; and from deep obscurity to fame and martial immortality.<sup>[11]</sup>

This study investigates specific uses of landscape imagery that anticipated Williams's vision of racial uplift. It explores the interplay between constructions of race and landscape found in Civil War imagery, areas kept largely separate in the scholarly literature.<sup>[12]</sup> Precedents for a linkage exist, however. Historians of US art have long argued that artists forged an ideological correlation between depictions of Native Americans and wilderness in American landscape imagery.<sup>[13]</sup> In addition, several transnational studies, following the example of W. J. T. Mitchell, have argued for the entanglement of imperialism and landscape imagery, in which landscapes work to naturalize colonization and enslavement.<sup>[14]</sup> Implicit in this scholarship is the role of race in the visualization of colonial territories or former colonies. Many of these accounts emphasize the absence, marginalization, or exoticization of people

of color in landscape imagery. In contrast, I focus on war landscapes in which African American soldiers take a prominent and active role. Such images did not eliminate stereotyping; “accommodation” and “resistance” to cultural racism co-existed during the war years, as Patricia Hills has argued, sometimes within a single image.<sup>[15]</sup> Nevertheless, these images document how black soldiers became “see-able’ for and in a given culture, and according to that culture’s codes of visual representation.”<sup>[16]</sup> Landscape imagery, a highly codified form of expression in the nineteenth-century United States, became one means to argue for the soldiers’ autonomy, thereby upending racialized readings of both the figures of black men and landscape types.

Three recurring landscape types worked to introduce an image of black soldiers’ autonomy: the Southern swamp, the hill- or mountaintop, and the inhabited military landscape. These representations sent a new message of empowerment to both black and white audiences. In place of images of passivity, African American soldiers activated their landscape settings and landscape settings activated African American soldiers. Such iconography is particularly significant given the virtual erasure of black soldiers from post-war commemorative art.<sup>[17]</sup>

### The Soldier and the Swamp

Images of black soldiers deployed in Southern swamps signaled a profound social reorganization. The men’s appearance in uniform contradicted antebellum images that conflated African Americans with the swamp’s wildness and hazards. The soldiers in such depictions represent the forces of order, distinct from associations of the swamp as marginal or “uncivilized.”

One example of swamp imagery advancing a new image of African American soldiers is a cover illustration (fig. 2) for *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* published in early 1863. The image depicts a group of five African American soldiers on picket duty guarding a railroad line. The wood engraving emphasizes the lush foliage of the setting, which encircles the makeshift military outpost. The trees are draped with Spanish moss and a luxuriant palmetto dominates the left foreground, clearly identifying the location as swampland in the Deep South.



Fig. 2, “Pickets of the First Louisiana ‘Native Guard’ Guarding the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, March 7, 1863: 369. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)



Two elements break with conventional swamp images: the presence of the black soldiers and the train steaming into view in the left background. The soldiers belong to the First Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards. This regiment, mustered into service in New Orleans on September 27, 1862 by Major General Benjamin Butler (1818–1893), was the “first officially sanctioned regiment of black soldiers in the Union army.”<sup>[18]</sup> Its members included both free black citizens of New Orleans and former slaves. Although the field officers who commanded the regiment were white, all the line officers were African American.<sup>[19]</sup> In the *Leslie’s* illustration, the pickets perform their duties without white oversight, unlike many comparable images of black soldiers. During the spring of 1863, soldiers in the First Regiment were tasked with guarding the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad line west of New Orleans, as depicted in the illustration.<sup>[20]</sup> In the image, armed black men act on behalf of the federal government, securing the transportation routes crucial to Union success. Because the railroad was an established visual symbol of civilization, the men are thus allied not only with the Union Army but also with the forces of progress.<sup>[21]</sup>

The soldier to the left of the composition is singled out for prominence. The illustrator emphasizes the details of the soldier’s regulation uniform; he wears a winter overcoat with cape, a cartridge box, and a tall-brimmed dress hat with plume (known as the Hardee hat). He is armed with a musket or rifle with affixed bayonet, the scabbard of which hangs from his waist. This specificity underlines the soldier’s official status. Unlike a contemporary wood engraving of white Union pickets from *Harper’s Weekly* (fig. 3), which depicts the guards as dwarfed by the dense swamp surrounding them, the standing soldier looms over the train, visible below his left elbow.<sup>[22]</sup>



Fig. 3, “On Picket Duty in the Swamps of Louisiana,” *Harper’s Weekly*, May 9, 1863: 289. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

Despite its radical message, the illustration does not eliminate all stereotyping. Caricature creeps into the facial features of the two soldiers around the campfire, particularly those of the seated man, in a strategy that Alice Fahs has described as fusing images of “minstrelsy and black soldiering.”<sup>[23]</sup> The magazine text mirrors the mixed messages of the illustration. Quoting the unnamed artist, the article praises the indispensability of African American

soldiers in negotiating the swampy terrain, while also undercutting this expertise by remarking, “Impervious to miasma, they only see the home of the coon, the possum and the copperhead, so that with ‘de gun dat Massa Sam gib’em,’ they have all the essential elements of colored happiness, except ladies’ society.” The inclusion of verbal and visual stereotyping betrays unease with the soldiers’ role.<sup>[24]</sup>

The *Leslie’s* illustration’s break with convention is thrown into higher relief through an examination of changing representations of the swamp, particularly during the antebellum and war years. The swamp served as a multivalent symbol in American culture, signifying the geographic region of the South, among other meanings.<sup>[25]</sup> Its visual markers were relatively consistent—including not only Spanish moss, but also cypress trees and murky water—as was the awareness of its dangers, summarized succinctly by David C. Miller in his cultural history of the swamp: “The vegetation of the swamp may be entangling, its morass treacherous, its atmosphere poisonous, its denizens devouring.”<sup>[26]</sup> This sense of menace underpins the swamp’s identification with forces beyond the bounds of civilization, making it the antithesis of the pastoral tradition.<sup>[27]</sup> Its otherness could take on religious overtones, as in the perilous Slough of Despond familiar to American Protestants from John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678), or in the wilderness settings evoked by African American spirituals in which it was possible to encounter the divine.<sup>[28]</sup> The symbolic links between swamps and wilderness led elite whites to identify Southern swamps with marginalized populations seen as threatening to their interests, particularly those of other races. Native Americans were associated with swamps during the colonial period, until extensive land clearing, warfare, and the enactment of Indian removal policies loosened the connection.<sup>[29]</sup> Subsequently, Southern swamps were identified with African Americans. Within plantation culture, for example, swamps and woodlands located on the outskirts of large landholdings constituted a de facto extension of the slave quarters.<sup>[30]</sup>

As sectional tensions intensified, and with the lingering memory of Nat Turner’s rebellion of 1831, Northern images began to equate the dangers of the swamp with the threat of African American insurrection. Swamps were feared as the locations from which an armed black rebellion could emerge and threaten slaveholding landowners. This putative black army would be populated by escaped and freed slaves, sometimes called maroons, who had established independent communities in swamps throughout the southeastern United States.<sup>[31]</sup> An illustration by Porte Crayon (the pseudonym of David Hunter Strother, 1816–88) entitled *Osman* (fig. 4) gives visual form to the newly sharpened awareness of the maroon population at mid-century.<sup>[32]</sup> The image was one of several accompanying an account of the artist’s trip to the Great Dismal Swamp, on the border of Virginia and North Carolina, which appeared in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in September 1856.<sup>[33]</sup> In the image, a solitary armed figure, Osman, appears as an emanation of the swamp itself; a web of vines entwines his lower body and frames him in a dense semi-circle. The curve of the vines echoes his beard, linking man and landscape. Although memorable, the illustration required the text’s dramatic account of Strother’s near-encounter with Osman—and readers’ preconceptions—to render him a figure of terror. He writes:



Fig. 4, Porte Crayon [David Hunter Strother], “Osman,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, September 1856: 452. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

About thirty paces from me I saw a gigantic negro, with a tattered blanket wrapped about his shoulders, and a gun in his hand. His head was bare, and he had little other clothing than a pair of ragged breeches and boots. His hair and beard were tipped with gray, and his purely African features were cast in a mould betokening, in the highest degree, strength and energy. The expression of the face was of mingled fear and ferocity, and every movement betrayed a life of habitual caution and watchfulness. [\[34\]](#)

Osman turns away before the two men meet, but the narrator emphasizes the indelible impression he made. In this account, trepidation and curiosity are mixed in equal measure.

More overt in playing on white fears is the illustration that appeared in the *New York Illustrated News* in 1861, after the war broke out. An African American man, identified in the caption as a fugitive slave named Tom, faces four armed white men in the dense Big Cypress Swamp southeast of New Orleans (fig. 5). Here, the violence only hinted at in the illustration of Osman becomes explicit. The scene presents Tom as a formidable figure, despite being outnumbered. He towers over the other figures, standing with his left hand clenched and his right wielding a sword. His pose mirrors the tree with outstretched branches to the right of the composition. According to the printed description, Tom fled to the swamp after killing his overseer, when the latter attempted to whip him. He then killed two of his pursuers in the ensuing battle before escaping entirely. The sensationalizing text further stokes readers’ anxiety by remarking that Tom “is a fellow of great strength and ferocity, and will be a great acquisition to the fugitives in the swamp,” since “there are at least 300 runaway negroes in that vicinity, who live by murder and pillage.” The text also hints at future rebellion by adding that “the Negroes are watching their chance, and will undoubtedly avail themselves of the present opportunity.”[\[35\]](#) The historian Sylviane Diouf has argued that it was only a “subgroup” of American maroons who engaged in banditry, meaning that they went beyond the petty theft of food and supplies necessary to the survival of all maroons to rob homes and travelers and even commit premeditated murder. However, she concludes that white anxiety usually magnified such threats, including the numbers of maroons. For example, she

finds no evidence that bands of maroons, rather than individuals, initiated or participated in slave insurrections.[36]



Fig. 5, “Murder of Mr. Grimshaw, Mr. Town, and An Overseer by the Fugitive Negro ‘Tom,’ in Big Cypress Swamp, Plaquimine Parish, Louisiana. Desperate Conduct and Escape of the Murderer,” *New York Illustrated News*, July 15, 1861: 172. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.

[\[larger image\]](#)

Swamp iconography was used very differently when Northern image-makers began to encourage African American enlistment. In contrast to the previous emphasis on insurrection, this imagery presents the swamp as a transitional space through which an African American man can transform himself from a slave into a Union soldier. A series of twelve small chromolithographs published in Philadelphia as *Journey of a Slave from the Plantation to the Battlefield* (fig. 6) designed by Henry Louis Stephens (1824–82) demonstrates this altered approach.[37] Issued as collectible trade cards, roughly the size of playing cards, they construct an extended narrative.[38] The first five scenes depict episodes from the man’s life in bondage. A turning point occurs in the sixth scene—*Blow for Blow*—in which the black man exacts his revenge on the white man who has beaten him in the previous card. The seventh card, *In the Swamp*, shows the black man crouching, with his hands clasped as if in prayer, in tall swamp grasses. He attempts to elude the slave hunters visible to the right. This scene relates to abolitionist imagery and published first-hand accounts that presented the swamp as a place of extreme danger for self-emancipating men and women.[39] The eighth card, entitled *Free!*, shows the man stepping onto dry land and freedom, having negotiated the swamps visible in the right distance and reached the Union lines delineated on the left. He raises his arms and throws back his head in exultation. The blood on the man’s body, which is also visible in the water, emphasizes the hardships of his journey. (His blood, along with the blue and white striped pants and red kerchief belt, associate him visually with the flag in the Union encampment.) The four remaining cards depict the man prostrate in front of an American flag held by a white Union soldier (*Stand Up a Man!*); as a soldier in battle drawing blood from a Confederate opponent with his bayonet; dying from enemy fire while carrying the flag; and being crowned with a laurel wreath by the allegorical figure of Liberty (*He Died for Me!*).[40] Throughout the series, landscape is one cue to the changing status of the African American man. While cotton fields mark his enslavement and a rocky hill symbolizes his hardships in battle, the swamp indicates his passage to freedom. It is a place of temporary

refuge in Stephens's characterization—a liminal, murky space from which the protagonist reaches solid ground and the Union encampment.<sup>[41]</sup>



Fig. 6, Henry Louis Stephens (illustrator) and James Queen (lithographer), *The Slave in 1863 [Journey of a Slave from the Plantation to the Battlefield]*, 1863. Chromolithographs. Published by William Allen Stephens, Philadelphia. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, On loan from Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library, Cambridge (MA), 120.1976.23-34. Photo: Imaging Department  
© President and Fellows of Harvard College. [\[larger image\]](#)

Returning to the illustration of the First Louisiana pickets, it clearly provides a sharp contrast to the other swamp images under review. For example, the pickets' uniforms function not only to underline their military mission but also to keep the soldiers distinct from their surroundings, unlike the depictions of Osman and Tom in which the two blur. The soldiers in the *Leslie's* illustration also differ from the protagonist of the album cards in that they do not flee in the direction of the Union lines but define these lines through their presence. The *Leslie's* illustration trades on preexisting associations between African Americans and swamps, yet it also posits an iconography that reconceptualized these associations: black soldiers take command of the swamp in order to advance the Union war effort.<sup>[42]</sup> They are depicted as autonomous actors in the landscape in a way that had typically been reserved for white Americans.

### The Soldier and the Summit/Mountaintop

The summit or mountaintop was another recurring landscape type used by artists to create images of African American autonomy through the figure of the soldier. Unlike the low-lying swamp, whose image worked to define the changing boundaries of civilization, the elevation of the mountaintop evoked the Christian quest for spiritual union with God. The mountain also became a metaphor for the fight for racial equality in the United States; its scaling by black soldiers conveyed this moral mission.

A prime example of the symbolic use of the mountaintop is a painting (fig. 7) created for the obverse of the regimental flag of the 24th Infantry Regiment of the United States Colored Troops (USCT).<sup>[43]</sup> This regiment, recruited in eastern Pennsylvania, was mustered at Camp William Penn, located just north of Philadelphia, in February of 1865.<sup>[44]</sup> The regiment's flag, now known only through a photograph, was the design of David Bustill Bowser (1820?-1900), an African American painter based in Philadelphia.<sup>[45]</sup> Unlike other images discussed in this article, therefore, the flag offers an iconography of black soldiers created by a black artist for a black regiment.



Fig. 7, David Bustill Bowser, Regimental flag (now lost), 24th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, ca. 1864. Oil on silk. Photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-11274. [\[larger image\]](#)

The scene on the flag presents an African American soldier, with both arms outstretched, striding toward a mountaintop shrouded in clouds. A scroll with a Latin inscription, which translates to “Let Justice Be Done,” hovers above his hands. The angle and position of the soldier’s arms and legs visually reinforce the slope of the mountain and its paired peaks. Although in uniform and with a pack on his back, the soldier has discarded his weapon; the barrel of a rifle with affixed bayonet is visible behind him. A broken axle and wheel from a caisson in the foreground identify the location as the site of a previous battle. Two additional soldiers are located on a distant ridge. Each has one arm raised, visually reinforcing the outstretched arms of the main figure.

The scene from the regimental flag belongs to a group of popular images of black soldiers in which they ascend or surmount a hill or mountain. Although the topography depicted in some of the images documents actual locations, many of them, including Bowser’s design, present a symbolic landscape. They draw on a long Christian tradition of associating mountains with spirituality and divinity. For example, Moses, a key figure for black Christians because he led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, first encountered God and later received the Ten Commandments on a mountain. Mountains also possessed a particular meaning within the oral tradition of slavery. As Melvin Dixon concluded in his study of recurring landscape imagery in slave songs, “Whereas the valley was an image for conquering despair, the mountain became a figure for personal triumph and witness; the singer, delivered out of bondage to sin or to masters, earned a moment of transcendence.” Dixon also quotes from a particular song: “Up on the mountain when my Lord spoke / Out of his mouth came fire and smoke. / Looked all around me, it looked so fine, / And I asked my Lord, if all were mine.”<sup>[46]</sup> Similarly, Bowser’s placement of the Latin inscription near the top of the flag suggests the inscription’s invocation of justice is a divine gift.

The antebellum source for Bowser’s flag painting shares the fusion of Christianity and black resistance that is found in many spirituals. Bowser’s model was the frontispiece to the second edition of *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, by David Walker (ca. 1796–1830), published



in 1830 (fig. 8, showing an 1848 edition).[47] A call to action directed to a global audience, this radical pamphlet denounced racism, advocated for the abolishment of slavery, and decried colonization efforts in the United States. As Ross Barrett argued recently, the frontispiece complemented Walker's text by presenting the central figure as "a Mosaic leader, an African messiah who leads his followers toward a holy state of freedom and justice produced by the miraculous intercession of God." [48] Through the motif of scaling a mountain, the image also takes up Walker's belief that his black readers must take an active role in their emancipation: "There must be a willingness on our part, for GOD to do these things for us, for we may be assured that he will not take us by the hairs of our head against our will and desire, and drag us from our very, mean, low and abject condition." [49] Bowser built on the vision of black agency shown in the frontispiece by adopting its composition, including the mountaintop landscape, wholesale. He substituted a soldier in uniform for the slave in the original, thereby emphasizing its American context. He also borrowed the motif of the figure reaching toward a Latin inscription, although by transposing that of the original, which reads *Libertas* and *Justicia*, to the imperative of *Fiat Justicia*, he implied that justice was the most pressing issue now facing black soldiers. This shift also served as a reminder that some African American soldiers entered military service as freedmen. Images of black figures scaling hills or mountains extended Romantic symbols for communion with the divine or the definition of the self to include the quest for social equality.



Fig. 8, Frontispiece, David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, with a Brief Sketch of His Life* (New York: J. H. Tobitt, 1848). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-105530. [\[larger image\]](#)

In addition to their association with spiritual transcendence, mountains were linked to sacrifice and difficulty. Drawing on a tradition of anthropomorphizing nature, the Reverend Thomas Starr King (1824–64) wrote in his guide book to the White Mountains of New Hampshire: "The great mountains rise in the landscape as heroes and prophets in history, ennobled by what they have given, sublime in the expressions of struggle and pain . . . because their brows have been torn, and their cheeks been furrowed by toils and cares in behalf of districts below. . . . Their perfection comes through suffering." [50] When included in depictions of black slaves or soldiers, as in the frontispiece or flag, the motif of the mountain called to mind these associations of sacrifice.

The flag's connection to *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* also raises the question of the necessity of violence in achieving racial equality.[51] In one of the pamphlet's most controversial arguments, Walker contended that it was legitimate for African Americans to counter violence directed against them with violence.[52] Bowser's ascending soldier has discarded his weapon near the top of the mountain, but has borne arms up until this point. In other words, the mountain peak may represent a sacred, demilitarized zone, but its slopes signify the dangerous sites of battle through which the soldier must pass.[53] When this evidence of battle is combined with the inscription *Fiat Justitia* and the regiment's motto—"Let Soldiers in War Be Citizens in Peace"—the image argues that it is participation in combat that entitles African American veterans to full equality after the war.

As made explicit in the Walker frontispiece, the mountain setting of the regimental flag also links to an iconography of freedom.[54] For example, at the end of 1863, the *New York Illustrated News* published a two-page spread entitled *New Phase in Southern Life* (fig. 9). In a series of vignettes, the illustration presents an idealistic view of the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation on African Americans in the South. It uses landscape and Southern plants visible in each corner to situate the viewer geographically as well as to posit a changed social standing for black people. For example, a vignette located at the top of the page depicts *The Freedman* looking from an elevated location over a riverscape toward a steamship with an American flag. Still in motion, having just emerged from the woods, he takes off his hat to mark the significance of the moment. As a number of scholars have demonstrated regarding the western landscape tradition, an elevated prospect confers power on the beholder, implying, as Alan Wallach has put it, that he or she identifies, "symbolically, with dominant forms of social and political power." [55] The freedman commands such a viewpoint, a rarity in the visual culture of the time, but the illustration also makes clear through its title that this is a position he has only recently acquired.



Fig. 9, "New Phase in Southern Life," *New York Illustrated News*, December 12, 1863: 104–5. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

In contrast, the soldier painted by Bowser looks up into the sky rather than across a vista, evoking a higher authority than humans. Albert Boime's distinction between the "magisterial gaze" and the "reverential gaze" is helpful in understanding the implications of this difference in viewpoint. Whereas the magisterial gaze emphasizes the "gaze of command" that sweeps down across a panoramic view, the reverential gaze follows an "ascending



trajectory” to signify “the striving of vision toward a celestial goal in the heavens.”[56] In this way, the figure on the regimental flag, along with most depictions of African American soldiers on hill- or mountaintops manifests an aspirational quality. Despite having been accepted into military service, the image of the ascending soldier signals that social and political equality are as yet unreached goals.

Many of the depictions of African American soldiers ascending a hill or mountain drew inspiration from accounts of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment’s participation in the disastrous battle of Fort Wagner in 1863. Here the topography forced Union troops, led by the 54th, to advance on a heavily fortified battery located above the shoreline to the southeast of Charleston Harbor. The resulting battle represented a turning point in the reputation and representation of African American troops. Writing for the *New York Times* four days after the battle, Edward Pierce remarked of the 54th’s wounded: “The men of the regiment are very patient, and where their condition at all permits them, are cheerful. They expressed their readiness to meet the enemy again, and they keep asking if Wagner is yet taken. Could any one from the North see these brave fellows as they lie here, their prejudice against them, if he had any, would all pass away.”[57] Depictions of the assault on Fort Wagner initiated a visual tradition of showing the valor of African American troops through the difficulties associated with steep terrain. A hand-colored lithograph published by Currier and Ives in 1863 (fig. 10) offers an early example. The print presents a sea of gray and blue uniforms, whose regularity is broken by the Union soldiers who ascend and storm over the parapet of the battery.[58] Most prominent are Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (1837–63), the regiment’s white commander, whose thrown-back head indicates that he has been hit by the shot that killed him, and Private William H. Carney (1840–ca. 1908), who carries the regimental flag. Throughout the composition, the print emphasizes the determination of the members of the 54th through their active poses, resolute facial expressions, and the ascending arc of their advance. Unlike the soldier in the flag designed by David Bustill Bowser, who stands separate from his comrades as a prophetic figure after a battle, the Currier and Ives print emphasizes the regiment’s collective discipline and effort engaged in combat.



Fig. 10, Currier and Ives, *The Gallant Charge of the 54th Massachusetts (Colored) Regiment. On the Rebel Works at Fort Wagner, Morris Island, Near Charleston, July 18th, 1863, and Death of Colonel Robt. G. Shaw, 1863.*

Hand-colored lithograph. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York, GLC02881.23. [\[larger image\]](#)

Henry Louis Stephens's series of album cards, discussed previously, also makes use of a hilltop location in the final three cards. However, this series does not anticipate a future, civilian role for African American men in the way that Bowser's flag design does. Card number 10, "*Make Way for Liberty!*" (fig. 6), initiates a sequence of ascent and descent. Raised from his prostrate position before the flag in the preceding card, it depicts the man in uniform, prevailing in hand-to-hand combat with a Confederate soldier as he climbs a rocky outcropping. The upward arc of the protagonist's body then reverses itself in the subsequent card, which depicts his being wounded in battle. The final card, which depicts the soldier's lifeless body, suggests that he crested the hill and died on the downslope. As noted, the mountain setting in the album cards is part of a larger narrative—constructed to emphasize the man's enslavement, his ennobling through enlistment, and his death in battle. The finality of the final card, unlike the ascent in progress depicted in other images, suggests Stephens's inability to imagine full agency for black men after the war.<sup>[59]</sup>

A final example of the symbolic use of a mountain, which brings us back to Bowser's regimental flag design, dates from the post-war era. This scene of African American soldiers ascending into battle (fig. 11) appears as a vignette at the top of a lithograph commemorating the bill that became the Civil Rights Act of 1875. The act, later declared unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court, "made it illegal for places of public accommodation and entertainment to draw any distinction between black and white patrons and outlawed racial discrimination in public schools, jury selection, churches, cemeteries, and transportation."<sup>[60]</sup> The print's center scene is given over to the legislative process, depicting Robert B. Elliott (1842–84), a US representative from South Carolina, giving a speech in favor of the bill in the House of Representatives. Drawing a connection between the war and the proposed legislation, a link Elliott made in his speech, the top border and lower left and right corners of the print depict black men in uniform.<sup>[61]</sup> The highest scene shows black cavalry and infantry charging upward in the direction of a distant battlefield. Particularly notable is the fact that despite the scene's clear groundline, littered with casualties, the soldiers ascend through clouds. Similar to the design for the 24th Infantry Regiment's flag, the setting brings a spiritual dimension to its representation of African American military service; the distant battle becomes a heavenly one, reminiscent of slave songs in which singers transformed themselves into an "Army of the Lord."<sup>[62]</sup> When the celestial black army is read in conjunction with the view of the Congressional chamber pictured below it, it appears as a fulfillment of the flag's inscription "Let Justice Be Done." Black military service is again presented as grounds for social equality, an equality not only divinely ordained but now also legislatively enacted.



Fig. 11, Edward Sachse, *The Shackle Broken – By the Genius of Freedom*, 1874. Hand-colored lithograph. Baltimore. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

### The Soldier and the Inhabited Military Landscape

While the swamp connoted a perilous wilderness and the mountaintop a place of spiritual struggle and communion within the lexicon of nineteenth-century landscapes, the inhabited landscape—whether military or civilian—signified the reach of civilization. Images of military encampments depicted humans making use of nature in familiar ways, such as clearing land, extracting its resources, and building places to live. Representations of black soldiers as active inhabitants of the military landscape, however, were of particular consequence. Despite the racial prejudices evident throughout the visual culture, African Americans were presented in such images as being at home in the American landscape, the equals of their white soldier counterparts.<sup>[63]</sup> Allusions to shared camp life also suggested a strong camaraderie among black soldiers, thereby encouraging high morale and further enlistment.<sup>[64]</sup>

A hand-colored lithograph issued by the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments in Philadelphia elucidates the symbolic role of the military encampment in depictions of African American soldiers (fig. 12).<sup>[65]</sup> A company of soldiers stands in an expansive and sunlit landscape, which ranges from the arching tree in the right foreground to the distant mountains. A tent in the left middleground alludes to an army in the field. The soldiers, arranged in a tight semi-circle bracketed by their white commander and the figure of a drummer boy, stand in full uniform with their army-issued weapons. The American flag held by one of the soldiers provides a central focal point, mediating between the tent and *repoussoir* tree.



Fig. 12, P. S. Duval & Son, *Come and Join Us Brothers*, ca. 1864. Lithograph. Philadelphia. Chicago History Museum, Chicago. [\[larger image\]](#)

As Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite, Jr. revealed, the print is based on a studio photograph of members of the 25th regiment of the USCT, probably taken in early 1864 (fig. 13).<sup>[66]</sup> This regiment, with recruits from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, was designated for service in Texas, but was diverted to North Carolina, and then sent to New Orleans and Florida.<sup>[67]</sup> Comparison of the photograph and print make clear that the tent, drummer, flag, and landscape were the additions of the lithographer, designed to encourage an interpretation of the company as patriotic defenders of the Union. In one version of the print, the location is identified as Camp William Penn, the Philadelphia-area training ground for eleven USCT regiments. Although the camp was located in a hilly landscape, comparison with period photographs suggests that the landscape of the print was idealized.<sup>[68]</sup> The setting follows well-established formulas from the antebellum landscape tradition rather than documenting a particular place, emphasizing the symbolic equation of the American landscape with the nation.

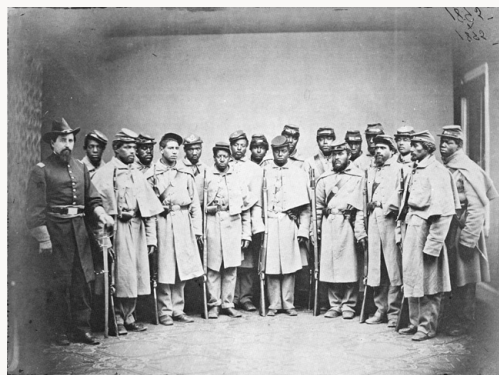


Fig. 13, Copy of studio photograph of 25th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, early 1864, Philadelphia. Courtesy of Jerome S. Handler, [jeromehandler.org](http://jeromehandler.org). [\[larger image\]](#)

In addition to presenting black soldiers as belonging to and defending the American landscape, the print promises comradeship to potential recruits. Its title, *Come and Join Us*

*Brothers*, gives voice to the black soldiers depicted; it is they who are speaking and not the white officer. Such an address establishes a direct connection with the viewer and identifies its primary audience as African American men. The scene depicts a well-organized army, comfortable in its role in the field, and offers their brotherhood to selected viewers.

Images of black soldiers as inhabiting military landscapes provide a stark contrast to contemporary depictions of the escaped slaves, known as contrabands, who worked for the Union army.[69] Representations of contrabands often showed them between locations in order to underline the figures' unstable social position. For example, in a decorated envelope from the war years (fig. 14) a black man stands between cotton fields and Fort Monroe, taunting the master ordering his return by replying "Can't come back nohow, massa; Dis chile's CONTRABAN.'" It was at Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, that General Butler first asserted that escaped slaves who reached Union lines constituted "contrabands of war" who would not be returned to their owners.[70] Another envelope (fig. 15) appropriates the images used to designate runaways in newspaper advertisements and repurposes them to create an army headed toward the North Star, to the peril of the Southern economy.[71] In both examples, the designs include dialect as an additional means to mark the African American figures racially. The people depicted, neither enslaved nor fully free, are shown in motion through an area with no landscape features.



Fig. 14, *Come back here, you black rascal. Can't come back nohow, massa; Dis chile's CONTRABAN'*, 1861–65. Decorated envelope. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

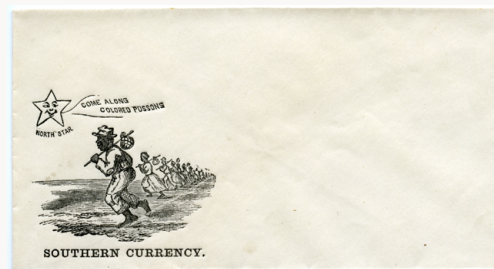


Fig. 15, *North star. Come Along Colored Pussons. Southern Currency*, 1861–65. Decorated envelope. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

In contrast to the liminal realms occupied by the self-emancipators on the decorated envelopes, other popular images showed black men ensconced in Union encampments in their official capacity as soldiers. For example, an illustration from *Harper's Weekly* that



depicted the “Negro Quarters” of the Army of the James (fig. 16) is comparable to scenes depicting white regiments. The stumps in the foreground indicate that the army has felled trees to meet the camp’s needs for wood. Anticipating the interests of its home-front audience, it also shows mundane details such as hanging laundry, informal groupings of soldiers in conversation, and a picket on duty in the right foreground. The very casualness of the scene obscures the radical nature of its depiction of independent African American camp life. In fact, the Army of the James was the field command with the largest representation of United States Colored Troops, approaching forty percent of the total.<sup>[72]</sup>



Fig. 16, Captain L.L. Langdon, “Negro Quarters: Army of the James,” *Harper’s Weekly*, February 25, 1865: 124. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

More overtly symbolic is the use of encampments on the obverse of two additional USCT regimental flags designed by David Bustill Bowser (figs. 17, 18). Both images depict an African American soldier and white female allegory in a landscape that includes pitched tents. An account of the ceremony for the presentation of Bowser’s flag to the 3rd Regiment described “The Goddess of Liberty presenting a flag to a color—and colored sergeant on the other side.”<sup>[73]</sup> Notably, the figures stand at equal height, and despite their differences of sex and race, they hold the flag in close proximity to one another. The color guard stands confidently with the encampment behind him while the figure of Liberty, leaning on the Roman fasces, stands in front of some trees. The encampment, through its association with human culture, thus serves to identify and legitimate the African American soldier, and by extension the regiment for which the flag was designed, while its motto “Rather Die Freeman, Than Live to Be Slaves,” addresses the larger issues at stake. The design for the flag of the 127th Regiment is similar. Associating masculinity with military service, the flag’s motto reads “We Will Prove Ourselves Men,” a sentiment echoed by the active pose of the soldier, who is armed and equipped for deployment.<sup>[74]</sup> The heavy smoke in the distance suggests a nearby battle. Both flags create models of the black soldier that were addressed to multiple audiences simultaneously: the members of the regiment, white soldiers, and any civilians who encountered the regiment. Similar to the *Harper’s* image of Hubbard Pryor in uniform (fig. 1), the soldiers tower over the horizon. They are liberated from stereotyped conflation with the landscape.



Fig. 17, David Bustill Bowser, Regimental flag (now lost), 3rd Regiment, United States Colored Troops, ca. 1864. Oil on silk. Photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-23098. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 18, David Bustill Bowser, Regimental flag (now lost), 127th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, ca. 1864. Oil on silk. Photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-23097. [\[larger image\]](#)

A camp scene also figures prominently in a lithograph of Major Martin Robison Delany (1812–85; fig. 19), who became the first African American field officer in the Union army. Similar to *Come and Join Us Brothers*, the print of Delany is based on a studio photograph, by Abraham Bogardus, with the setting added by the lithographer.<sup>[75]</sup> Mark Neely and Harold Holzer speculate that the print's publisher, John Smith of Philadelphia, saw the portrait of Delany, prominent for his work as an abolitionist, physician, journalist, advocate for black emigration to Central and South America, and Army recruiter, as a way to create a new audience among African Americans.<sup>[76]</sup> Such images, according to an address delivered in 1862 by Thomas Morris Chester (1834–92) to the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons, would create a new iconography of black heroes. Writing before the official enlistment of black soldiers in the United States, Chester lauded military leaders from the Haitian Revolution: "Take down from your walls the pictures of WASHINGTON, JACKSON, and MCLELLAN; and if you love to gaze upon military chieftains, let the gilded frames be

graced with the immortal TOUSSAINT, the brave GEFFRARD, and the chivalrous BENSON, three untarnished black generals whose martial achievements are the property of history.”  
[77]



Fig. 19, Unidentified artist, after Abraham Bogardus, *Major Martin R. Delany, U.S.A.*, ca. 1865. Hand-colored lithograph. Published by John Smith, Philadelphia. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. [\[larger image\]](#)

In its strategic use of landscape elements, the portrait of Delany relates to those of white officers, including the famous Mathew Brady photograph of Ulysses S. Grant (1822–85), shown in the field at Cold Harbor, Virginia, in 1864 (fig. 20), yet the differences are also telling.[78] In the Brady photograph, Grant takes a relaxed pose, leaning against a tree, with a tent filling the frame. His coat is unbuttoned and his uniform is rumpled. Grant’s leadership is taken for granted; Brady (ca. 1823–96) presents a candid view of the man in which the tree in the photograph highlights the general’s informality. In contrast, the lithograph presents Delany in his official capacity. He stands upright in full uniform. He is also depicted large in scale compared to the camp scene with sentry to his right and the tree to his left. The vertical accents created by Delany’s pose and the tree suggest strength and solidity. The pairing of man and tree recalls a war-era song rallying the troops, “The Oaken Tree,” whose final verse reads,



Fig. 20, Mathew Brady, *Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant Standing by a Tree in Front of a Tent, Cold Harbor, Va, 1864*. Photograph. National Archives, Washington, DC. [\[larger image\]](#)



The oak-tree's lived through wind and sleet,  
And grown a thing of might:  
So let us stand forever firm  
And steadfast for the right.  
Whatever comes, we'll never break,  
Though bend we like the bough,  
Good-by, my boys, good-by, we've had  
A little more singing now.[\[79\]](#)

The artist makes use of the traditional association of trees with strength and longevity evident in the song. The use of a military landscape also adds to the image of Delany as a patriotic officer; the print's caption underlines his active service, reading "Promoted on the Battle Field For Bravery." The design employs a favorable analogy from nature, comparing Delany to the stalwart tree, while simultaneously suggesting his confident mastery of the field of battle.[\[80\]](#) Similar to other depictions of black soldiers in military encampments, the portrait presents Delany as an actor within an inhabited landscape.

### Coda

The popular images under review in this article used landscape to emphasize African Americans as active agents of order and civilization, guarding railroads, defending the Union, and fighting for racial justice. In doing so, they effected a visual emancipation of black men from primitivizing associations with nature. But the symbolic use of landscape did more than simply substitute black figures for white ones. Instead, a new iconography developed that was distinctive to the African American experience, including the quest for social equality. These images were not free of caricature, but they established new visual models for asserting black autonomy. Their broad circulation reached viewers well beyond the limited audiences for fine-art exhibitions.

After the war, however, the image of the autonomous black soldier in the field largely disappeared, along with its potential application for civilian contexts.[\[81\]](#) As scholars including Kirk Savage and David Blight have argued persuasively, African Americans were excluded from official commemorations of the war in order to reassert white authority.[\[82\]](#) A print presenting the design of a sculptural monument to the 13th Amendment created by the Boston architectural firm of Lord and Fuller illustrates this point (fig. 21). The multi-tiered monument includes several allegorical figures as well as a portrait of Abraham Lincoln and the text of the amendment that outlawed slavery. However, the design effaces all trace of black military service. The lowest tier includes the figure of a white infantryman, standing at left in front of a lit battlefield. His counterpart is a half-clad black man, standing in front of a dark grove of trees. There are multiple references to the latter man's recent servitude; he holds a shovel and stands between broken shackles and a bale of cotton. The proposed monument would have denied a role in the Union victory and the abolition of slavery to African American soldiers or civilians. It reverts instead to well-worn associations between black figures and untamed nature. Such post-war omissions ignored the emergent iconography of independent black soldiers, along with the humanity and bravery of those who had served.

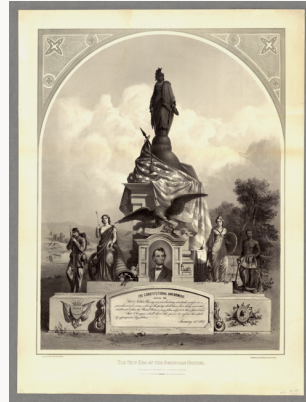


Fig. 21, Joseph E. Baker, *The New Era of the American Nation*, ca. 1865. Tinted lithograph. Published by J. H. Bufford, Boston. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[larger image\]](#)

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## Notes

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[1] The text of Douglass's speech is reprinted in "Enlistment of Colored Men," *Douglass' Monthly*, August 1863, 852. In this talk, Douglass does not minimize the prejudice faced by African Americans in the North, but argues that voluntary enlistment offers the best chance for equality: "Remember that the musket with its bayonet of steel—is better than all mere parchment as guarantees of citizenship." Ibid.

[2] For information on Pryor, and the failed promises of black military service, see Maurice O. Wallace, "Framing the Black Soldier: Image, Uplift, and the Duplicity of Pictures," in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 244–66. The

depictions of Pryor should not be confused with those of Gordon, an escaped slave turned soldier who was featured in *Harper's* a year earlier than Pryor. *Harper's Weekly*, July 4, 1863, 429. The three published images of Gordon show him as he looked upon reaching Union lines, posed shirtless to display the network of scars on his back from whipping, and in uniform.

[3] The original photos are reproduced in Wallace, "Framing the Black Soldier," 252. William A. Dobak points out that *Harper's* idealized Pryor himself in the second image. William A. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862–67* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2011), 12.

[4] One of the few exceptions is Thomas Waterman Wood's triptych *A Bit of War History: The Contraband, The Recruit, The Veteran* (1865–66; Metropolitan Museum of Art). Also, the soldier to the left of the two combatants in *Fight for the Standard* (ca. 1865; Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art) by an unknown artist may be African American. According to Marc Simpson, Winslow Homer's *The Bright Side* (1865; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) depicts civilian black teamsters, not enlisted soldiers; see Marc Simpson, "The Bright Side 'Humorously Conceived and Truthfully Executed,'" in *Winslow Homer Paintings of the Civil War*, exh. cat. (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1988), 52 and 60n29. Kirk Savage does not reproduce any sculptures of African American soldiers produced during the war in Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Patricia Johnston suggests that the popular and fine arts possess distinct, if sometimes intersecting, "representational strategies and capacities" for addressing social tension and change. Patricia Johnston, introduction to *Seeing High & Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*, ed. Patricia Johnston (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 3.

[5] Patricia Hills makes the point that while marginalized people in the United States rarely featured prominently in fine art media, including genre paintings, they were a staple of popular media such as magazine illustrations and sheet music, although presented in stereotyped form. Patricia Hills, "Cultural Racism: Resistance and Accommodation in the Civil War Art of Eastman Johnson and Thomas Nast," in Johnston, *Seeing High & Low*, 105. On the existence and limits of an iconography of black freedom before abolition, see Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal, eds., *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World* (West Nyack, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Jasmine Nichole Cobb, *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

[6] At the height of the Civil War the two most successful illustrated weekly magazines, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*, had print runs of over 100,000, with special editions as high as 300,000. These audience figures climb when combined with the viewers of the other illustrations, single-issue prints, album cards, and regimental flags analyzed in this article. On the circulation of the illustrated weeklies, see Andrea G. Pearson, "Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper and Harper's Weekly: Innovation and Imitation in Nineteenth-Century American Pictorial Reporting," *Journal of Popular Culture* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1990): 81; and Harry L. Katz and Vincent Virga, *Civil War Sketch Book: Drawings from the Battlefield* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), xvi.

[7] Angela Miller has traced the emergence of landscape imagery in the United States during the mid-nineteenth century that validated the goal of social unity and ideologies of progress. She demonstrates that this seemingly national landscape tradition actually served specific regional and class interests. Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825–1875* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[8] For an introduction to the subject of African American soldiers and constructions of masculinity, see Jim Cullen, "It's a Man Now': Gender and African American Men," in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 76–91; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Race, Memory, and Masculinity: Black Veterans Recall the Civil War," in *The War Was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War*, ed. Joan E. Cashin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 136–56; and Carole Emberton, "'Only Murder Makes Men': Reconsidering the Black Military Experience," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2, no. 3 (September 2012): 369–93.

[9] Although landscape imagery was used to empower depictions of black soldiers, it often signaled white soldiers' powerlessness in the face of the war's violence and unpredictability. See Maura Lyons, "An Embodied Landscape: *Wounded Trees at Gettysburg*," *American Art* 26, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 45–65; and Maura Lyons, "Nature Defamiliarized: Picturing Relationships between Humans and Nonhuman Nature in Northern Landscapes from the American Civil War," *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2015), accessed March 4, 2015, <http://journalpanorama.org/issues/winter-2015/?category=articles>.

- [10] For an overview of this history, see Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, *Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chap. 1.
- [11] George Washington Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861–65* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1888), xiii–xiv. Williams, an African American veteran, used his account to provide a revisionist history of the war.
- [12] One exception is Kathleen Diffley, “Home on the Range: Turner, Slavery, and the Landscape Illustrations in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1861–1876,” *Prospects* 14 (1989): 175–202. Diffley argues that when black figures appeared in the magazine's illustrations, they did so in static or compressed spaces antithetical to the expansiveness of typical landscape imagery. Margaret Rose Vendryes offers a valuable cautionary tale regarding racialized readings of art created by African American artists during the nineteenth century in Margaret Rose Vendryes, “Race Identity/Identifying Race: Robert S. Duncanson and Nineteenth-Century American Painting,” in “Terrain of Freedom: American Art and the Civil War,” separate issue, *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 27, no. 1 (2001): 82–99.
- [13] Barbara Novak provided an early analysis of the visual confluences of Native American figures and nature. She writes of wilderness scenes, “One type of figure can be introduced into this landscape without disrupting this—the Indian, who, as a function of nature, symbolizes its unexplored state. Like the forests, the Indian exists in a state of nature, before he is cut down. His tenancy as a natural citizen is premised on his inseparability from nature. When separated, he dies.” Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 189. More recently, Martin Berger has reframed the issue of the construction of race in landscape imagery by arguing that a normative white gaze governed the reception of western landscape photography, even when native people were not present in the photographs. Martin A. Berger, *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), chap. 2.
- [14] W. J. T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape,” in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5–34. For examples with attention to the Americas, see Katherine Manthorne, “Plantation Pictures in the Americas, c. 1880: Land, Power, and Resistance,” *Nepantla: Views from the South* 2, no. 2 (2001): 317–53; Geoff Quilley and Kay Dian Kriz, eds., *An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Tim Barringer, “Picturesque Prospects and The Labor of the Enslaved,” in *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds*, ed. Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester, and Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz, exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2007), 41–63; Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); and Jennifer Raab, “Details of Absence: Frederic Church and the Landscape of Post-Emancipation Jamaica,” *Art History* 34, no. 4 (September 2011): 714–31. Many of these scholars consider not only the power of the imperial gaze but also instances of subtle resistance.
- [15] Hills, “Cultural Racism,” 103–23.
- [16] Geoff Quilley and Kay Dian Kriz, introduction to *Economy of Colour*, 2.
- [17] See Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*. In his discussion of the equation of the classical sculptural tradition with whiteness, Savage provides a model for thinking about the racial dimensions of landscape imagery. *Ibid.*, chap. 1.
- [18] James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., *The Louisiana Native Guards: The Black Military Experience During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 17. The First Louisiana Native Guards who fought for the Union army are not to be confused with the African American force of the same name formed in 1861 and mustered into the Louisiana (Confederate) state militia, only to be dissolved when Union forces captured New Orleans. Hollandsworth's book unravels this complicated history (see esp. chap. 1), as well as providing detailed information about the composition and assignments of the Native Guards, including its participation in the siege of Port Hudson during the spring of 1863.
- [19] Lawrence Lee Hewitt, “An Ironical Route to Glory: Louisiana's Native Guards at Port Hudson,” in *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, ed. John David Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 80.
- [20] Hollandsworth, *Louisiana Native Guards*, 36. As Hollandsworth and others have noted, African American troops were often tapped for garrison and fatigue duty rather than active combat.
- [21] For an illustration contrasting the regularity of railroad lines with the irregularity of the swamp, see *Charleston & Savannah R.R. Through the Swamps* in *Harper's Weekly*, March 4, 1865, 133. The image accompanies an article detailing the difficulties faced by Sherman's troops in marching through South Carolina.

[22] Racial assumptions that African Americans were more acclimated to the swamp might have something to do with the disparity between the representations of white and black pickets. The companion text to the *Leslie's* illustration describes the soldiers as "impervious" to the swamp's "miasma," reporting that "though unendurable to our soldiers of the North," it "seems an elysium to these sable soldiers, for the swampy forest has no horrors to them." "Scenes in Louisiana," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, March 7, 1863, 369. In contrast, the medical historian Margaret Humphreys has argued that African American soldiers actually experienced higher mortality rates from disease than white soldiers due to their medical states before enlistment, the strenuousness of their assigned tasks in the Union Army, and medical neglect. Margaret Humphreys, *Intensely Human: The Health of the Black Soldier in the American Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). For the particular health threats experienced by African American troops in Louisiana, see chap. 6, 104–18.

[23] Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North & South, 1861–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 162.

[24] "Scenes in Louisiana," 369. For a careful case study of the contradictory racial attitudes held by white Union soldiers, see David A. Cecere, "Carrying the Home Front to War: Soldiers, Race, and New England Culture during the Civil War," in *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments*, ed. Paul A. Cimbal and Randall M. Miller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 293–323.

[25] Anthony Wilson argues that though "the South and the swamp became clearly linked in discourses of separateness that originate in the North," the swamp also "remains a separate, intractable space within the South's own self-narrative." During the colonial and antebellum periods, the swamp was antithetical to white Southerners' vision of building an "idealized agrarian society." Anthony Wilson, *Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), xvii, xiii.

[26] David C. Miller, *Dark Eden: The Swamp in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 17. On American swamps, see also Megan Kate Nelson, *Trembling Earth: A Cultural History of the Okefenokee Swamp* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Wilson, *Shadow and Shelter*; William Tynes Cowan, *The Slave in the Swamp: Disrupting the Plantation Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2006); and Conevery Bolton Valencius, *The Health of the Country: How Americans Understood Themselves and Their Land* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 145–52.

[27] For the Northeastern appropriation of the pastoral tradition, emphasized in contradistinction to the corrupted land of the slave-holding South during the sectional crisis, see Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), esp. chap. 4.

[28] Melvin Dixon includes several examples in Melvin Dixon, *Ride Out the Wilderness: Geography and Identity in Afro-American Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 13, 18. Although these songs do not explicitly mention swamps, I find persuasive Christine Gerhardt's argument that from the perspective of the enslaved and fugitives from bondage, wilderness constituted anything beyond the realm of the plantation, including woods and swamplands. Christine Gerhardt, "Border Ecology: The Slave Narrative of Henry Bibb, Nature, and the Frontier Myth," in *Restoring the Connection to the Natural World: Essays on the African American Environmental Imagination*, ed. Sylvia Mayer (Munich: LIT, 2003), 16.

[29] On the Seminole Wars, see Nelson, *Trembling Earth*, chap. 2.

[30] For the enslaved, both locations could provide a place of temporary independence by offering the occasional cessation of work, private meeting places, and the opportunity to supplement their food and fuel rations. This dynamic is at work in John Antrobus's painting *A Plantation Burial* (1860; Historic New Orleans Collection), which illuminates the African American figures at a burial service but places the white figures in shadow. See also, Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Material Life in America, 1600–1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1976), 367; John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), esp. 12–17; Nelson, *Trembling Earth*, 22–23; Mart A. Stewart, "Slavery and the Origins of African American Environmentalism," in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, ed. Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 9–20; and Leslie King-Hammond, "Identifying Spaces of Blackness: The Aesthetics of Resistance and Identity in American Plantation Art," in *Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art*, ed. Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius, exh. cat. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 58–85.

[31] A recent history reconstructs the long history of marronage in the United States: Sylviane A. Diouf, *Slavery's Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons* (New York: New York University Press, 2014). Diouf distinguishes between "borderlands" maroons, who lived in areas close to



established farms and plantations and “hinterlands” maroons, who lived in more remote areas such as the Great Dismal Swamp. Ibid., 5–11.

[32] The illustration appeared in the same year that Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*. As William Tynes Cowan argues, the novel’s publication occurred against the backdrop of escalating fears among white Southerners about possible emancipation that accompanied the election of 1856. Cowan, *Slave in the Swamp*, 1–3.

[33] “The Dismal Swamp,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, September 1856, 441–55. Strother, a prominent illustrator and regular contributor to *Harper’s Monthly*, both wrote the text and drew the illustrations for the article. Cowan (*Slave in the Swamp*, 4–11) and Miller (*Dark Eden*, chap. 1) provide analyses of the article, although Cowan focuses on its racial undertones while Miller reads it as a psychological journey of the self. For an introduction to Strother, see John A. Cuthbert and Jessie Poesch, *David Hunter Strother: “One of the Best Draughtsmen the Country Possesses,”* exh. cat. (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1997).

[34] “Dismal Swamp,” 453. Diouf identifies Osman as a Muslim name and speculates that he was African-born; a large proportion of North American maroons were enslaved people who had arrived recently from Africa. Diouf, *Slavery’s Exiles*, 39–40, 219.

[35] “The Illustrations,” *New York Illustrated News*, July 15, 1861, 171.

[36] Diouf, *Slavery’s Exiles*, chaps. 9 and 10, esp. 230–38, 284–85. Diouf contends that maroons did not fit the profile of insurrectionists, describing them instead as “separatists” who “opted out and exiled themselves” rather than seeking to overthrow slavery. Ibid., 285.

[37] Henry Louis Stephens, a caricaturist and illustrator, is best known for his illustrations for *Vanity Fair*. He collaborated with the Philadelphia lithographer James Queen to create several war-related series of cards, including *Journey of a Slave*, which was published by his brother William Allen Stephens. Mazie Harris, who has done extensive research on Henry Louis Stephens, argues that he changed his anti-abolitionist stance, evident in his magazine illustrations, after the Emancipation Proclamation. Yet, she notes that he “was still able to conceive only of a limited sacrificial role for freed slaves” (Email to author, May 26, 2015). My thanks to Dr. Harris for sharing her knowledge of Stephens and directing me to the sketches Stephens made for the *Journey of a Slave* series that are now owned by the Harvard University Art Museums.

[38] Some of these images were used as trade cards, with information about a business printed on the reverse; William A. Gladstone reproduces four with advertisements for the New York druggist H. T. Helmbold in William A. Gladstone, *United States Colored Troops, 1863–1867* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1990), 47. Mazie Harris speculates that the series was produced for the Union League Club of New York (Email to author, May 27, 2015). Established in 1863 by pro-Union New Yorkers involved in the United States Sanitary Commission, the club organized the first African American regiment in New York State.

[39] See, for example, the illustration for the letter F (Fugitive) found in Iron Gray [Abel Charles Thomas], *The Gospel of Slavery: A Primer of Freedom* (New York: T.W. Strong, 1864), 6. The image of escaped slaves pursued in the swamp also entered the realm of fine art in such paintings as Thomas Moran, *Slave Hunt, Dismal Swamp, Virginia* (1862; Philbrook Museum of Art), and James Hamilton, *Bayou in Moonlight* (ca. 1864; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). William Tynes Cowan points out that African Americans did not typically describe the swamp as a place of refuge in accounts of escaping slavery. He argues that this would have suggested a subversive affinity for the uncivilized and the existence of a space independent of white control threatening to white readers. Cowan, *Slave in the Swamp*, 125.

[40] Alice Fahs describes the emergence of the black soldier martyr in Northern popular culture, a figure whose radicalism is neutralized by his heroic death. Fahs, *Imagined Civil War*, 171–81. Sarah N. Roth has built on Fahs’s insights, adding an analysis of the literary demasculinization of African American men to the benefit of white women in Sarah N. Roth, *Gender and Race in Antebellum Popular Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), esp. intro. and chap. 8.

[41] Waterways in swamps also served the practical purpose of throwing the bloodhounds of slave hunters off the scent. Diouf, *Slavery’s Exiles*, 95.

[42] For another example, see *Turning the Tables—Southern Masters Hunted in the Swamps by Negro Soldiers* in the *New York Illustrated News*, March 26, 1864, 341.

[43] Most of these regimental flags, including that of 24th USCT, contained a narrative scene on the obverse and the national coat of arms and the date of their presentation painted on the reverse. The regimental flags for USCT regiments mustered in Pennsylvania were commissioned by the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments, an independent organization in Philadelphia that also issued the recruitment print reproduced

as fig. 12. See Richard A. Sauers, *Advance the Colors! Pennsylvania Civil War Battle Flags* (Philadelphia: Capitol Preservation Committee, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1987), 1:41, 46–47.

[44] Samuel P. Bates, *History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–65* (Harrisburg: B. Singerly, 1868–71), 1011–25. Because African American men from Philadelphia had traveled to join the 54th and 55th Massachusetts regiments, thereby depleting the number of eligible black soldiers, the recruiters in Pennsylvania extended their efforts into New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:40.

[45] On Bowser, see Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:41–57; Steven Loring Jones, “A Keen Sense of the Artistic: African American Material Culture in 19th Century Philadelphia,” *International Review of African American Art* 12, no. 2 (1995): 4–29; Eric Ledell Smith, “Painted with Pride in the USA,” *Pennsylvania Heritage* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 24–31; and Susan B. Iwanisziw, “David Bustill Bowser,” in *African American National Biography*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1:509–10. Photographic documentation for seven of the regimental flags designed by Bowser is preserved in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. See Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, accessed January 6, 2015, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>. Smith speculates that Bowser painted flags for all eleven USCT regiments that trained at Camp William Penn (Smith, “Painted with Pride,” 29) and there is some evidence that the artist also created flags for USCT regiments organized outside of Pennsylvania. See “Relief of Contrabands in the District of Columbia,” *Liberator*, September 25, 1863, 156, regarding Bowser’s creation of a flag for the First District of Columbia Infantry.

[46] Dixon, *Ride Out the Wilderness*, 19–20.

[47] Bowser’s reliance on an illustration from Walker’s pamphlet reveals continuity between the free black community’s battle against slavery and discrimination during the antebellum period and war-era advocacy for racial equality. Bowser had many ties to these efforts, including his family connections, his patronage from figures such as the Philadelphia abolitionist Robert Purvis, and his own activism. See “A War Meeting of Colored Citizens,” *Liberator*, April 17, 1863, 62, regarding debates over the raising of black regiments in Pennsylvania; Smith, “Painted with Pride,” 26–27; Jones, “A Keen Sense of the Artistic,” 16–22; Iwanisziw, “David Bustill Bowser,” 509–10; and Aston Gonzalez, “The Art of Racial Politics: The Work of Robert Douglass Jr., 1833–46,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 138, no. 1 (January 2014): 5–37, which recovers the artistic career of Bowser’s cousin, Robert Douglass, Jr. The frontispiece for Walker’s pamphlet also inspired the frontispiece of Hollis Read, *The Negro Problem Solved, or Africa as She Was* (New York: A. A. Constantine, 1864). In this image an ascending black man, set against tropical scenery, reaches toward an apparition of the bible. In sharp contrast to Walker, Read advocated repatriation in Africa for newly emancipated people in the United States.

[48] Ross Barrett, *Rendering Violence: Riots, Strikes, and Upheaval in Nineteenth-Century American Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 70.

[49] David Walker, *Walker’s Appeal in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, But in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829*, 3rd ed. (Boston: David Walker, 1830), 2.

[50] Thomas Starr King, *The White Hills; Their Legends, Landscape, and Poetry* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, and Co., 1860), 103.

[51] Using Nathaniel Jocelyn’s painting *Cinque* (1840; New Haven Museum & Historical Society), as his focus, Ross Barrett offers insight into antebellum debates over the necessity of violent black resistance to white oppression, including the emergence of a radical visual culture. Barrett, *Rendering Violence*, chap. 2.

[52] Walker writes “Look upon your mother, wife and children, and answer God Almighty; and believe this, that it is no more harm for you to kill a man, who is trying to kill you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty; in fact, the man who will stand still and let another murder him, is worse than an infidel, and, if he has common sense, ought not to be pitied.” Walker, *Walker’s Appeal*, 30.

[53] Compare Bowser’s design for the 24th USCT regiment with that of the 22nd USCT, which depicts a black soldier bayonetting a fallen Confederate color guard who has dropped his sword and flag. This latter design is accompanied by the motto *Sic Semper Tyrannis* (Thus Always to Tyrants), an adaptation of the Virginia state motto. Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:50.

[54] Unlike other regimental flag designs by Bowser, the narrative scene included in the colors of the 24th does not include overt references to slavery—such as the figures of plantation slaves and broken shackles found in the regimental colors of the 6th and 25th US Colored

Troops, respectively. See Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:45–47, 52–53. Instead, it looks more to the future than the past.

[55] Alan Wallach, “The Persistence of the Panoramic: Technologies of Vision in American Culture from the 19th to the 21st Century,” in *Transcultural Spaces: Challenges of Urbanity, Ecology, and the Environment in the New Millennium*, REAL Yearbook of Research in English and American Studies 26, ed. Stefan Brandt, Winfried Fluck, and Frank Mehring (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2010), 90.

[56] Albert Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830–1865* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 20–22.

[57] Edward L. Pierce, “The Siege of Fort Wagner: Conduct of the Massachusetts Negro Regiment,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1863.

[58] The Currier and Ives print bears several similarities to the composition of Thomas Nast’s illustration *A Negro Regiment in Action*, published in *Harper’s Weekly*, March 14, 1863, 168–69, and may have used Nast’s print as a model. The illustration for *Harper’s* depicts the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers in the Battle of Island Mound fought in Missouri in 1862. See the entry for the print in Kansas City Public Library, *Civil War on the Western Border, The Missouri-Kansas Conflict 1854–1865*, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.civilwaronthewesternborder.org/content/negro-regiment-action>. My thanks to Patricia Hills for pointing out this similarity.

[59] Roth makes a similar point in the chapter in which she interprets the Stephens album cards. Roth, *Gender and Race in Antebellum Popular Culture*, 247.

[60] Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 226. Another postbellum print in which African American soldiers are depicted moving uphill into battle commemorates the passage of the 15th Amendment; see the upper right corner of *The Result of the Fifteenth Amendment, and the rise and progress of the African race in America and its final accomplishment, and celebration on May 19th A.D. 1870* (Baltimore, ca. 1870). A reproduction can be found in the Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, Library of Congress, accessed August 23, 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003690775/>.

[61] “Robert Brown Elliott,” *History, Art and Archives, United States House of Representatives*, accessed April 19, 2015, [http://history.house.gov/People/Listing/E/ELLIOTT,-Robert-Brown-\(E000128\)/](http://history.house.gov/People/Listing/E/ELLIOTT,-Robert-Brown-(E000128)/).

[62] The full text of the song can be found in Dixon, *Ride Out the Wilderness*, 16. Lawrence W. Levine argued that the military imagery found in many slave spirituals made them easily adaptable for use by black soldiers. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 52–53.

[63] Although beyond the scope of this article, *Come and Join Us Brothers* (fig. 12) raises the larger issue of the place of African Americans in constructions of the American landscape. As Kimberly K. Smith has written, racial oppression, including slavery, “put black Americans into a conflicted relationship to the land—by coercing their labor, restricting their ability to own land, and impairing their ability to interpret the landscape.” Kimberly K. Smith, *African American Environmental Thought: Foundations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 7–8.

[64] Sarah Greenough has argued that the painted backdrops showing military encampments that appeared in photographic portraits of soldiers, both black and white, emphasized their “communal life” in the Civil War. Sarah Greenough, “Seeing What Ought to Be: Photography and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment,” in Sarah Greenough and Nancy K. Anderson with Lindsay Harris and Renée Ater, *Tell It With Pride: The 54th Massachusetts Regiment and Augustus Saint-Gaudens’ Shaw Memorial*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 6. For multiple examples of such backdrops chosen by black soldiers, see Ronald S. Coddington, *African American Faces of the Civil War: An Album* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

[65] The Supervisory Committee was established by white Philadelphians, many with links to the Union League of Philadelphia. Eric Ledell Smith, ed., “The Civil War Letters of Quartermaster Sergeant John C. Brock, 43rd Regiment, United States Colored Troops,” in *Making and Remaking Pennsylvania’s Civil War*, ed. William Blair and William Pencak (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2010), 145. Peter S. Duval (ca. 1804/5–1886), was a French-born lithographer who established a highly successful business in Philadelphia. Sarah J. Weatherwax, “Peter S. Duval, Philadelphia’s Leading Lithographer,” in *Philadelphia on Stone: Commercial Lithography in Philadelphia, 1828–1878*, ed. Erika Piola (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, in association with the Library Company of Philadelphia, 2012), 97–117.



- [66] Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite, Jr., "Retouching History: The Modern Falsification of a Civil War Photograph," (August 20, 2009), 1–3, Jerome S. Handler personal website, accessed August 30, 2016, <http://jeromehandler.org/wp-content/uploads/Retouching-History-05.pdf>. The essay, based on an earlier conference presentation, reveals the deliberate misidentification of the photo as depicting the 1st Louisiana Native Guards in order to support neo-confederate views.
- [67] Donald Scott, Sr., *Camp William Penn, 1863–65* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2012), 225; and Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:52–53.
- [68] On the history of the camp, see Scott, *Camp William Penn*; and Donald Scott, Sr., *Images of America: Camp William Penn* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008).
- [69] Not all black men linked to the Union army enlisted as soldiers; many continued their service as civilian cooks, teamsters, and laborers. In fact, recruiters and quartermasters competed for black labor. Berlin, Reidy, Rowland, *Freedom's Soldiers*, 18.
- [70] Dobak traces the incremental acknowledgment by political and military authorities of the necessity of African American contributions to the war effort. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, chap. 1. See also Gladstone, *United States Colored Troops*, 9–11.
- [71] On the abolitionist appropriation of images of runaway slaves, see Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780–1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 80–99.
- [72] Edward G. Longacre, "Black Troops in the Army of the James, 1863–65," in *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity*, vol. 1, "Manhood Rights": *The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750–1870*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 532. Longacre argues that the Army of the James, first commanded by General Benjamin Butler, gave more responsibility, resources, and acknowledgement to black soldiers than any other Civil War army, including forming an all-African American corps (the XXV Corps) in 1864. *Ibid.*, 535.
- [73] Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Wagner to Colonel Benjamin C. Tilghman, November 25, 1863, National Archives, quoted in Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:44. The flag was presented to a representative at Camp William Penn since the regiment had already left for active duty. The 3rd USCT was the first to be mustered at Camp William Penn and participated in the siege at Fort Wagner. *Ibid.*
- [74] Sauers, *Advance the Colors*, 1:57.
- [75] For a concise biography of Delany, see Allan D. Austin, "Martin Robison Delany," in Gates and Brooks, *African American National Biography*, 2:636–38. It is noteworthy that Delany was identified by name in the text of the print, unlike the soldiers appearing in *Come and Join Us Brothers* (fig. 12), certifying the image as a portrait. For the shifting boundaries between portraiture and images of "types," see Angela Rosenthal and Agnes Lugo-Ortiz, "Introduction: Envisioning Slave Portraiture," in Rosenthal and Lugo-Ortiz, *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, 8–11.
- [76] Mark E. Neely, Jr. and Harold Holzer, *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 232. See also Erika Piola, "Object, Producer, and Consumer of Popular Prints: A Study of Afro-Americana Graphics at the Library Company of Philadelphia," *Imprint* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 18–20.
- [77] T. Morris Chester, "Negro Self-Respect and Pride of Race," (1862), reprinted in *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African American Protest Literature, 1790–1860*, ed. Richard Newman, Patrick Rael, and Phillip Lapansky (New York: Routledge, 2001), 308. Creating a pan-African gallery of heroes, Chester refers here to heroes of the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint L'Ouverture and Fabre Geffrard (the Benson referred to is unknown). I was directed to Chester's address by David Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 144–45.
- [78] Relevant to the print image of Delany is a series of camp portraits of such prominent Union officers as General Ambrose Burnside and William Tecumseh Sherman produced as cartes de visite after lithographs by J. H. Bufford in Boston. The American Antiquarian Society owns several examples.
- [79] "The Oaken Tree," *Songs for the audience at W.A. Gordon's musical evenings: No. 1 of the Series* (Philadelphia: L. Johnson & Co., ca. 1865).
- [80] Despite the lithograph's caption, Victor Ullman's biography of Delany suggests that his commissioning into the army as major was due to his previous work as a civilian recruiter. His regiment, the 104th USCT, never saw combat. For a detailed account of Delany's recruiting efforts, commission, and army service, see Victor Ullman, *Martin R. Delany: The Beginnings of Black Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 281–290, 292–323.

[81] Thomas Nast was one graphic artist who kept the image of the black soldier in the public eye during Reconstruction, but largely to highlight the promises broken to veterans and to deplore post-war racial violence.

[82] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*; and David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001). Savage has presented Augustus Saint-Gaudens's *Shaw Memorial*, 1897, Boston Common, as a singular exception to the dearth of sculptural commemorations of African American soldiers. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 192–208; and Kirk Savage, “Uncommon Soldiers: Race, Art, and the Shaw Memorial,” in *Hope and Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment*, ed. Martin H. Blatt, Thomas J. Brown, and Donald Yacovone (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, in association with Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, 2001), 156–67. For recent assessments of the *Shaw Memorial*, see Kirk Savage, ed., *The Civil War in Art and Memory*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

## Illustrations



Fig. 1, “The Escaped Slave—Photographed by T. B. Bishop” and “The Escaped Slave in the Union Army,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 2, 1864: 428. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.

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Fig. 2, "Pickets of the First Louisiana 'Native Guard' Guarding the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, March 7, 1863: 369. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 3, "On Picket Duty in the Swamps of Louisiana," *Harper's Weekly*, May 9, 1863: 289. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 4, Porte Crayon [David Hunter Strother], "Osman," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, September 1856: 452. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 5, "Murder of Mr. Grimshaw, Mr. Town, and An Overseer by the Fugitive Negro 'Tom,' in Big Cypress Swamp, Plaquimine Parish, Louisiana. Desperate Conduct and Escape of the Murderer," *New York Illustrated News*, July 15, 1861: 172. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.

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Fig. 6, Henry Louis Stephens (illustrator) and James Queen (lithographer), *The Slave in 1863* [*Journey of a Slave from the Plantation to the Battlefield*], 1863. Chromolithographs. Published by William Allen Stephens, Philadelphia. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, On loan from Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library, Cambridge (MA), 120.1976.23-34. Photo: Imaging Department  
© President and Fellows of Harvard College. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 7, David Bustill Bowser, Regimental flag (now lost), 24th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, ca. 1864. Oil on silk. Photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-11274. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 8, Frontispiece, David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, with a Brief Sketch of His Life* (New York: J. H. Tobitt, 1848). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-105530. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 9, "New Phase in Southern Life," *New York Illustrated News*, December 12, 1863: 104–5. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 10, Currier and Ives, *The Gallant Charge of the 54th Massachusetts (Colored) Regiment. On the Rebel Works at Fort Wagner, Morris Island, Near Charleston, July 18th, 1863, and Death of Colonel Robt. G. Shaw, 1863.*

Hand-colored lithograph. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York, GLC02881.23. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 11, Edward Sachse, *The Shackle Broken – By the Genius of Freedom*, 1874. Hand-colored lithograph. Baltimore. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 12, P. S. Duval & Son, *Come and Join Us Brothers*, ca. 1864. Lithograph. Philadelphia. Chicago History Museum, Chicago. [\[return to text\]](#)

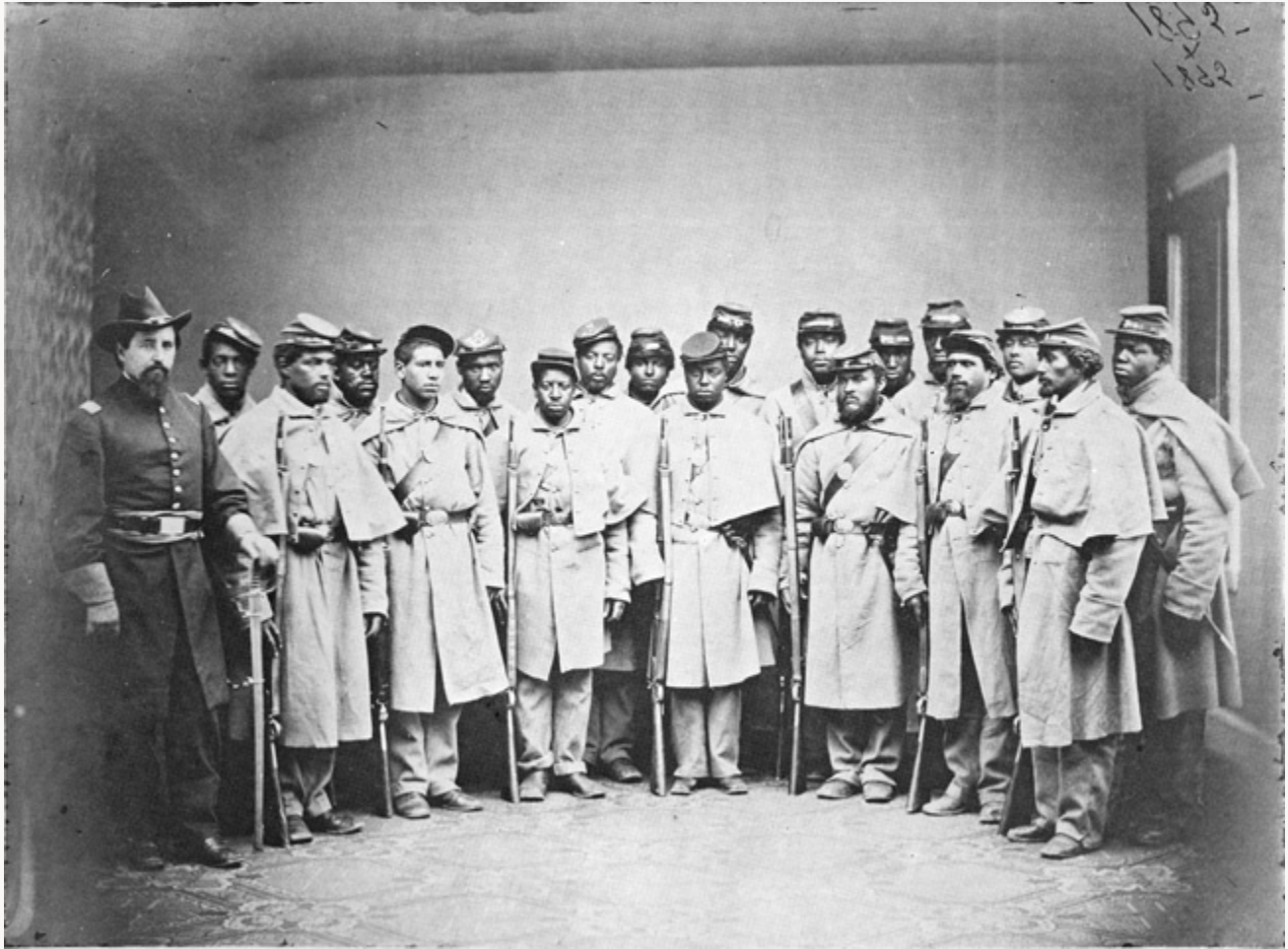


Fig. 13, Copy of studio photograph of 25th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, early 1864, Philadelphia. Courtesy of Jerome S. Handler, [jeromehandler.org](http://jeromehandler.org). [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 14, *Come back here, you black rascal. Can't come back nohow, massa; Dis chile's CONTRABAN'*, 1861–65. Decorated envelope. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)

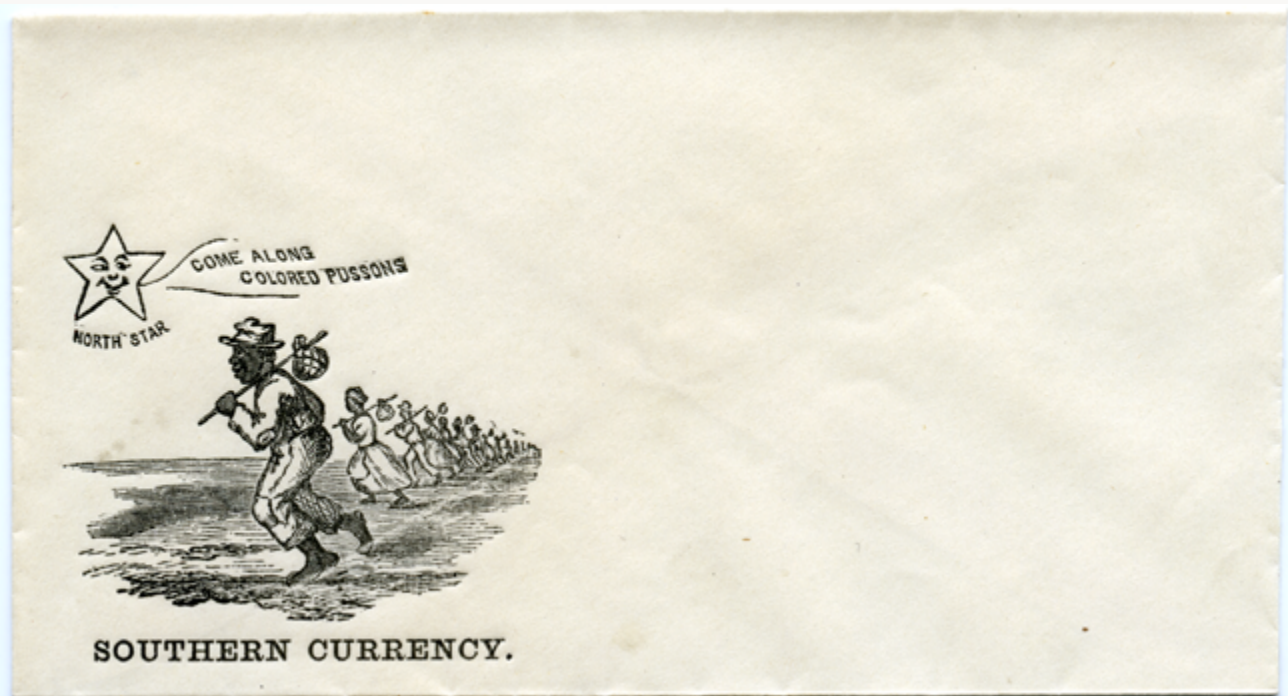


Fig. 15, *North star. Come Along Colored Pussons. Southern Currency*, 1861–65. Decorated envelope. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 16, Captain L.L. Langdon, "Negro Quarters: Army of the James," *Harper's Weekly*, February 25, 1865: 124. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)





Fig. 17, David Bustill Bowser, Regimental flag (now lost), 3rd Regiment, United States Colored Troops, ca. 1864. Oil on silk. Photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-23098.  
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Fig. 18, David Bustill Bowser, Regimental flag (now lost), 127th Regiment, United States Colored Troops, ca. 1864. Oil on silk. Photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-23097. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 19, Unidentified artist, after Abraham Bogardus, *Major Martin R. Delany, U.S.A.*, ca. 1865. Hand-colored lithograph. Published by John Smith, Philadelphia. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. [\[return to text\]](#)

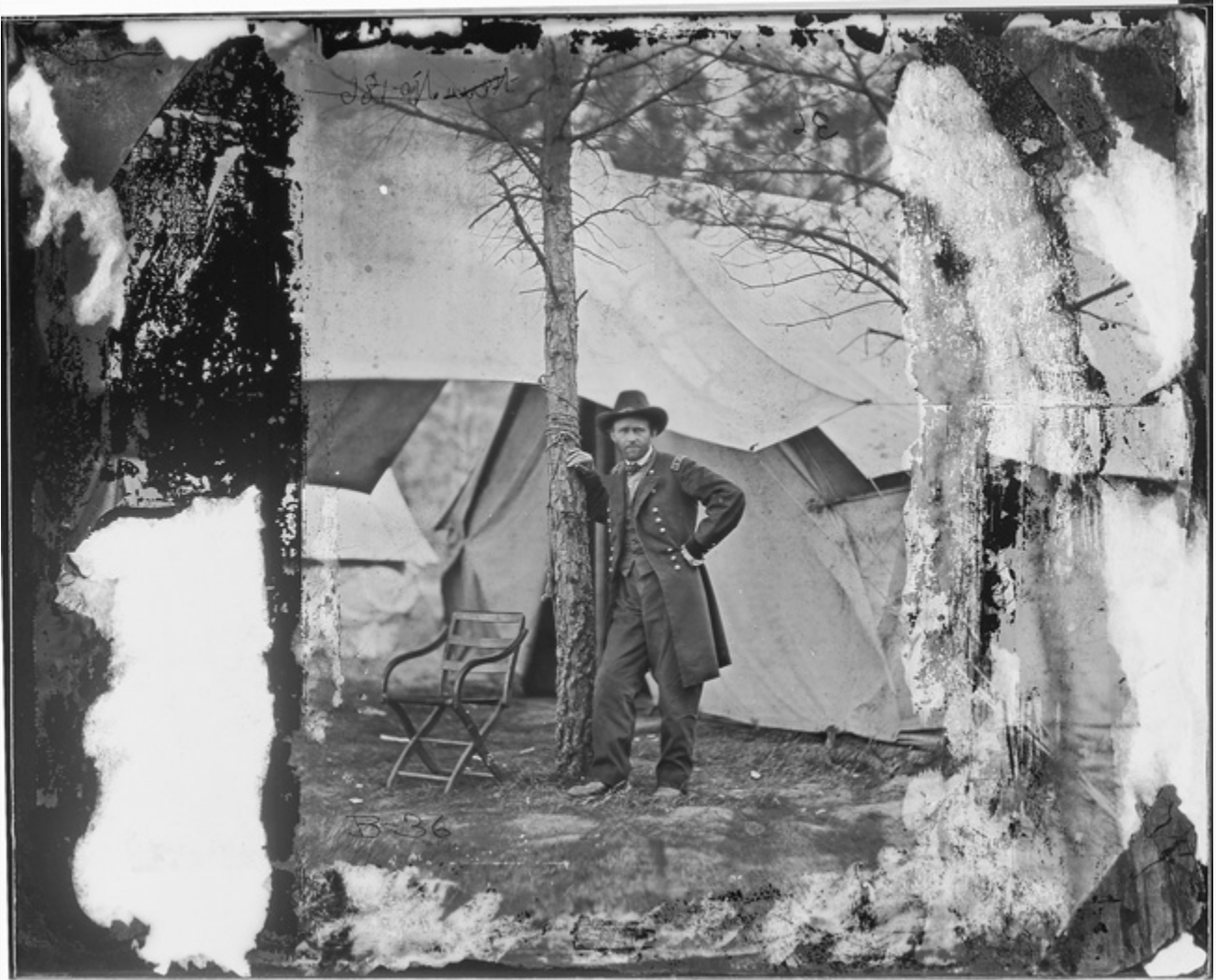


Fig. 20, Mathew Brady, *Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant Standing by a Tree in Front of a Tent, Cold Harbor, Va, 1864*.  
Photograph. National Archives, Washington, DC. [\[return to text\]](#)



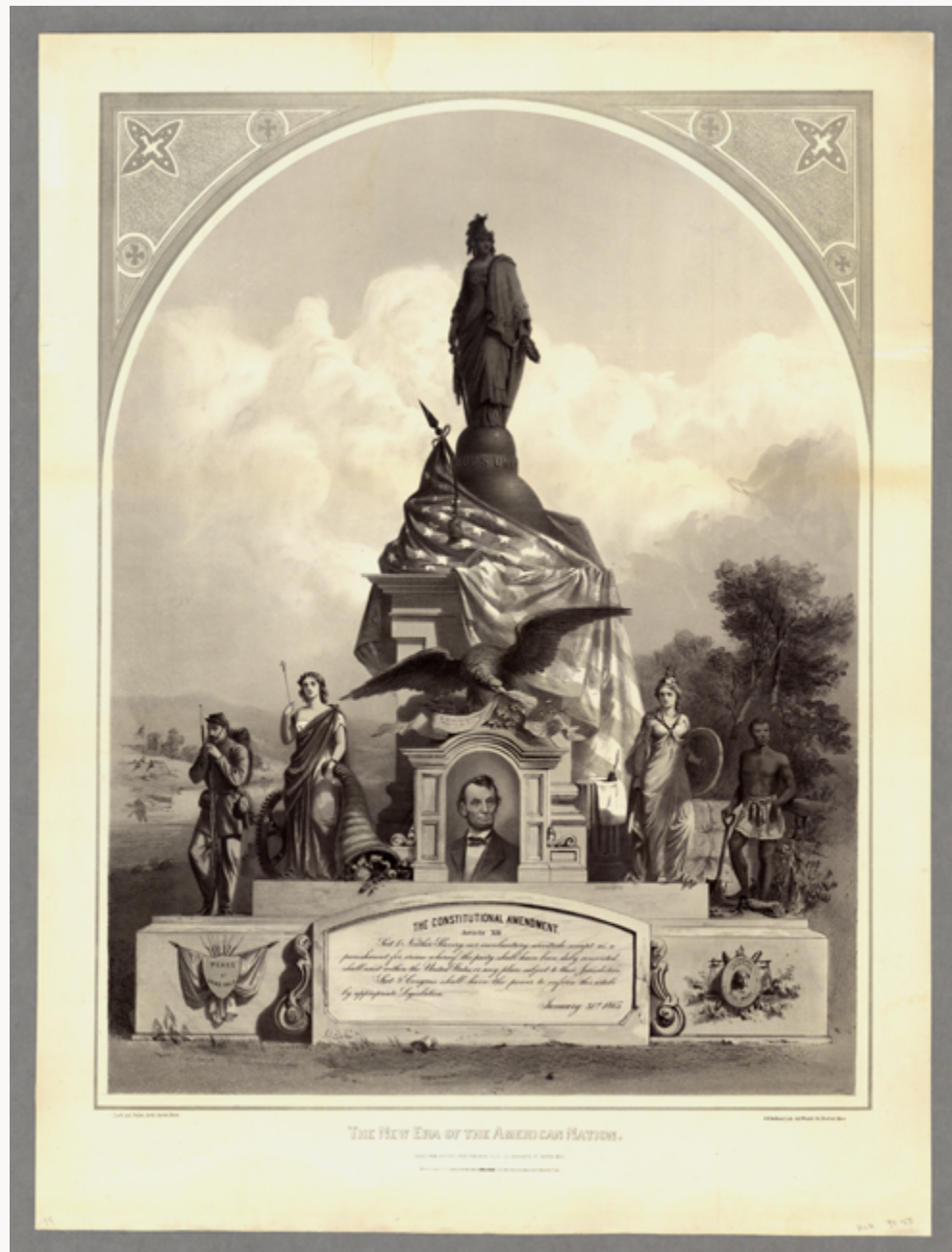


Fig. 21, Joseph E. Baker, *The New Era of the American Nation*, ca. 1865. Tinted lithograph. Published by J. H. Bufford, Boston. Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. [\[return to text\]](#)