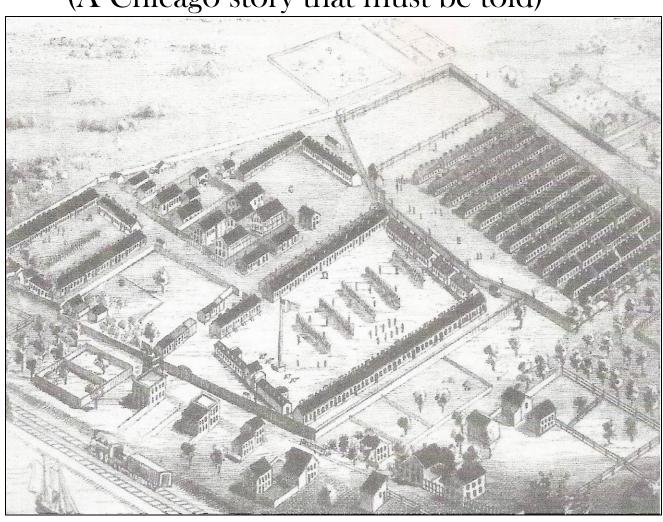
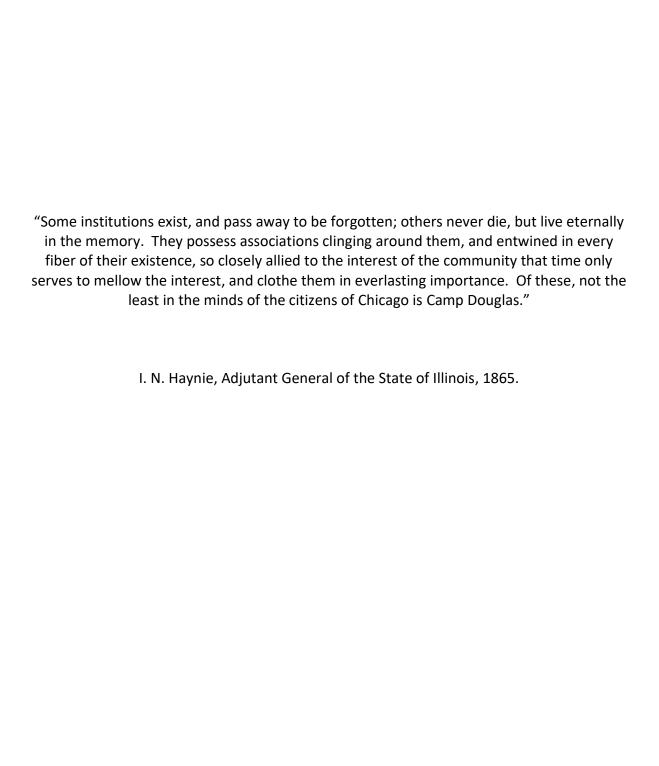
CAMP DOUGLAS

September 1861-December 1865

(A Chicago story that must be told)





The Chicago Story that Must be Told:

Reconstruction of a portion of Camp Douglas, one of the most significant Union Civil War prison camps, is important to the history of Chicago. Camp Douglas was more than a prison camp. As the largest reception and training center for Union soldiers in Northern Illinois, Camp Douglas was the most significant Civil War facility in Chicago. In addition to training nearly 40,000 Union soldiers, Camp Douglas was one of the few Union camps that received and trained African American soldiers. Providing a place for young and old to see and touch our heritage is important to retaining a historic perspective. Giving an educational opportunity to our youth is critical to providing them with a sound historic foundation. Sharing with all the role of African Americans during the Civil War, as part of the Camp Douglas restoration, offers a unique opportunity to tell the story of over four-million slaves who emerged from the war to join Northern freemen in the quest for racial equality. Chicago's role in the Civil War can be told through the reconstruction of a part Camp Douglas as a historic interpretive center.

This reconstruction and preservation is a fitting part of retaining the history of Chicago, our State, and the nation as well as honoring brave men who served and lost their lives in the Civil War. This preservation will provide an essential historic perspective for generations to come.

Other projects of the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation including community outreach, archaeological investigations on the site, development of a prisoner data base, and creation of the virtual Camp Douglas add to the knowledge of the area and the time period and offer educations and historians important tools.

Historic Perspective:

Chicago, the surrounding region, and the state of Illinois all played significant roles in the Civil War. In 1860 at the Wigwam, Chicago hosted the Republican Convention that named Abraham Lincoln as the party's presidential candidate.

Illinois ranked behind only New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio in troops enlisted for the war. Almost 260,000 soldiers for the Union effort came from Illinois, with approximately 40,000 of those from greater Chicago region and more than 17,000 from the city itself. Nearly 35,000 from Illinois died in the conflict, ranking third in all Union states. During this time African Americans redefined their relationship with their country and their states. The issue of slavery had divided the nation and this was the first time African Americans were call into active military service for their country.

Nearly 200,000 Union soldiers of a total of 2,700,000 troops were African American and nearly 37,000 died during the war.

Need to Recreate and Preserve:

There is an opportunity to recreate a portion of Camp Douglas without displacing current residents, demolishing any structures or disturbing the ecology of the site. The proposed facility will house interpretive galleries for the history of Camp Douglas, Civil War prisons and Chicago's role in the war. Half of the compound will be devoted to the contribution of African Americans to the Civil War effort.

Camp Douglas-A Brief History:

Camp Douglas was opened in September 1861 as a quartering and training site for newly recruited Union soldiers from Chicago and the surrounding area. The facility was named in honor of Stephen A. Douglas whose estate provided a small portion of the his land at the southern edge of the city for the camp. The camp continued to function as a quartering and training facility for Union soldiers until 1865. Also housed at the camp were Union soldiers awaiting exchange.

The Union, recognizing the need to house Confederate prisoners of war, identified Camp Douglas in late 1861 as one of the camps to be used. Camp Douglas located near a major north/south railroad and at a reasonable distance from Confederate controlled areas was an ideal location. Its proximity to a ready supply of food, water, and equipment meant virtually unlimited growth for the camp. Unfortunately, the camp was located on low ground subject to frequent flooding resulting in dangerous sanitary conditions.

After Tennessee's Fort Donelson fell to General Ulysses S. Grant, the first prisoners, approximately 5,500, arrived at Camp Douglas in February 1862. Until closed in December 1865, Camp Douglas housed nearly 30,000 Confederate prisoners. While capacity was listed at 9,000, the population ballooned to a population of over 12,000 at one time. It is estimated that between 5,000 and 6,000 prisoners died while held in the camp. It must be noted that poor records available from the North and especially the South has resulted in figures of prisoners incarcerated, escaped, exchanged or died that are extrapolated from a variety of sources.

Camp Douglas was the subject of mixed feelings in Chicago. While it offered a macabre source of entertainment, including a viewing platform that was available above the stockade wall, there was ongoing fear of disease, especially smallpox. It is generally believed that this fear contributed to the failure after the war of the University of Chicago that was located adjacent to the camp to the south. Still there was a great deal of inter-action between the prison and locals ranging from sutler's services to local women providing food and clothing to the prisoners. Frequently, due to lacks security, prisoners were even free to leave the camp to enjoy the benefits of Chicago's life on the notorious sin strip in the city's "levee" district.

Concerns about escaping prisoners and attempts to liberate the prison were evident during the life of the prison. In the summer of 1864 there was a reported conspiracy to liberate the camp and raze much of Chicago during the Democratic Convention. This failed attempt

resulted in a famous trial in Cincinnati of a group of Confederate provocateurs as well as a number of Confederate sympathizers from Chicago.

Camp Douglas Facts:

- This was one of the longest continuous operating prisons in the Civil War.
- It had the greatest number of prisoner deaths of any Union prison.
- Camp Douglas contained nearly 200 buildings at the close of the war.
- Sixty-six of the buildings were prison barracks plus two prison hospitals and several other prison administrative buildings.
- Prison barracks were 24 feet x 90 feet with 20 feet partitioned as a kitchen. There were three tiers of bunks and the barracks were heated by one or two wood or coal burning stoves.
- Prison capacity (6,000) was based on approximately 100 men per barracks or about 17 square feet per prisoner. The average number of prisoners per barracks was 189, allowing about nine square feet per person.
- In March 1864 the four page newspaper *Prisoner Vidette* was published by prisoners.



Enlisted men in Camp Douglas, Around September 30, 1864 (Courtesy: Chicago History Museum)



Confederate Officers in front of the sutler's store September 1864 (Courtesy: Chicago History Museum)

The loss of life at Camp Douglas has been a source of debate since before the end of the war. Many factors contributed to the high number of deaths from disease. The climate was exceptionally harsh for soldiers from the Deep South. Reported winters in 1863 and 1864 were some of the harshest in history.

As the war continued, the condition of the Confederate soldier deteriorated. Often prisoners arriving at Camp Douglas were diseased or in deplorably poor physical condition. While some medical treatment was available at Camp Douglas the treatment of disease was extremely primitive. Sanitation facilities including sewage systems, running water were frequently inadequate. Only in the later years of the war were sufficient sewers and fresh water facilities constructed at Camp Douglas. Individual prisoner hygiene was generally poor.

The infrastructure for quartermaster supply of food and provisions proved woefully inadequate and, at times, subject to fraud. Frequently rations were reduced at Camp Douglas and other prison camps as punishment for escapes or infractions of rules.

All of these factors contributed to death rates unacceptable by today's standards. None the less, recovery rates from disease in Camp Douglas were better than the Confederate recovery rates recorded in Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond, VA that served the Confederate military during the period.

Of the deaths at Camp Douglas between February 1862 and June 1865, approximately 4,000 were from disease. (Death estimates range from 4,000 to 6,000. 4,243 names are etched on the memorial at Oak Woods Cemetery.)

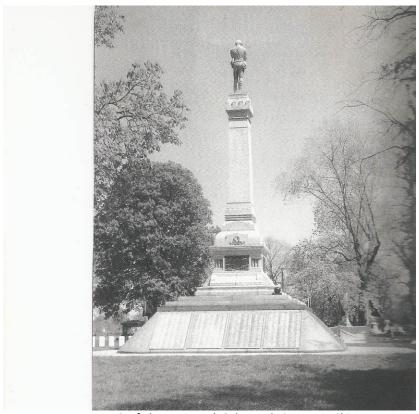
Cases of Disease and Death-Camp Douglas February 1862-June 1865 (Source: Medical and Surgical History Vol. I)

Cause	Cases	Death
Fevers, such as Smallpox and Malaria	15,938	1,407
Diarrhea and dysentery	13,455	698
Anemia	585	4
Consumption (Tuberculosis)	259	113
Rheumatism	3,212	37
Scurvy	3,745	39
Bronchitis	1,628	27
Pneumonia and pleurisy	4,655	1,296
Wounds, injuries and unspecified diseases	1,279	80
Other diseases	25,332	308
Total	70,088	4,009

A majority of the dead from the camp were originally buried in the Chicago City Cemetery and were moved in early 1867 when the cemetery was closed for the creation of Lincoln Park on Chicago's north side. A total of 4,039 remains were reburied in Oak Woods Cemetery (67th Street near Cottage Grove). In 1895 President Grover Cleveland dedicated a monument to the dead buried at Oak Woods Cemetery. Today, that and an historic marker

at 33rd street and King Drive are the only remaining commemoration to the prisoners of Camp Douglas.

Those remains interred in Oak Woods represent the greatest number of Confederate soldiers buried north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

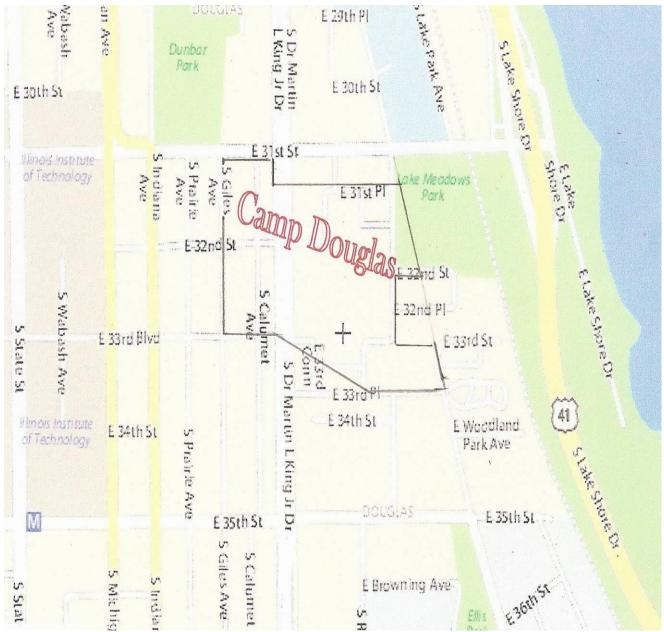


Confederate Mound, Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago

Camp Douglas operated until July 1865 when the last prisoners were released. In November 1865 the government land was returned to the former owners and a number of barracks and fences torn down and the lumber sold. One row of barracks was purchased and moved to the 700 block of 37th Street, renovated and used as apartments until 1940 when they were razed.

Location of Camp Douglas:

Camp Douglas was located at 31st Street on the north, 33rd Place on the south, Cottage Grove Avenue on the east and South Giles Avenue on the west. The western boundary of the camp is Giles Avenue. The camp consisted of approximately sixty acres, with the main access on Cottage Grove near 32nd Place.



Site of Camp Douglas with contemporary streets

Thirty acres were devoted to prisoners. The prison complex was located on the western side of the prison approximately between King Drive and Giles Ave. A smallpox hospital was located south of the complex, west of the University of Chicago near what is today 33rd Place and Rhodes Ave.

Today a majority of the camp grounds now contain the Lake Meadows housing complex, managed by Draper and Kramer. Lake Meadows consists of high rise buildings surrounded by a large amount of public open space. The northeastern portion of the camp is now in the Chicago Park District, Lake Meadows Park. The western portion of the camp is mostly privately owned with the exception of John J. Pershing Magnet School at 32d Street and Calumet Avenue. The only commemoration for the camp is a historic marker erected in October 2014 by the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation and the Illinois State Historical Society.

Prisoner of War Camps in the Civil War:

The Civil War was one of the first conflicts in history where prisoners were held in captivity in large numbers. Up to this time death on the field of battle, slavery or immediate exchange was the accepted practice. No international agreements existed on the treatment of prisoners, and armies had no experience or training in handling large numbers of prisoners.

Approximately 674,000 Union and Confederate soldiers and sailors were taken captive during the Civil War or about 16 per cent of total enlistments. While many were released on parole at the time of capture or immediately exchanged, it is estimated that 410,000 were held in over 150 different facilities throughout the country.

Prison population in both the North and the South expanded significantly after the middle of 1863 when prisoner exchanges were suspended. The increased captures as a result of General Grant's 1864 offensive campaign also raised the prison population.

Approximately 15 per cent of those held in Confederate prisons (30,000+) died in captivity. Approximately 12 per cent (27,800) died in Union prisons

Conditions in both Union and Confederate prisons were generally poor. Cooking facilities were often poor and unsanitary. Food was often of low quality and scarce. Fruits and vegetables were rarely provided except by purchase from the sutlers who also provided comfort items such as tobacco and combs. Replacement clothing and bedding were often of inferior quality and frequently inappropriate for the climate.

In Northern prisons, packages of food and clothing were often available from friends and family. However, mail privileges, both sending and receiving mail, were often suspended as punishment.

Sanitary conditions, poorly constructed latrines (called sinks) were often poorly located and were inadequate for the number of prisoners. Camp Douglas was one of the few camps that had running water and a sewer system, although it was inadequate for the unanticipated number of prisoners housed in the camp.

In Union prison facilities wooden barracks were most often provided. Frequently these barracks were poorly constructed, ill heated and poorly ventilated. Many lacked floors, in part, to prevent escapes by tunneling. In some instances tents were provided for shelter.

Confederate camps frequently provided no shelter from the elements. The infamous Andersonville in southern Georgia is a prime example where prisoners were required to provide their own shelter using material available in the camp.



Andersonville Prison seen between March and August 1864 (Courtesy: New York Historical Society)

The command of prisoners and guards had extremely high turnover. Most often these officers and soldiers were either part of invalid forces or awaiting exchange. This high turnover of command resulted in the camps having little continuity and very little planning. In the three years Camp Douglas was a prisoner of war camp there were nine officers in command.

The United State Government operated many prisons and prisoner of war camps through out the north during the Civil War. The following facilities were major prison camps for at least two years during the Civil War.

Prison	Years Open	Maximum	Most	Deaths
		Capacity	Held	
Point Lookout, Mary Land	1863-65	10,000	22,000	3,584
Fort Delaware, Delaware	1861-65	Unknown	12,600	2,416
Camp Douglas, Illinois	1862-65	6,000	12,082	4,454
Elmira, New York	1864-65	5,000	9,441	2,933
Camp Chase, Ohio	1861-65	4,000	9,423	2,260
Rock Island, IL	1863-65	10,800	8,670	1,960
Fort McHenry, Maryland	1861-65	600	6,957	33
Johnson's Island, Ohio	1862-65	1,000	3,256	235
David's Island, New York	1863-65	1,800	3,000	Unknown
Camp Butler, Illinois	1863-63	2,100	2,186	866

(Source: Speer, Lonnie, Portals to Hell, Military Prisons of the Civil War, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2005)

The following were major prison camps operated by the Confederate States of America.

Prison	Years Open	Maximum	Most	Deaths
		Capacity	Held	
Andersonville, Georgia	1864-65	10,000	32,899	12,919
Richmond, Virginia (15 locations)	1861-65	Unknown	13,500	200+
Salisbury, North Carolina	1861-65	2,000	10,321	3,700
Bell Island, Virginia	1862-64	3,000	10,000	300+
Camp Ford, Texas	1863-65	Unknown	4,900	232+
Libby Warehouse, Virginia	1862-65	1,000	4,221	20+
Danville, Virginia	1863-65	3,700	4,000	1,297
Castle Thunder, Virginia	1862-65	1,400	3,000+	Unknown
Cahaba, Georgia	1863-65	500	3,000	225

(Source: Speer, Lonnie, Portals to Hell, Military Prisons of the Civil War, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2005)

African American Contribution:

Nearly 2,700,000 men were called into Union military service of which approximately 200,000 were African American.

Pulitzer Prize winning historian, William S. McFeeley in his introduction to African American historian Benjamin Quaries' book, *The Negro in the Civil War*, wrote, "Black Americans were participants in, not recipients of, emancipation." Those participants who played well known and obscure roles in the struggle just before and during the Civil War are an integral part of American history. Chicago's contribution to the African American cause is personified by the actions of John Jones, a free black tailor, and his wife Mary was instrumental in the Underground Railroad in the city.

The white community in Chicago generally aligned themselves with the abolition movement. For example, The *Chicago Tribune* praised the Emancipation Proclamation with "The President has affixed the great seal to the greatest proclamation ever issued by man."

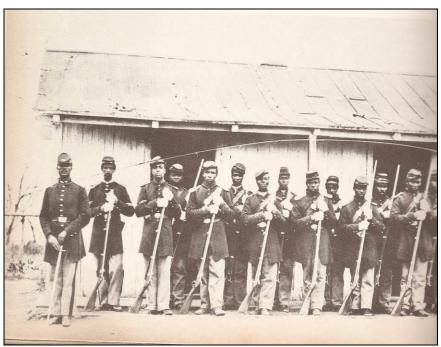
Southern support in Chicago was also significant. The *Chicago Times* was strongly anti-war and while on October 12, 1850 the Chicago City Council passed a resolution condemning the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, they shortly thereafter rescinded the resolution supporting the act.

The 1860 census recorded 955 free "Negroes" and 108,305 Whites in Chicago. There were 7,628 free "Negroes" in Illinois with a total population of 1,711,919 per the 1860 census. These and the 4,000,000 enslaved and 500,000 free African Americans left an indelible mark on this country and the Civil War.

The stories of Fredrick Douglas, Dred Scott, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth are known to most and must be preserved. In addition, the heroic stories that should be told include these and many more:

o Benjamin H. Carney, Company C, 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, Fort Wagner.

- o H. Ford Douglas, 95th Illinois Infantry
- o 29th Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops The Crater at Petersburg
- o Robert Smalls, Confederate steamer *Planter* 1862.
- Sgt William H Carney, first African American to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. (1863).
- o "Uncle Jim" Williams, 95th Illinois, scout.
- o George B. Vashon, Lawyer and Oberlin College Graduate.
- Major Martin R. Delany, Harvard Medical School. First African American officer to hold a field command.
- o Robert Hamilton, Editor, Anglo-African.
- o H. Ford Douglas, 59th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers.
- o Flag Sergeant Anselmas Planciancois, 1st Louisiana Native Guard.
- o Aaron Anderson, U.S. Navy, Medal of Honor recipient, Wyabdank.



107th U.S. Colored Infantry, Ft. Corcoran Washington DC

African American Civil War Facts:

- At least eight African American prisoners were held at Camp Douglas from Morgan's Raiders. Three were unaccounted for, four released by order of the Secretary of War and one recorded as died in captivity.
- In 1859 Southern slave owners attempted to legally renew the slave trade from Africa and the Caribbean.
- January 1864 the *Charleston Mercury* wrote "South Carolina entered into this struggle [Civil War] for no purpose other than to maintain the institution of slavery."
- The first "Negro" regiments in the Civil War were organized in April 1861.
- African Americans fought in fifty-two military encounters during the war.
- Prior to 1863 African American troops were led by white officers. Beginning in 1863 1,700 African Americans were recommended for commissions from colonel to second lieutenant.

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- African American soldiers were paid \$7 per month plus \$3 in clothing while white troops were paid \$16 per month plus clothing. Not until January 1864 was pay equalized.
- African American of the 29th U. S. Colored Troops at the "Crater" during the siege of Petersburg, 1864, were part of the 9th Army Corps, 4th Division which had casualties of 1,327, more than any other unit employed.
- African Americans casualties in the U. S. Navy represented 25 per cent of total Navy causalities in the war.
- In December 1864, Confederate General John Bell Hood's, Army of Tennessee was routed out of existence at Nashville thanks in large part to the contribution of African American troops.
- Prisoner exchanges were terminated by the Federal government in large part because the Confederacy refused to exchange African American soldiers.
- African Americans, both slave and free, were instrumental in assisting the escape of Union prisoners of war.



2d U.S. Colored Light Artillery-Battle of Nashville (Courtesy: Chicago History Museum)

We'll fight for liberty, We'll fight for liberty, We'll fight for liberty, Den de Lord will call us home. African American Folk Song, cir. 1860

Civil War Prison Camps Today:

There were approximately 150 facilities used during the Civil War. With the exception of a few commemorative plaques and signs only a few facilities have been preserved. For example, Andersonville, GA is extensively restored and is part of the U. S. National Park system. Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, IL has a museum on federally owned land managed

by the Rock Island Arsenal Historical Society. Recently Johnson Island, Ohio has been developed and will include a museum depicting the history of that Union prison camp,

Unlike battle sites, the history available on Civil War prisoner facilities is singularly lacking. This is a part of our heritage and should be preserved and protected.

Critics often state that preservation of these facilities is to preserve that which was wrong with our country. Proponents argue that this is a part of our history and the stories should be told in a clear, unbiased manner acknowledging the difficulties and poor conditions while informing the public of circumstances in the 1860s that contributed to the conditions and measures attempted to ameliorate the deficiencies in the camps

<u>Proposed Recreation of Camp Douglas Facilities:</u>

It is proposed that a prisoner barracks and a portion of the stockade fence be constructed on the site of Camp Douglas. These wooden barracks would be approximately 24 feet wide and 90 feet long. Photographs, drawings and descriptions of the barracks from former prisoners are available.

The museum would operate in conjunction with other facilities at a museum campus including the former Griffin funeral home at 3232 South King Drive.

Design development and fund raising for the project is currently under way.

Project Time Frame:

Development plan completed Spring 2015
 Ground breaking Summer 2015
 Fund raising completed Winter 2015
 Opening of facility Summer 2016

Project Status:

The foundation is developing increased community awareness and support for the project. Support and encouragement have been received from:

- Chicago History Museum
- DuSable Museum of African History
- Newberry Library
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
- Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation
- Chicago Civil War Round Table
- Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
- Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table
- South Suburban Civil War Round Table
- Prairieville WI Civil War Round Table

- School of the Art Institute
- Pritzker Military Library
- Old Soldiers Home, Archdiocese of Chicago
- A. Lincoln Bookstore
- University of Chicago
- DePaul University
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Illinois State University
- Loyola University of Chicago
- Chicago Public Library
- Chicago Public Schools
- Prologue Alternate Schools
- Chicago Park District
- Chicago Paranormal Investigators
- South Suburban Archaeological Society
- Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago
- Clarke House Museum
- Hyde Park Historical Society
- Des Plaines Historical Society
- Bronzville Visitor Information Center
- Bronzville Community Development Partnership
- Olivet Baptist Church
- Stephen A. Douglas Society
- American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter
- Zpd+a Archetects, Jim Damato
- Kick Kogan, WGN-AM, Chicago Tribune
- Geoffrey Baer, WTTW
- Civil War News
- Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA
- U.S. Army Heritage and Educational Center
- Civil War Preservation Trust
- Sons' of Confederate Veterans
- Civil War News
- Noted Authors:
 - o George Levy, To Die in Chicago, Confederate Prisoners at Camp Douglas 1862-65
 - Arnie Burnstein, The Hoofs and Guns of the Storm (Chicago's Civil War Connection)
 - o Thomas Campbell, Fighting Slavery in Chicago
 - o Robert Doyle, The Enemy in our Hands

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- o Robert I Girrardi
- o Ted Karamanski, Rally 'Round the Flag Chicago and the Civil War
- Political:
 - o Toni Preckwinkle, President Cook County Board and Former Alderman 4th Ward
 - o Robert Fioretti, Alderman 2d Ward
 - Will Burns, Alderman 4th Ward
 - o Joseph Moore, Alderman 49th Ward

<u>Archaeological Investigations:</u>

The Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation, in conjunction with Northern Michigan University, Loyola University and the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, conducted its first archaeological excavation in June 2012 on the site of Camp Douglas. The five day excavation of three units on a site in Lake Meadows Park on the northeast corner of Camp Douglass was a success. It is believed that the southern side of the camp headquarters foundation was discovered. Artifacts and other information will be studied in greater detail by the chief archaeologists, Dr. Scott Demel and students from Loyola and Northern Michigan Universities. Three subsequent De Paul University sponsored excavation were completed in October 2013, May 2014 1b2 October 2014 led by Dr. Michael Gregory. This excavation concentrated on the southwester portion of Prisoner Square at Pershing Magnet School (CPS). Artifacts found included an Union cap badge, circ. 1863, the first Civil War military artifacts found in Chicago on over 100 years. Subsequent investigations in this area are contemplated. Unfortunately, the primary land owner Draper and Kramer refused to allow the investigation on their land.

Virtual Camp Douglas:

The Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation, along with the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and the architectural firm, zpd+a, are developing a three-dimensional virtual Camp Douglas.

Virtual Camp Douglas began developing a computerized reproduction of the camp that can be superimposed on existing Google Maps in the fall 2012. All camp buildings in existence in 1864-65 were reproduced in 3-D from historic maps, drawings, photographs and first person descriptions. Exteriors of the historical correct buildings can be available to rotate for a 360 degree view. Selected buildings offer internal views. In addition, imbedded videos are planned to provide the viewer with a narrative of camp life.

This program is part of IIT's IPRO program for students is ongoing and should be completed by mid-2015.

Work to date has supported the position that the western boundary of the camp was Giles Avenue rather than King Drive as believed by some.

Site Acquisition & Development:

Possible locations have been identified. Optimum sites are located on land owned by Draper and Kramer. Unfortunately, they have refused to consider adding the Camp Douglas project to their property. A agreement in principle has been reached to locate the museum on property owned by Prologue, Inc. at the former Griffin Funeral Home. This complex will include other museums and a community center..

James Damato of Zpd+a Archetects has developed preliminary drawings of the original barracks from Camp Douglas. Mr. Damato's work has resulted in an indication that the barracks can be reconstructed with historic accuracy while meeting modern needs. Construction drawings are currently being developed

Preliminary Identification of Financial Needs:

Based on estimated costs of construction of two barracks and sufficient working capital to open the facilities a preliminary budget has been prepared. The financial needs to meet this budget is \$2,500,000.

Continued Call for action:

With strong community support the Camp Douglas Restoration Project can be completed shortly after the celebration of the 150 anniversary of the Civil War.

Help is needed in this early phase to identify those individuals and institutions who can work toward the ultimate goal. Identification of centers of influence and possible concept and financial contributors to the development of the project is another of our early objectives.

Ongoing activities require financial resources to allow the project to move forward. Contributions are accepted on our website www.campdouglas.org.

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Suggested Further Reading:

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