

EXPLORE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM. LEARN INSIDE OUR STATE.

Travel Back in History

Fort Garland Museum

Background: After the Civil War, many Black soldiers joined the army to help settle the west during this period. Over 10,000 soldiers moved west, including the 9th Cavalry which was stationed at Fort Garland. The soldiers received their nickname, *Buffalo Soldier*, from the plain's Indians. There are many theories about its meaning. However, it's generally believed to be a sign of respect as the Native Americans revered the buffalo and the Buffalo Soldiers had proven themselves to be worthy opponents.

Now, take some time to explore the museum and see if your kids are able to find the answers to the following questions.

Questions to Ask:

1. What was a Buffalo Soldier? *An African-American soldier that fought in the west after the Civil War.*
2. Why did the African-American join the army? *They were fighting to get freedom they never had before.*
3. What is the fort made of? *Adobe brick*
4. When was it built and why? *Built in 1858 to protect pioneers from the Native Americans.*

Activity: Write a letter home describing life at Fort Garland. As you can imagine, life was quite different for Buffalo Soldiers for many reasons. Just being in the Army was different, as well as the area in which Fort Garland is located. From the adobe buildings to daily life, it was quite different than where they were from. Letter writing was especially important, as that was the only way to communicate with families. Letters allowed family members to know how a soldier was doing but also let them experience their soldiers' life. Often letters included a drawing. You can do either or both.

Draw a picture of life at Fort Garland.

