



TITLE

JOSEPH PIERCE, CIVIL WAR SOLDIER, UNION ARMY: “WHO KNEW? ASIAN AMERICANS FOUGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR?”

GRADE LEVEL: MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

SUBJECT: History

THEME: Bias and Stereotype, Immigration, Civil Rights, Identity and Culture

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Analyze documents relating to Joseph Pierce to tell a personal story of an immigrant soldier's life.
- Tell the story of Joseph Pierce, a Chinese American soldier in the Civil War fighting for the Union.
- Learn of major campaigns from Antietam to Gettysburg to Appomattox through his experience.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- In what ways can Joseph Pierce's experience expand our understanding of the Civil War?
- How does Joseph Pierce's life help us better understand the lives of Civil War veterans more broadly?
- How does Joseph Pierce expand our knowledge of the role of immigrants in American life during this period?

INTRODUCTION:

In the discussion of Civil Rights in America, and especially concerning the 14th amendment, little attention is given to the significant role that Asian Americans have played in affirming basic civil rights. This lesson aims to show the role played by Asian Americans in shaping American law.

CREDIT AUTHOR
AND CONTACT: TING-YI OEI

LAST UPDATE: JAN, 10TH, 2024



ACTIVITIES:

1. Use a document analysis tool (see links below) to guide students through an analysis of each of the documents (A-D) attached. This can be done as a whole class activity or in small groups to allow broader participation.

<https://www.docsteach.org/tools/analyzing-documents>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/OBz6nDcuoegaZNOdSd1RCTjIhWG8/edit?resourcekey=0-StaaFZ3WyeSd916B6BdaEA>

2. Once students have a sense of Joseph Pierce's life from the documents, allow them time in small groups to discuss their findings and what they have learned.

3. Have students read one of the short summaries of his life provided by one of the links in the resources (choice of reading can be made to suit the grade level from upper elementary through high school) to fill in gaps in Pierce's story. The class may want to create a timeline to help them visualize his life span and correlate it to other events in American history.

4. If you wish to use his story as part of explaining the course of the Civil War, students can examine the importance of Antietam, Gettysburg, and Appomattox to the outcome of the war. The following questions can guide such learning:

- Why is each of these campaigns significant?
- What can we learn about soldiering during the war from Pierce's experience?
- Consider his length of service, the fighting and wounds he received.

ASSESSMENT:

Student learning during the lesson should be assessed through the document analysis and in small group and class discussions.

For a summative assessment, have students write their own summary of Pierce's life focusing on the question: Why do you think learning about him is important? Length of the writing can depend on the grade level. Consider alternatives such as graphic novel descriptions of his service and life.

While no letters and few personal documents are known to exist about Pierce, students may also demonstrate understanding of the period by writing letters that capture aspects of soldiering and life during the war and participation in major battles and campaigns. (The Irving Moy reflection, Reflections on the Civil War and Joseph Pierce, speaks to what is known of his family and to whom he might have written. Link is below)

http://www.cof14thcvi.com/Joseph_Pierce/Joseph_Pierce.html



CREDIT AUTHOR
AND CONTACT:

TING-YI OEI

LAST UPDATE:

JAN, 10TH, 2024



Document A: Volunteer Enlistment Form

May, Joseph
Pierce

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT, TOWN OF New Britain

I, Joseph Pierce, born in Lardner, State of Illinois, aged 21 years, and by occupation Farmer

Do HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have voluntarily enlisted this 26th day of July 1862, as a Soldier in a Volunteer Regiment of Connecticut, to serve the UNITED STATES FOR THREE YEARS, OR DURING THE WAR with persons owning allegiance to and in open rebellion to the United States Government, unless sooner discharged by proper authority; and to be subject to orders from the Federal Government; do also agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing, as are, or may be established by law.

And I, Joseph Pierce do solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies of opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States.

Sworn and subscribed to, at New Britain this 26th day of July 1862. Joseph Pierce

I CERTIFY ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above named Recruit, agreeably to the General Regulations of the Army, and that in my opinion he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity, which would, in any way, disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

Lewis Jewett M.D. Examining Surgeon. 14th
I CERTIFY ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Recruit, Joseph Pierce previously to his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that to the best of my judgment and belief he is of lawful age; and that in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able bodied soldier, I have strictly observed the Regulations which govern the Recruiting service. This soldier has Black eyes, Dark hair, Dark complexion, is 5 feet 6 inches high.

W. A. Moore Recruiting Officer.
DIRECTIONS.—This enlistment must be signed and acknowledged in triplicates, one copy to be sent to the Adjutant-General; one to the United States Mustering Officer, and one copy to be retained by the Recruiting Officer; the copy to the Adjutant-General must be sent immediately after being signed; the oath must be sworn and subscribed to before a Justice of the Peace or Notary Public. Witnessed by me Thos. G. Ellis Aug 14/62 Mustering Officer

Document B: Joseph Pierce in Uniform



**CREDIT AUTHOR
AND CONTACT:**

TING-YI OEI

LAST UPDATE:

JAN, 10TH, 2024



Document C: Obituary for Joseph Pierce

May, Joseph
Pierce

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT, TOWN OF New Britain



I, Joseph Pierce, born in Lardner, State of Indiana, aged 21 years, and by occupation Farmer

Do HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have voluntarily enlisted this 26th day of July 1862, as a Soldier in a Volunteer Regiment of Connecticut, to serve the UNITED STATES FOR THREE YEARS, OR DURING THE WAR with persons owing allegiance to and in open rebellion to the United States Government, unless sooner discharged by proper authority; and to be subject to orders from the Federal Government; do also agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing, as are, or may be established by law.

And I, Joseph Pierce do solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies of opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States.

Sworn and subscribed to, at New Britain this 26th day of July 1862. Joseph Pierce

I CERTIFY ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above named Recruit, agreeably to the General Regulations of the Army, and that in my opinion he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity, which would, in any way, disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

Lewis Jewett M.D. Examining Surgeon. 14th
I CERTIFY ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Recruit, Joseph Pierce previously to his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that to the best of my judgment and belief he is of lawful age; and that in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able bodied soldier, I have strictly observed the Regulations which govern the Recruiting service. This soldier has Black eyes, Dark hair, Dark complexion, is 5 feet 6 inches high.

W. A. Moore Recruiting Officer.
DIRECTIONS.—This enlistment must be signed and acknowledged in triplicates, one copy to be sent to the Adjutant-General; one to the United States Mustering Officer, and one copy to be retained by the Recruiting Officer; the copy to the Adjutant-General must be sent immediately after being signed; the oath must be sworn and subscribed to before a Justice of the Peace or Notary Public. Witnessed by me Thos. G. Ellis Aug 14/62 Mustering Officer

July 11
Pierce



Document D: Pension File record for Joseph Pierce

3-380
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 2, 1915.

Sir: Please answer, at your earliest convenience, the questions enumerated below. The information is requested for future use, and it may be of great value to your widow or children. Use the inclosed envelope, which requires no stamp.

Very respectfully,

JOSEPH PIERCE
MERIDEN CONN
728207 ACT MAY
17 MERIDIAN ST.

In case of
U. S. OFFICE
MAR 29 1915
Com. Pierce

No. 1. Date and place of birth? *Nov. 16, 1842, Canton, China*
The name of organizations in which you served? *Co. F, 14th Co. V.*

No. 2. What was your post office at enlistment? *New Britain, Conn.*

No. 3. State your wife's full name and her maiden name. *Martha A. Morgan, Pierce*

No. 4. When, where, and by whom were you married? *Nov. 12, 1876
Cromford, Conn. by P. G. Caldwell*

No. 5. Is there any official or church record of your marriage? *No. church record.*
If so, where? *Cromford, Conn. married license*

No. 6. Were you previously married? If so, state the name of your former wife, the date of the marriage, and the date and place of her death or divorce. If there was more than one previous marriage, let your answer include all former wives. *Answer: I do not have another wife, and was not married previous to Martha A. Morgan, Pierce.*

No. 7. If your present wife was married before her marriage to you, state the name of her former husband, the date of such marriage, and the date and place of his death or divorce, and state whether he ever rendered any military or naval service, and, if so, give name of the organization in which he served. If she was married more than once before her marriage to you, let your answer include all former husbands. *Answer: My present wife was never married previous to her marriage to myself.*
Lorem ipsum

No. 8. Are you now living with your wife, or has there been a separation? *I am now living with my wife Martha A. Pierce and no separation.*

No. 9. State the names and dates of birth of all your children, living or dead. *Answer:*

<i>Lula B. Pierce</i>	<i>April 24, 1879</i>	<i>Dead</i>
<i>Sedona B. Pierce</i>	<i>Jan 22, 1881</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>Franklin M.</i>	<i>May 13, 1882</i>	<i>Living</i>
<i>Harward D.</i>	<i>Jan 2, 1883</i>	<i>"</i>

Date *March 24, 1915* (Signature) *Joseph Pierce*

Information for Pension File
March 24, 1915



RESOURCES:

Reflections on the Civil War and Joseph Pierce

http://www.cof14thcvi.com/Joseph_Pierce/Joseph_Pierce.html

Meet Joseph Pierce, One of the Only Chinese Americans Who Fought in Bloodiest Battle in US History

<https://www.yahoo.com/now/meet-joseph-pierce-one-only-213828060.html>

#VeteranOfTheDay Civil War Veteran Joseph Pierce - VA News

<https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/50843/civil-war-veteran-joseph-pierce/>

[Corporal Joseph Pierce of Co. F, 14th Connecticut Infantry Regiment in uniform] / W. Hunt, photographer, 332 Chapel St., New Haven, Conn. - digital file from original, front | Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.72054/>

Asian and Pacific Islanders and the Civil War. Official National Park Service Handbook, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2015.



**CREDIT AUTHOR
AND CONTACT:** TING-YI OEI

LAST UPDATE: JAN, 10TH, 2024

