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served in the Union Army. Official recognition and organization of black troops, however, had not begun until the second year of the war. The first black units raised for the Union cause were individual and unauthorized attempts by federal officials in South Carolina and Kansas.

During the summer of 1862, Congress began paving the way for official black military service. The first recognized black unit was the First Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards, a free black militia unit, which was sworn into Union service in September 1862. Still, black military service was minimal, as no large effort to place the thousands of willing black men into uniform had yet gone into effect. This changed with enforcement of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, which included a special provision for black soldiers.

Tens of thousands of black volunteers were placed in all-black units with white commissioned officers. Black soldiers faced particular hardships and circumstances unlike those of white soldiers. They were originally paid less and confronted other discrimination from white Union soldiers. They were primarily used for laboring duties. And, if captured, black soldiers faced possible execution or enslavement as the Confederacy originally refused to recognize black soldiers as legitimate combatants. Still, thousands of black men served the Union faithfully, taking part in as many as 449 separate battles and demonstrating bravery that often won praise from fellow white soldiers. Approximately 38,000 black soldiers died during the war—over 2,800 from combat, most others from disease.

Ian M. Spurgeon

References

**Universal Negro Improvement Association, The**

On August 1, 1914, Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Jamaica. Armed with the slogan “Africa for Africans,” the organization aimed at freeing Africa from European colonization and arranging the return of all blacks to Africa. Beyond its idealism, the UNIA had concrete goals such as improving the social and economic life of all black people through self-reliance and nationhood. In North America, the UNIA had successes in both its labor and economic struggles. However, due to strategic problems in and outside the organization, its success in the United States was short-lived.

The UNIA came to the United States during the turbulent decade of the 1910s when racial violence against African Americans in northern cities was rampant. Garvey established a branch of the UNIA in New York at some point between the summer of 1917 and early 1918. From the late 1910s to the early 1920s, the UNIA developed social and economic projects that had positive impact on the African American community. In 1919, the organization created businesses in trucking and owned buildings located in New York and in other cities in the United States, South America, and the Caribbean. By the end of the 1920s, UNIA corporations in the
United States employed more than 1,000 African Americans.

In addition, the UNIA helped train black professionals. The coalition formed nurses and veterans who supported their local community through charity and entertainment projects in social clubs and churches. In Boston, the association focused on education of the masses. It created a Literary and Publicity Club to educate its members in literary and oratory skills and in the standard history of the world. The aim of this education was to give blacks a way to social success and political awareness.

Furthermore, the UNIA sponsored programs that sought to improve the working skills of local black communities. In New York and other larger cities, the association taught young and adult black females how to practice military drills and driving. These women handled cars, taxis, and ambulances operated by the association. In the South, the UNIA had a special Committee on Social Conditions that exhorted adult blacks to build secure homes where the young could be taught courtesy, clean speech, correct manners, and good character, which are elements that Garvey perceived as the hallmarks of true leaders and gentlemen.

The success of the UNIA in the United States was jeopardized by various circumstances. First, due to internal mismanagement of funds, the UNIA was bankrupt by the mid-1920s "with liabilities of over $200,000." Second, because of his success among black people to whom he told that "Africa is for Africans" and that "being black is beautiful" Garvey was soon targeted as a troublemaker in America and abroad. In January 1922, he and three of his aides had been arrested and convicted on accusations of mail fraud. These events precipitated the downfall of the UNIA in the United States.

Babacar M'Baye

See also: Civil Rights Movement; Garvey, Marcus; Pan-Africanism

References

URUGUAY

Since the sixteenth century, African-descended peoples have profoundly shaped the historical development of the Banda Oriental region, today known as Uruguay. The first Africans arrived as acculturated servants in 1534 with Pedro de Mendoza, one of the most well-known Spanish explorers of the River Plate. A century later, Spanish colonial administrators relied heavily on African slave labor in establishing settlements. In fact, the very survival of these colonies depended on slaves as soldiers who fought with Spaniards against hostile indigenous groups. The colony’s growing demands for workers in the fields, mines, and households of the Banda Oriental forced settlers to turn to African-born slave labor even more. This need for labor encouraged smuggling, which is the principal reason why it is so difficult to count with any precision the number of slaves imported into the region. Locating the place in Africa where Uruguay’s slaves originated is difficult at best. Records of slave shipments reveal that they hailed from all parts of West, Central, and East Africa. Until