

History, Genealogy, and the USCT: Building a Unit Study with Family Genealogy in Mind

Sherri Mehta, Ph.D.



Part 1 - Mapping Your Family in History

Think about your family tree during the Civil War era (1861-1865).

Use this space to list names, locations, or any details you know. Don't worry if you don't have all the answers yet - questions can lead to research!

Ancestor's Name(s): _____

Approximate Birth & Death Dates: _____

Where They Lived: _____

Known Occupation/Role: _____

Known Military Service (if any): _____

Part 2 - Historical Context

What was happening in their world?

Research or brainstorm events, laws, or social changes that may have impacted your ancestor(s). Think local, national, and global.

Key Historical Events (national): _____

Key Local Events (state/town): _____

Possible Impact on Ancestors: _____

Part 3 - The USCT Connection

If your ancestor was African American during the Civil War, consider:

Could they have served in the USCT or supported the war effort in another way?

Did they live near recruitment areas?

Were they in an enslaved or free community at the time?

Reflection: _____

Part 4 - Ponder & Connect

What family stories have been passed down from this era?

How might those stories connect to larger historical events?

Are there letters, photographs, or artifacts you can integrate into a unit study?

Notes: _____

Part 5 - Unit Study Planning Ideas

As you build your history + genealogy unit study, think about:

Primary Sources: census records, pension files, letters, photographs

Secondary Sources: books, articles, documentaries

Local Resources: libraries, archives, historical societies

Creative Outputs: student family history booklet, timeline, heritage map

List 2-3 activities you might include in your unit study:

Part 6 - Next Steps

Write down one action you will take this week to connect your family history to Civil War-era events: