

## **Lesson Plan #14 for *Genius of Freedom: The Shackle Broken - By the Genius of Freedom* by Charlene Weigel**

**Grade Level:** High School

**Topics:** Civil Rights Act of 1875, African American legislators during Reconstruction

**Pennsylvania History Standards:** 8.1.6 B, 8.1.9 B, 8.2.9 A, 8.2.9 C, 8.2.9 D, 8.3.9 A, 8.3.9 B, 8.3.9 D

**Pennsylvania Core Standards:** 8.5.9-10 A, 8.5.11-12 A, 8.5. 9-10 B, 8.5.11-12 B

***African American History*, Prentice Hall textbook:** pages 428-435, 444

**Overview:** After studying the military and political upheaval of the Civil War, Pennsylvania high school students may be surprised by the degree to which the country continued to struggle during Reconstruction. Complementary and conflicting programs cut across political, social, and economic sectors at the federal, state, county and local levels. Allies and opponents shifted along racial, political, geographic, social, and economic lines. The country struggled to create a new economic, political, and social structure that incorporated the newly freed Americans while responding to the changed economic circumstances of white Southern planters and rebuilding after the destruction of war. As textbooks cover presidential policies, the actions of the Radical and moderate Republicans, the response of the Southern Democrats, and local Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, students study the actions of the white majority politicians. Students may not, however, grasp either the struggles of and the agency shown by black Americans elected to the local, state and federal offices during Reconstruction. By thinking critically about the primary source lithograph *The Shackle Broken - By The Genius of Freedom*, students can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and efforts of this pioneering generation of black legislators and the voices of the newly freed Americans for whom they advocated. Students will examine and analyze the lithograph that focuses on a major address by Congressman Robert B. Elliott (R-SC) in support of what would ultimately become the Civil Rights Act of 1875. They will analyze the messages in the lithograph in the context of key historical events.

### **Materials:**

- From the Exhibit: Copy of lithograph *The Shackle Broken - By The Genius of Freedom* (Pub. E. Sachse & Co., 5 N. Liberty St., Baltimore, c1874)
- *Distinguished Colored Men* - a chromolithograph showing Robert Elliott, Frederick Douglass and other prominent pre-and post-war African-American leaders
- Worksheets:
  - Worksheet A: Robert Elliott Biography Analysis Worksheet

- Worksheet A Robert Elliott Biography Analysis Worksheet Answer Key
- Worksheet B: What is Genius?
- Worksheet B: What is Genius? Answer Key
- Worksheet C: “The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom” Image Analysis Sheet
- Worksheet C: “The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom” Image Analysis Sheet Answer Key
- Political Cartoon, *Southern Chivalry: Argument versus Club’s, 1856* depicting Congressman Preston Brooks (D-SC) striking Senator Charles Sumner (R-MA) with a cane in 1856:  
[http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/civilwar/html/slide\\_9a.html](http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/civilwar/html/slide_9a.html)
- Smartboard/Overhead projector

#### Additional Teacher Background:

- Additional context on the history of African-Americans in Congress in this e-book available for free download:  
Office of History and Preservation Office of the Clerk U.S. House of Representatives. *BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS 1870 - 2007 - H. DOC. 108-224*. Comp. The Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives. GPO. U.S. Government Publishing Office, 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 5 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CDOC-108hdoc224/content-detail.html>>.

#### Procedure:

1. Set stage for lesson by reminding students of the deep political divide that was growing between the North and South in Congress during the years leading up to the Civil War. Display *Southern Chivalry: Argument versus Club’s, 1856* depicting the caning of Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner by South Carolinian Congressman Preston Brooks. If this event was addressed in prior curricular work, ask students to recap the issue leading up to the caning and the significance of the event at the time. If this event was not included in the prior curriculum, use the context included in the legend of the cartoon to give students appropriate background. Inform students that both actors (Sumner and Brooks) became popular symbols within their respective parties as a result of this event (Sumner was viewed as heroic by Radical Republicans and Brooks by Southern Democrats). Ask students to analyze whether the artist was writing in favor of Sumner or Brooks given the title/caption. (Teacher Note: *The use of the term “Southern Chivalry” in the context of the brutal caning is sarcastic, indicating that the artist was being critical of the act of the Southern Congressman Brooks.*)
2. Show image of chromolithograph *Distinguished Colored Men* to students. Ask students to recap the role of Frederick Douglass and to hypothesize about why the image might show him at the center. Ask students to identify any other men in this image that they may recognize.
3. Point out Robert Elliott in the chromolithograph. Distribute Worksheet A (Robert Elliott Biography Analysis Worksheet), reviewing the key points about Robert Elliott in the first column. Ask students to complete the

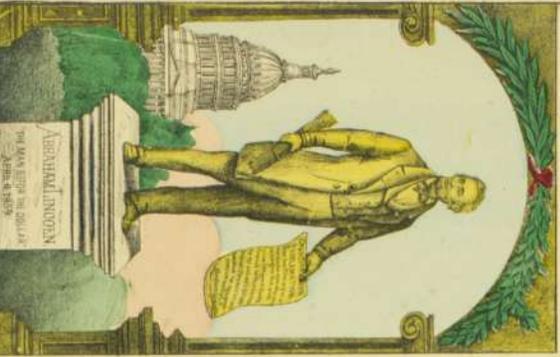
second and third columns of the worksheet. This worksheet may be an appropriate homework assignment.

- Source: Pages 78-83 of *BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS 1870 - 2007 - H. DOC. 108-224* (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CDOC-108hdoc224/content-detail.html>) (See full source in Additional Teacher Background section).
4. Facilitate class discussion on Worksheet A (see Answer Key for some suggested responses).
  5. Explore the concept of what it means to be a genius. Distribute Worksheet B: What is genius? Give students five minutes to work individually on the questions. Then have students pair up for five minutes. Facilitate group discussion using Answer Key for some suggested discussion questions.
  6. Distribute copies of the lithograph to students or display on Smartboard/projector. Break students into five groups to work on Worksheet C: *The Shackle Broken - By The Genius of Freedom Image Analysis Sheet*.
  7. Have students jigsaw sharing their observations on the assigned portion of the lithograph to lead a discussion with their peers. The goal is for students to use their assigned segment of the image to educate their peers about the key messages of that portion of the lithograph (see Worksheet C). Allow time for students to ask questions of those leading the discussion for the assigned portion of the lithograph.
  8. Facilitate final discussion about the center portion of the lithograph: Elliott's speech.
    - a. Focus on center image of "*Hon. Robert B. Elliott of South Carolina delivering his great speech on civil rights in the House of Representatives, January 6, 1874.*" Focus on words on banner: "*What you give to one class, you must give to all. What you deny to one class, you shall deny to all. Hon. R. B. Elliott's speech, page 7.*" Also note text at bottom stating, "*The rights contended for all in this bill are among the **sacred rights of all mankind** which are not to be rummaged for among old punishments or musty records, they are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of **human nature**, by the hand of Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power. Hon. Robert B. Elliott.*"
      - i. Facilitate a discussion comparing Elliott's words to Jefferson's Declaration of Independence
        1. "... Laws of Nature and of Nature's God..."
        2. "...certain unalienable rights..."
        3. "...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness..."
      - ii. How is Elliott using the founding documents of this country to support extending equality to black Americans?
      - iii. Just as Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address argued that the entire nation was born with the original sin of slavery (not just the South), Elliott argues that all men are affected when the rights of some are denied. Do you agree with this assessment?

- iv. Does Elliott show evidence of genius given your definition? Discuss the American Dream in which a self-taught immigrant can rise to the level of an American Congressman against the racial, economic and social obstacles of the time. Unlike Carnegie, Vanderbilt and other self-made men of the time, he did not focus his talent on capitalism but rather on extending democracy to all.



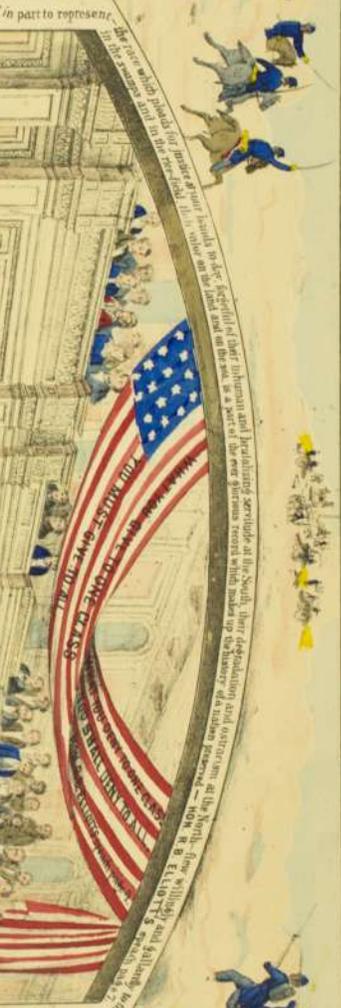
In battle extending the members of the race which I have the honor



Abraham Lincoln  
The Great Emancipator  
From the Journal Morning, Thursday, 1862



Of those who were shown at the beginning of the position full and true  
died gloriously and now in the U. S. Service



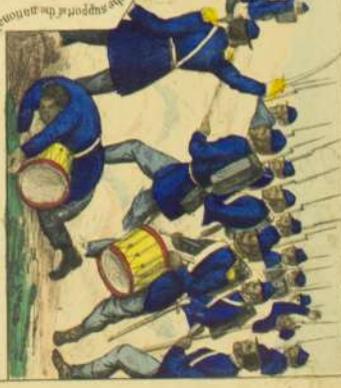
in part to represent. The one who has passed of posterity has to be kept in the memory of the nation as a part of the great glorious record which makes up the history of a nation preserved in the memory of the people. The one who has passed of posterity has to be kept in the memory of the nation as a part of the great glorious record which makes up the history of a nation preserved in the memory of the people.



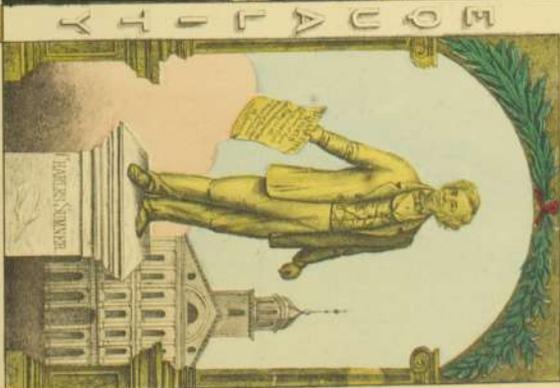
HON. ROBERT B. ELLIOTT,  
of SOUTH CAROLINA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE,  
GIVEN SPEECH IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 6, 1875.



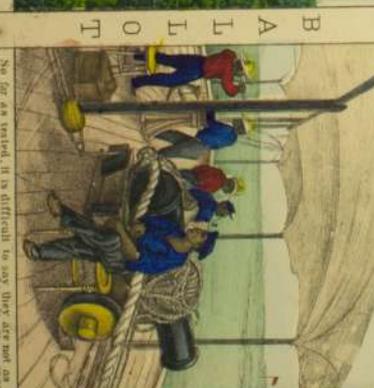
AMERICAN SLAVE LABOUR IS OF THE PAST - FREE LABOUR IS OF THE PRESENT - WE TOIL FOR OUR OWN CHILDREN AND NOT FOR THOSE OF OTHERS.



in support of the national Government. Their self-forgetful assistance, provisions, and trials



EQUALITY OF RIGHTS  
IS THE FIRST OF RIGHTS.  
Charles Sumner



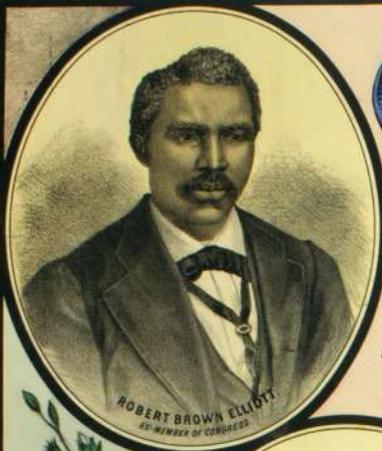
No. 1000 - 1875. It is difficult to say they are not a good reason, in any.

The rights conferred for in this bill are among the sacred rights of mankind, which are not to be purchased for money, and which are not to be withheld from any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation or by any act of Congress. From the Journal Morning, Thursday, 1862.

THE SHACKLE BROKEN - BY THE GENIUS OF FREEDOM.

By volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be removed or removed by man's power. From the Journal Morning, Thursday, 1862.

# DISTINGUISHED COLORED MEN



ROBERT BROWN ELLIOTT  
EX-MEMBER OF CONGRESS



BLANCHE K. BRUCE  
EX-SENATOR, U. S.



HENRY HIGHLAND GARRETT  
LATE MINISTER OF LIBERIA



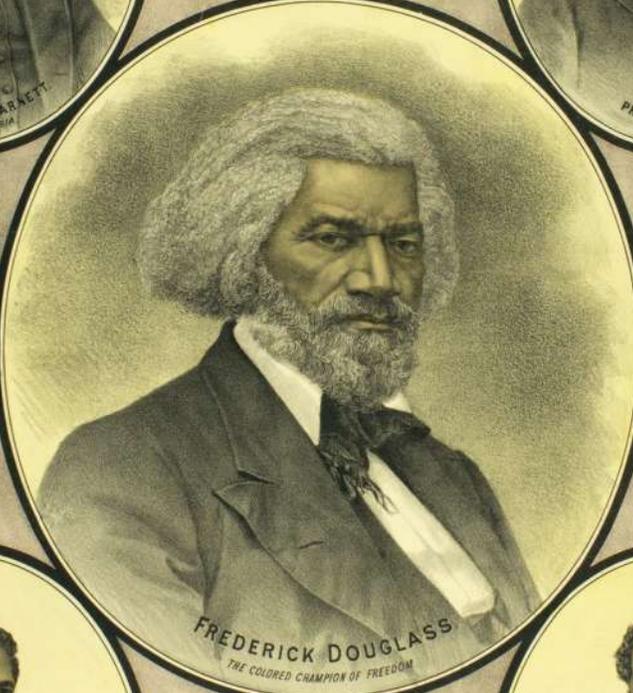
WM. WELLS BROWN, M.D.  
AUTHOR OF 'THE RISING SUN'



PROF. R.T. GREENER  
DEAN HOWARD UNIVERSITY



P. B. S. PINCHBACK  
EX-GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA



FREDERICK DOUGLASS  
THE COLORED CHAMPION OF FREEDOM



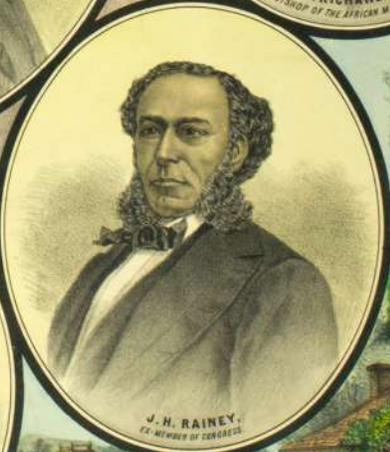
RT. REV. RICHARD ALLEN  
1ST BISHOP OF THE AFRICAN M. E. CHURCH



JOHN MERCER LANGSTON  
MINISTER TO HAITI



E. D. BASSETT  
EX-MINISTER TO HAITI



J. H. RAINEY  
EX-MEMBER OF CONGRESS



**Worksheet A: Robert Elliott Biography Analysis**

	Discussion Questions - Jot down your thoughts	What questions/observations do you have?
Born 1842 in Liverpool, England. Educated in British public schools. Skilled as a typesetter, and served in British Navy.	<i>Why might this background be relevant to his later emergence as a American black leader?</i>	
By 1867, was living in Charleston, South Carolina as an associate editor for the <i>South Carolina Leader</i> , a freedmen's newspaper, and emerged as a leader at South Carolina state constitutional convention in 1868.	<i>How might this background have allowed him to emerge as a black leader? What key skills did he have?</i>	
Later in 1868, was elected to Barnwell County, SC Board of Commissioners (only black member) and then to SC State House of Representatives.	<i>What challenges do you think he faced as the only, and then one of the only, black men in these positions? Were there any advantages?</i>	
Admitted to SC Bar (given license to practice law in SC) in 1868 (self-studied).	<i>What words would you use to describe Elliott knowing about this accomplishment?</i>	

<p>In 1870, was Republican nominee for U.S. House of Representatives in the district seat once held by Representative Preston Brooks (committed caning assault on Senator Charles Sumner in 1856). Won and was sworn into 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress in 1871.</p>	<p><i>What is ironic about this fact?</i></p>	
<p>Was darker-skinned than the other African-American representatives. “I shall never forget [my first day in Congress],” Elliott later recalled. “I found myself the center of attraction. Everything was still.” (Office of History).</p>	<p><i>Why might his skin color be significant? What feelings might he have had about entering the U.S. Congress? How do you interpret the quotation about his first day in Congress?</i></p>	
<p>Served on Committee on Education and Labor. Active in <i>challenging</i> the Amnesty Bill (to re-establish full political rights of former Confederates) that ultimately passed. He also was vocal in <i>supporting</i> the Ku Klux Klan Bill (designed to stop terrorist activities of this group), which also ultimately passed.</p>	<p><i>Given his bio, how would he feel about being appointed to this committee? Why would he have taken the stances he did on each bill?</i></p>	

<p>Given his political activism at this time, felt his life was in danger and he gave instructions to his wife in case of his death.</p>	<p><i>Knowing what you know about him so far and reflecting on this fact, what three adjectives/phrases would you use to describe Elliott?</i></p>	
<p>Reelected in 1872 with 93% of the vote. Helped pass Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner's Civil Rights Bill (passed as the Civil Rights Act of 1875) focused on preventing discrimination on public transportation, and in public accommodations and schools. Was opposed by Southern Democrats who argued that federal government had no constitutional authority to enforce civil rights.</p>	<p><i>Think about Elliott living in Washington and working in Congress. What specific personal experiences can you imagine he had that would have been altered by passage of this Bill?</i></p>	
<p>Delivered eulogy for Senator Sumner in Boston's Faneuil Hall in March 1874.</p>	<p><i>What are some of the connections to Sumner that might have resulted in being chosen for this honor?</i></p>	

<p>Increasingly frustrated with corruption in SC Republican Party that was allowing Democrat Party to gain inroads. Resigned from U.S. House of Representatives in 1874. Won seat in SC State Assembly, later serving as state attorney general.</p>	<p><i>Why could corruption in his party cause him to decide to resign?</i></p>	
<p>Lost political position in Bargain of 1877 when Reconstruction collapsed. Remained politically active and struggled to make a living with his law practice until his death, in poverty, in 1884.</p>	<p><i>What does this last piece of his biography imply about the life of an educated, politically active black American in SC after Reconstruction?</i></p>	

**Worksheet A: Robert Elliott Biography Analysis**

	Discussion Questions - Jot down your thoughts	What questions/observations do you have?
<p>Born 1842 in Liverpool, England. Educated in British public schools. Skilled as a typesetter, and served in British Navy.</p>	<p><i>Why might this background be relevant to his later emergence as a American black leader?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>One of the key challenges facing newly freed Americans was the inability to receive an education while enslaved. England, which eliminated slavery long before the U.S., offered Elliott an education that would not have been available to many black Americans. This lack of education was one of many barriers to bright and motivated newly freed Americans being able to enter political office.</i></li> </ul>
<p>By 1867, was living in Charleston, South Carolina as an associate editor for the <i>South Carolina Leader</i>, a freedmen’s newspaper, and emerged as leader at South Carolina Constitutional Convention in 1868.</p>	<p><i>How might this background have allowed him to emerge as a black leader? What key skills did he have?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In addition to his solid core education, Elliott honed his skills in writing and analysis as an editor. He was well informed about current and historical events given his role at the newspaper. As a professional member of the black community, his election to participate in the state’s Constitutional Convention gave him both visibility and connections to other politicians and influential members of SC political and social elite.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Later in 1868, was elected to Barnwell County, SC Board of Commissioners (only black member) and then to SC State House of Representatives.</p>	<p><i>What challenges do you think he faced as the only, and then one of the only, black men in these positions? Were there any advantages?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How difficult it must have been to know that you were in such a stark minority. Who would be his ally in passing legislation? Would other legislators give fair airing to his views? Would his views be heard on their own merits or would he be seen as a token minority representative? Should he “come out swinging” or move slowly to try to build friends and allies? One potential advantage is that this was not the first time he found himself in the political minority and he had an education and skills that equaled those of his white peers.</i></li> </ul>

<p>Admitted to South Carolina Bar (i.e. given license to practice law in SC) in 1868 (self-studied).</p>	<p><i>What words would you use to describe Elliott knowing about this accomplishment?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While it was not as unusual then for someone to pass the state bar without formal legal training as now (witness Abraham Lincoln), it was an extraordinary accomplishment for a black man in these early years post-Civil War, especially when considering his very active political engagement and demanding employment. Words: motivated, intelligent, hard working, determined, focused, driven.</li> </ul>
<p>In 1870, was Republican nominee for U.S. House of Representatives in the district seat once held by Representative Preston Brooks (committed caning assault on Senator Charles Sumner in 1856). Won and was sworn into 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress in 1871.</p>	<p><i>What is ironic about this fact?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preston Brooks symbolized the South's opposition to federal movements to eliminate slavery before the Civil War, turning to violence in the very halls of the Capitol to oppose Charles Sumner. The fact that a black Congressman (who, as will be shown later, had close ties to Sumner himself) would represent the same district after the War is ironic.</li> </ul>
<p>Was darker-skinned than the other African-American representatives. "I shall never forget [my first day in Congress]," Elliott later recalled. "I found myself the center of attraction. Everything was still." (Office of History).</p>	<p><i>Why might his skin color be significant? What feelings might he have had about entering the U.S. Congress? How do you interpret the quotation about his first day in Congress?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During slavery, light-skinned African Americans might try to pass as white to be able to move freely in society. The deeper the color of one's skin, the more readily was one identifiable as "the other." Darker-skinned men and women had even more difficulty being accepted in white society than lighter-skinned African Americans. When Elliott says, "Everything was still" he is referring to how no one spoke when he entered a room, just staring at him. Imagine entering the cafeteria on your first day in a new school and having everyone turn to you and stare without talking. How alone he must have felt.</li> </ul>
<p>Served on Committee on Education and Labor. Active in <i>challenging</i> the Amnesty Bill (to re-establish full political rights of former Confederates) that</p>	<p><i>Given his background, how would he feel about being appointed to this committee? Why would he have taken the stances he</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The facts suggest that Elliott worked hard to obtain and continue his education and believed that education was very important to his personal success as well as to his role in</li> </ul>

<p>ultimately passed. He also was vocal in <i>supporting</i> the Ku Klux Klan Bill (designed to stop terrorist activities of this group), which also ultimately passed.</p>	<p><i>did on each bill?</i></p>	<p><i>representing black Americans.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>He opposed the Amnesty Bill because he believed that it would be more difficult for newly freed Americans to influence politics in the South if former Confederates, who opposed the end of slavery much less equality for black Americans, had full voting privileges and were able to hold political office. He supported the bill designed to stop the activities of the KKK which was a terrorist group focused on intimidating black Americans to not participate in the political process (among other goals).</i></li> </ul>
<p>Given his political activism at this time, felt his life was in danger and he gave instructions to his wife in case of his death.</p>	<p><i>Knowing what you know about him so far and reflecting on this fact, what three adjectives/phrases would you use to describe Elliott?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Brave, committed, in danger, fearful, risk-taker, a planner</i></li> </ul>
<p>Reelected in 1872 with 93% of the vote. Helped pass Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner's Civil Rights Bill (passed as the Civil Rights Act of 1875) focused on preventing discrimination on public transportation, and in public accommodations and schools. Was opposed by Southern Democrats who argued that federal government had no constitutional authority to enforce civil rights.</p>	<p><i>Think about Elliott living in Washington and working in Congress. What specific personal experiences can you imagine he had that would have been altered by passage of this Bill?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Elliott was a black man working in a largely white man's profession at the time (politics). Given the climate of the time and the fact that a bill to prevent discrimination in public places was necessary, Elliott likely experienced not being served (or feeling unwelcome) in some restaurants and hotels. He may have had difficulty hailing horse-drawn cabs or omnibuses. He would likely have felt excluded even if invited to socialize with his white peers. This is not to say that his support for the Bill was merely personal, but rather that despite the accomplishment of being elected to Congress, even he would still have experienced significant segregation and discrimination in his activities of daily living.</i></li> </ul>

<p>Delivered eulogy for Senator Sumner in Boston's Faneuil Hall in March 1874.</p>	<p><i>What are some of the connections to Sumner that might have resulted in being chosen for this honor? From evidence presented in this brief bio:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He strongly supported Sumner's Bill.</li> <li>• As a black man, he held the seat of the man who had, prior to the War, brutally beaten Sumner for Sumner's abolitionist views.</li> <li>• One could also infer that he was the epitome of Sumner's hopes: a bright, motivated black man effectively participating in a free America.</li> </ul>
<p>Increasingly frustrated with corruption in SC Republican Party that was allowing Democrat Party to gain inroads. Resigned from U.S. House of Representatives in 1874. Won seat in SC State Assembly, later serving as state attorney general.</p>	<p><i>Why could corruption in his party cause him to decide to resign?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elliott had to work hard to achieve his accomplishments despite many in the South who were hoping to return to the pre-Civil War economic and political system. No matter how hard working or smart Elliott and other black Americans were, if the system was corrupt, they could not rise on their own merits. One can imagine that he was disillusioned if even the Republican Party, the party advocating for racial equality, was subject to being paid off.</li> </ul>
<p>Lost political position in Bargain of 1877 when Reconstruction collapsed. Remained politically active and struggled to make a living with his law practice until his death, in poverty, in 1884.</p>	<p><i>What does this last piece of his biography imply about the life of an educated, politically active black American in SC after Reconstruction?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is difficult to imagine someone with more drive, intelligence, and desire to make a positive change than Robert Elliott. And yet, when presidential protection in the form of the military was removed from SC in the Bargain of 1877, even Elliott was unable to succeed in a system that tipped backward in time with Jim Crow laws. After the first blush of success in early Reconstruction, black politicians struggled to be elected and have a commensurate impact until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.</li> </ul>

## Worksheet B: What is Genius?

1. Craft your own definition of what it means to be a “genius.”
2. With your partner, compare your definitions. What elements are similar? Different? Working together, write a shared definition of “genius.” Be prepared to share your work in class discussion.
3. What is necessary for genius to be recognized by the general public? To get started on this question, think about your examples of geniuses (Question 1). What conditions were necessary for people to know about that person’s genius and for you, in turn, to know about him or her?

## Worksheet B: What is Genius?

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### *Teacher Notes:*

- *When facilitating the class discussion on this concept, help students evaluate the various responses with the following questions:*
  - *Can everyone achieve “genius” or is it something that refers to only a few people?*
  - *Who are some examples of geniuses in science? In music? In American history?*
  - *Are there different types of genius? If so, what makes someone a genius in physics? Music? Politics? Medicine?*
  - *Is genius the same or different than being smart? Hard-working? Can you be a genius if you are a follower or does genius imply that you need to be a leader in something?*
  - *Are you born a genius or is genius something that can be taught? Does there need to be a degree of “DIY” in genius?*
  - *What does it take for genius to be recognized? Is it possible that there have been geniuses in history about whom we don’t know because they were part of a minority culture? What does it take for genius to be recognized (e.g., literacy, visibility, agency, freedom, ability to be visible)?*
  - *Given what you know, how does Robert Elliott compare to your definition of genius?*

## Worksheet C: Analysis of “The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom”

You will be assigned one of the following segments of the lithograph to analyze.

1. Abraham Lincoln Statue with text beneath statue stating “I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation or by any act of Congress. Abraham Lincoln, From the Annual Message, December 8, 1863.”
2. Bottom left picture of a black American on horseback with text “Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion full one hundred thousand are now in the U.S. services” *and* the image that spans the top of the picture of the black Americans on horseback. Note word “Army” near top right of bottom left picture.
3. Bottom right picture of black Americans on naval vessel with text “So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soldiers as any. A. Lincoln, Dec 1863” *and* the image that spans the top of the picture of black Americans charging in battle. Note word “Navy” near top left of bottom right picture.
4. Charles Sumner statue holding document entitled “Bill of Civil Rights” with text stating, “Equality of Rights is the First of Rights, Charles Sumner.”
5. Focus on text in the lithograph. Note words on document including “Liberty, Jury, Equality, and Ballot.” Note text arching across the top of lithograph stating “In that dire extremity the members of the race which I have the honor in part to represent – the race which pleads for justice at your hands today, forgetful of their inhuman and brutalized servitude in the South – their degradation and ostracism at the North – flew willingly and gallantly to the support of the national government. Their sufferings, assistant privations and trials in the swamps and in the rice-fields, their valor on the land and on the sea is a part of the ever glorious record which makes up the history of a nation persevered. Hon. R. B. Elliott’s speech, page 7.”

Each group:

1. Narrative: Identify the key visual elements/clues that help the viewer focus on the main message of the assigned portion of the lithograph. Group Five – identify the key words (bold them) on which to focus.
2. Analysis: Connecting to background knowledge, what is the key take-away message for your assigned portion of the lithograph?
3. Making Connections: Thinking about your definition of genius, do you see any elements of that trait highlighted by the artist or author in your assigned image/text? How could the image/text be used to illustrate genius? Explain.
4. What other comments or observations can you share?
5. What questions do you have about your assigned portion of the lithograph?

## Worksheet C: Analysis of “The Shackles Broken – By The Genius of Freedom”

Some thoughts on each assigned section.

*For all groups, keep in mind that the lithograph has been made and released at the time that what will become the Civil Rights Act of 1875, authored originally by Senator Charles Sumner, is being debated in Congress. The Act focused on elimination of barriers to equal access to public transportation, public accommodations and to prevent exclusion from jury service.*

1. Abraham Lincoln Statue with text beneath statue stating “I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation or by any act of Congress. Abraham Lincoln, From the Annual Message, December 8, 1863.”
  - a. *Lincoln stands before the Capitol dome (symbol of federal U.S. government) holding arrows of democracy in his hand. His genius was to be willing to accept a war that, at its heart, was about the equality of all Americans. Rather than the compromises that had characterized the issue of slavery from the beginning, the artist has also chosen to highlight his statement that he would never **return** to slavery any person who had been freed, thus emphasizing the permanence and forward direction of treatment of former slaves. The actions of the KKK, the segregation in transportation and general businesses, the Black Codes/Jim Crow... all threatened to return freed Americans to, for all intents and purposes, slavery but by another name. At the time of the making of the lithograph, Sumner’s Civil Rights Act was being debated in Congress to eliminate some of those barriers to full civil equality.*
  - b. *Lincoln paid a physical, not just mental and emotional, price for his support of equality for black Americans.*
2. Bottom left picture of black American on horseback with text “Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion full one hundred thousand are now in the U.S. services” *and* the image that spans the top of the picture of the black Americans on horseback. Note word “Army” near top right of bottom left picture.
  - a. *This image reminds the viewer that black Americans were actively engaged in the battle to preserve the Union and eliminate slavery. They are not passive recipients of the largesse of white Americans, but rather have fought alongside whites to break their own shackles and earn their civil rights.*
  - b. *Black Americans gave their lives in the War even though they were not granted full citizenship rights by the country. Now they are asking for recognition of citizenship not as a handout but rather as a right earned.*
3. Bottom right picture of black Americans on naval vessel with text “So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soldiers as any. A. Lincoln, Dec 1863” *and* the image that spans the top of the picture of black Americans charging in battle. Note word “Navy” near top left of bottom right picture.

- a. *See response to Group 2. Also, note that Elliott himself served in the British Navy. While not involved in the Civil War, the object of this lithograph did share in the military service heritage that is being highlighted in the images for Groups 2 and 3.*
4. Charles Sumner statue holding document entitled “Bill of Civil Rights” with text stating, “Equality of Rights is the First of Rights, Charles Sumner.”
  - a. *Sumner stands before Boston’s Faneuil Hall, a symbolic meetinghouse and public space in Boston in a city that claims the nickname “Cradle of Liberty” from the Revolutionary Period (specifically from an anti-British speech given at Faneuil Hall in 1761 by James Otis). Boston was also a leading city in the abolition movement, home of The Liberator newspaper, many active abolitionists, and the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (one of the first all-black infantry regiments to fight in the Civil War). Sumner’s genius was to recognize the core equality of all Americans. He had particular pedigree in that he stood up for abolition in Congress, which earned him a brutal caning by Congressman Preston Brooks (D-SC, who served in the seat ultimately held by Elliott). Few whites could point to physical scars on their body over the issue of slavery as could Sumner as a result of this beating. Sumner was the author of what was to become the Civil Rights Act of 1875 that Elliott supported in his famous speech immortalized in this lithograph.*
  - b. *Sumner paid a physical, not just mental and emotional, price for his support of equality for black Americans.*
5. Focus on text in the lithograph. Note words on document including “Liberty, Jury, Equality and Ballot.” The text arching across the top of lithograph states, “In that dire extremity the members of the race which I have the honor in part to represent – the race which pleads for justice at your hands today, forgetful of their inhuman and brutalized servitude in the South – their degradation and ostracism at the North – flew willingly and gallantly to the support of the national government. Their sufferings, assistant privations and trials in the swamps and in the rice-fields, their valor on the land and on the sea is a part of the ever glorious record which makes up the history of a nation persevered. Hon. R. B. Elliott’s speech, page 7.”
  - a. *The key terms identify the tools at the hands of the former slaves to take their place as citizens including access to the judicial process (denied by Black Codes and Jim Crow) and to the political process (again threatened by Black Codes and Jim Crow) along with the core principles of Liberty and Equality.*
  - b. *Elliott presages Booker T. Washington in that he reminds all that black Americans supported the common cause with whites, experiencing significant suffering, as did the white soldiers in the Civil War, in the process. He emphasizes the role of black Americans in allowing the nation to persevere.*

Each group:

1. Narrative: Identify the key visual elements/clues that help the viewer focus on the main message of the assigned portion of the lithograph. Group Five - identify the key words (bold them) on which to focus.
2. Analysis: Connecting to background knowledge, what is the key take-away message for your assigned portion of the lithograph?
3. Making Connections: Thinking about your definition of genius, do you see any elements of that trait highlighted by the artist or author in your assigned image/text? How could the image/text be used to illustrate genius? Explain.
4. What other comments or observations can you share?
5. What questions do you have about your assigned portion of the lithograph?

## Culmination Assessment for Genius of Freedom: “The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom”

### 1. Quick Assessment: Exit Ticket

Assess student’s grasp of the core content of the lesson using an exit ticket.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Topic: "The Shackle Broken - By The Genius of Freedom"  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

All of the following are connections between Robert Elliott and Charles Sumner **except**:  
\_\_\_ Elliott was a strong supporter of Sumner's Civil Rights Act  
\_\_\_ Elliott represented the district formerly represented by Preston Brooks  
\_\_\_ Elliott's career was an example of what Sumner hoped for black Americans  
\_\_\_ Elliott grew up in Boston and knew Sumner as a child

Give one example of Elliott's "genius:"

Class Exit Ticket

#### Answers:

- “Elliott grew up in Boston and knew Sumner as a child” is not true.
  - This question assesses the student’s comprehension and critical thinking skills. As a result, there are many acceptable answers to this question, including the fact that Elliott was self-taught, that he faced considerable danger and opposition in representing black Americans, that he visibly supported the Civil Rights Act of 1875 that advanced the rights of black Americans as citizens, etc.
2. If time permits, a homework assignment could be used as a more substantive assessment with the following prompt:
- Reflect on Robert Elliott’s genius as an American leader who represented the rights of black Americans during early Reconstruction, often with some danger to his own safety. Think of another person, either in the past or today, who shows similar courage and leadership in defending and advancing the rights of a group of people. In a three paragraph essay, identify the person you are identifying as a “genius,” providing some narrative context to introduce your chosen genius. Then offer a compare and contrast analysis of the genius you identified with Robert Elliott drawing on your notes from our study of Elliott.