

Grades: 9-12

Future of America's Past "Freedom's Fortress"

In THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S PAST, notable scholar Ed Ayers takes viewers to the sites of complex and evocative chapters in American history. Throughout the series, Ayers meets with public historians working to preserve the past, from National Park Service rangers to curators and community activists. He visits the sites - both familiar and unknown - of monumental events, and brings on guests who offer a range of perspectives.

At Virginia's Fort Monroe, we discover a remarkable place: the spot where slavery began in British North America, and the site where it began to unravel during the Civil War. From one of the newest National Park Service sites to a historically-minded brewery and more, we learn from a diverse cast of people, engaging visitors with defining moments in our national past.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- What is this program "saying"? Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support your analysis.
- What was important about Fort Monroe?
- Why was this episode titled "Freedom's Fortress"?
- How did Fort Monroe impact legislation, political policy and eventually the Emancipation Proclamation?
- What is "African Landing Day" and why is it an important event in the community?
- Describe the artifacts found in the contraband camp.
- Who was Mary Smith Kelsey Peak? Why was she important?
- What is the Emancipation Oak?

Question Box 2

- What did you find most interesting and why?
- How much did you know about the subject before we started?
- How do you feel about this program? Why?
- What parts of it do you particularly like? Dislike? Why?
- What did you enjoy about this program?

Continued on the next page...

Box 3 (Tasks)

- Create an infographic that describes the earliest education of black Americans. Include details from the episode including who the first teacher was, what she taught, who she taught and where.
- General Butler allowed three slaves to come into Fort Monroe, Virginia, asking for freedom. Research the history of Freedom's Fortress. How many people came to Fort Monroe seeking freedom during the war? How does the contraband doctrine spread?

Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Consider tracing your ancestry. How would you go about doing this? Who would you speak to? Create a plan that will help you learn more about your family's past.
- Archaeology is talked about as being a destructive process. What is archeology? What are the different branches of archeology? What branch of archaeology seems most interesting to you and why? How could your interest help you investigate the archeology of your own community?

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- Watch this short video and read the article about park rangers.
<https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/Jobs-Park-Ranger.aspx>
- What surprised you most about the job of a park ranger?
- What do you need to apply to be a park ranger?
- From what you learned from the video and article what do you feel is the most important part of a park ranger's job?
- Would you consider a job as a park ranger? Why or why not?
- What classes do you take that might benefit you as a park ranger?