



# BATTLE OF FORT WAGNER

**A**FRICAN-AMERICAN soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment yesterday mounted an attack on Confederate-held Fort Wagner in the Civil War. Many were killed or wounded in the battle, but their bravery will live on forever.

The men showed no outward signs of fear as, along with other Union troops, they stormed the South Carolina fort under heavy fire. Robert Gould Shaw, their white commanding officer and son of Boston abolitionists, was killed atop the fort.

One of the bloodiest wars in U.S. history began more than two years ago after 11 southern states broke away from the Union. They feared that slavery, on which their farming economy has been built, would be banned under President Abraham Lincoln.

When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January—declaring that all slaves in rebel states were free—he made it possible for free men of color and newly liberated slaves to enlist in the Union Army.

The 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteers are among the first regiments of armed African-American units and has

appeal: “Men of Color, To Arms!”

The courage of the 54th is certain to inspire other African-Americans to enlist. According to eyewitnesses, Sergeant William Harvey Carney grabbed the U.S. flag after the flag bearer fell, bravely carrying it to the enemy. Despite the bloodshed yesterday, Fort Wagner remains in Confederate hands. Some think Carney’s heroism should be recognized with the Medal of Honor.

Massachusetts—a center of the anti-slavery movement—strongly supports the Union cause. This “most Yankee of Yankee states” is expected to supply at least 150,000 soldiers and sailors to the war effort.

LUTHER BURBANK, the 13th child of his parents, grew up on a Massachusetts farm and became an expert in agricultural science. In 1872, he developed a new blight-resistant potato, helping avoid a repeat of the terrible effects of the Great Famine in Ireland. Burbank also developed many varieties of fruits, flowers, and other plants, including a spineless cactus. A variety of his “Burbank potato” is today among America’s most cultivated crops.