



# Camp Douglas News

Committed to the Preservation of Chicago History



Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation

Chicago, Illinois

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## Project Phases:

Awareness and Support:  
2010-2013

Site Location and Site  
Planning: 2012

Archaeological  
Investigation: 2012-2013

Virtual Chicago: 2013

Construction: 2012-13

## About this Newsletter

This newsletter is devoted to the African American contribution to the Civil War. Material from the Civil War period frequently uses the phrases 'Negro' and 'Colored' when describing African Americans.

The use of these phrases in this newsletter is intended to reflect historic accuracy and not in any way to be demeaning or derogatory.

## Additional Reading

Articles contained in this newsletter were, in part, taken from the following publications.

\* Quarles, Benjamin, *The Negro in the Civil War*, Little, Brown and Co. New York, NY, 1953 Da Capo Press, New York edition, 1988

\* McPherson, James M. *The Negro's Civil War*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana IL, 1965

\* Miller, Edward, *The Black Soldier of Illinois-Story of the Twenty Ninth US Colored Troops*, University of South Carolina Press, 1998

\* Douglass, Frederick, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, Collier Macmillan Ltd, New York, reprint from 1892 edition

## Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation—Latest News

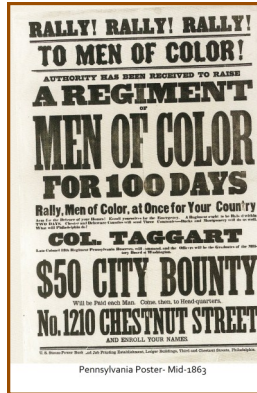
### FOUNDATION TO ATTEND SHOWS

The foundation will have a display at the Chicago Civil War Show, April 21 in Wheaton, IL and at the Ohio Civil War Show, May 5-6 in Mansfield, OH. See you there.

### BEIRNE ROOSE-SNYDER LEAVES THE BOARD!

The Board of Directors reluctantly accepted the resignation of Beirne, an original member of the Foundation Board. Ms. Roose-Snyder and her husband Adam and son Wesley recently moved from Chicago to New York City where she is practicing law.

Beirne was instrumental in organizing the Foundation and obtaining tax exempt status for the organization. Her insight and enthusiasm will be missed.



### SPECIAL VIDEO VIEWING

Fifth grade students from Decatur Classical School on March 24 gave a viewing of their video on Camp Douglas. Managing Director David Keller was interviewed for the video. The class project was led by Mike Gibbiser audio visual teacher at the school.

Interest by these and other students in the history of Camp Douglas make the work of the Foundation especially meaningful.

### FOUNDATION RECEIVES ITS FIRST ARTIFACT

Archaeologist Scott Demel presented the foundation with a neck from a medicine bottle that was found on the site of Camp Douglas. Dr. Demel indicated that the bottle was from the proper period and likely came from Garrison Square section of the camp.

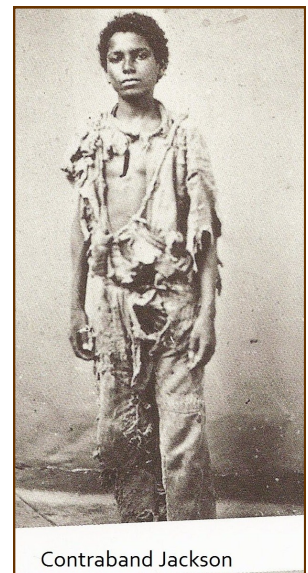
## Freedom to Read

As the Union forces pushed south, they were met by wave upon wave of Negroes fleeing their enslavement. The myth of happy contented slaves was shattered for the army of soldiers and accompanying newspaper journalists.

Perhaps even more enlightening as to the nature of slavery was the freedmen's first activity upon escaping this oppressive system. Reading and the sharing of that most empowering skill was brought out into the open. Many soldiers and other observers commented on how frequently they saw clusters of freedmen surrounding a reading or spelling book. And in each of the 180 regiments of Negro soldiers (180,000 soldiers in all) reading instruction was seen everywhere. Keith Wilson, in his book *Campfires of Freedom* wrote that in some camps, "chaplains and sympathetic officers . . . distributed primers and spelling books, and occasionally gave instruction to small groups of soldiers while moving from tent to tent on their pastoral rounds." But in most camps, Wilson noted, Chaplains and officers "established one large school to cater to all students in the camp."

Company officers and their wives spent much of their leisure time teaching Negro soldiers to read and write. This schooling became more organized and systematic as northern Missionary Societies sent thousands of teachers south.

Reading was in bloom during the war and into the beginning of Reconstruction following the war. The excitement was only suppressed with the murder of four thousand teachers and Negro political leaders in the first three years following the removal of northern troops from the South. Anyone daring to teach Negroes to read was terrorized, and the new school houses were burned throughout the South. Freedom of education, as we call it today, had to wait another 100 years.

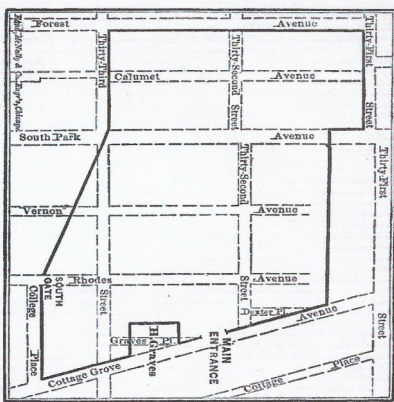


Contraband Jackson

Special Thanks to Daniel Barrett, teacher and historian, Rockford, IL for this article.

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CAMP DOUGLAS, 1864-5.

Map prepared by William Bross for a paper read before the Chicago Historical Society, June 18, 1878

*A Chicago Story that  
Needs to be Told*

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## Frederick Douglass

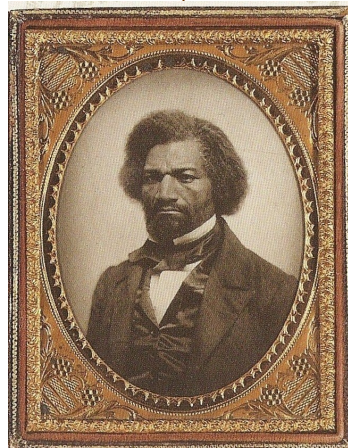
“From the first I, for one, saw in this war the end of slavery...”

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) In 1838 Douglass escaped slavery and moved to New York. During his lifetime he was a prolific writer and publisher. He championed causes including the abolitionist movement, women’s rights, emancipation and black suffrage. During the Civil War Douglass was active in recruiting colored regiments. After the Civil War he held a number of government positions and devoted a great deal of time emphasizing work to counter the racism that was then prevalent.

In his *Life and Times...* he recounted “I reproached the North that they fought the rebels with only one hand, when they might strike effectively with two—that they fought with their soft white hand, while they kept their black iron hand chained and helpless behind them—that they fought the effect, while they protected the cause, and that the Union cause could never prosper till the war assumed an antislavery attitude and the Negro was enlisted on the loyal side.” He held this position in spite of the common thoughts ‘Employ the arm of the Negro and the loyal men of the North will throw down their arms and go home’ and ‘This is the white man’s country and the white man’s war’

In March 1863 when Gov. Andrew of Massachusetts received permission from A. Lincoln to raise two colored regiments, the 54th and 55th, Douglass actively assisted in recruiting.

The success of the 54th, 55th and other colored regiments led to controversy that was addressed by Douglass. In his efforts to “secure just and fair treatment for the colored soldier” he stated in a letter, August 1863 to Major General George Stearns: “When I plead for recruits I want to do it with all of my heart without qualifications. I cannot do that now.” His concerns were first, “that colored soldiers ought to



Frederick Douglass circ. 1860

receive the same wages as those paid white soldiers”, second, “that colored soldiers ought to receive the same protection when taken prisoners, and be exchanged as readily and on the same terms as other prisoners...”, and third, “they [colored soldiers] should be rewarded by distinction and promotion precisely as white soldiers...”

His first and second concerns were addressed later (see Pay Dispute, below) unfortunately his third concern was never properly addressed.

## General Butlers' Contraband

In May 1861 three fugitives escaped from a Confederate labor battalion and entered Fortress Monroe, Virginia commanded by General Benjamin Butler. A Confederate major entered the fortress under a flag of truce demanding the return of the slaves to their owner Colonel Mallory based on the Fugitive Slave Law.

General Butler stated “I shall detain the Negroes as contraband of war. You are using them on batteries... I greatly need the labor...if Colonel Mallory will come into the fort and take the oath of allegiance to the United States, he shall have his Negroes, and I shall endeavor to hire them from him.

The concept and title ‘contraband’ remained and is Benj. Butlers’ greatest Civil War legacy.

## The Pay Dispute

Initially colored soldiers received \$10 per month, \$3 of which was deducted for clothing compared to white soldiers pay of \$13 per month plus \$3.50 for clothing. In August 1863 Frederick Douglass protested this to President Lincoln. The U.S. Congress on June 15, 1864 enacted legislation granting equal pay retroactive to January 1864 for all colored soldiers and retroactive to the date of enlistment for all Negroes who had been free after April 19, 1861.

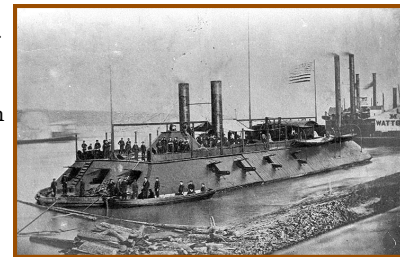
Soldiers of the 54th and 55th Mass., as a matter of principle, refused any pay until it was equalized.

## The Integrated U. S. Navy

African Americans constituted nearly 25% of all sailors in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War and 25% of naval casualties. According to the Naval War Records Office, of 118,044 enlistments during the Civil War 29,511 were African Americans. Examining the muster records of Federal vessels *New Hampshire*, *Argosy* and *Avenger* 26% of the total crew of 1150 were Negro sailors. A review of additional war ships by Herbert Aptheker revealed that not a single warship was without a Negro crewman.

The Medals of Honor were awarded to African Americans Joachim Pease, *USS Kearsage*, Robert Blake, *USS Marblehead*, John Lawson, *USS Hartford*, and Aaron Anderson, *USS Wyadank*.

It is interesting to note that U.S. military forces were not fully integrated until July 26, 1948 by executive order of Harry S. Truman.



USS Cairo- 1862

## African American Civil War Facts

- In April 1865 there were 166 colored regiments, 145 infantry, 7 cavalry, 12 heavy artillery, 1 light artillery and 1 engineers, totaling 175,975, approximately one eighth of the entire union army
- 229 of 262 African Americans assigned to Fort Pillow were killed, wounded in escape or buried alive April 14, 1864 by Confederates under MG N. B. Forrest.
- African American H. Ford Douglass enlisted in the white 59th Illinois Volunteers until Colored regiments were formed.
- African Americans John Scobell, William Kinnergy and Nathaniel Evans were Union spies.
- March 1863 when the 54th and 55th Mass. were recruited there were not enough African Americans in Massachusetts to fill the regiment. Recruits came from many northern states.
- African American units participated in 52 major military encounters during the war.