

African American Civil War Veterans

Delaware Directory

With History, Chronology, and Analysis of 11 U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments



Cpl. William E Oliver, Co. K, 32nd USCT

Author and Compiler: Kenneth J Finlayson

On the Cover

Cpl. William E. Oliver Company K, 32nd U.S. Colored Infantry

William was born in 1835 in Milton, Delaware, to Thomas Oliver and Mary Jane Collins. He was bound to a white farmer, Thomas Robinson, until he was 21. William married Nancy Jane Welburn in Blackwater, Delaware, near Millville on March 1858.

Corporal Oliver was drafted as a free man for three years with Company K, 32nd U.S. Colored Infantry at 26 on 4 March 1864 in Upper Providence Township in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. He trained at Camp William Penn. William spent his entire tour of duty in South Carolina where his regiment fought in the battles of Honey Hill, Boyd's Neck, Devaux's Neck, James Island, Dingle's Mills, Statesboro, Boykin's Mills, and the occupation of Charleston and Camden, South Carolina. He mustered out on 22 August 1865.

After the war, Nancy and William settled in Baltimore Hundred, Sussex County, and successfully owned and farmed 119 acres and raised eight children. In 1884, the family sold the farm and became ministers with the A.M.E. Church. He received his veteran pension in 1887. William E. Oliver died on 8 September 1912, and is buried in the Antioch A.M.E. Church Cemetery in Frankford, Delaware. Nancy died six years later.

- With Permission, Kimberly Chase-Longus

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Civil War Veterans
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*With History, Chronology and Analysis of
11 U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments*

**Delaware Genealogical Society
Wilmington, Delaware
2021**

The Delaware Genealogical Society (DGS) offers this independent research to the general public as part of its mission to promote knowledge of genealogical research; to locate, preserve, and index public and private genealogical records; and make those records available to the general public. DGS cannot assume responsibility for errors of fact or opinion. Presented as distinct data research, DGS welcomes additional manuscripts of research about African American participation in the American Civil War.

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About the Author

Ken Finlayson is the 2021-22 Vice President of the Delaware Genealogical Society and Senior Vice Commander of the Appomattox Camp 2, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Wilmington, Delaware.

Ken has 29 years of experience in genealogy and historical research. His book: “*The Butterfield Trail in Western Yuma County, Arizona*” received the Arizona Historical Society ‘Bent Spittoon’ best nominated annual research award. He authored “*Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery, GAR Soldier’s Section History, Relocation, and Soldiers’ Biographies*”.

Mr. Finlayson has completed almost 300 biographies of Civil War veterans and coordinated several ancestor-descendant memorial ceremonies. He is a descendant of a Civil War cavalry sergeant and is a U.S. Army combat veteran of the Vietnam War.

Acknowledgements

Given the history of African American participation in the Civil War was encased in a very complex overriding social order that effected every aspect of military events, it was an honor for me to have the review and counsel of three knowledgeable and recognized African American historians. While not only reviewing the data and analysis, their comments and advice on the social context of the presenting data in this Directory was invaluable.

Fred Minus, who has a long and rich family history in Kent County, Delaware is a national lecturer and reenactor in slavery, Revolutionary War, and Civil War history. He is a descendant of a veteran of the Revolutionary War and veterans of both the 3rd and 22nd U.S. Colored Infantry. His review and deep knowledge of regimental histories was indispensable. I am honored to have spent many hours in uniform with Fred at many events.

Syl Woolford is a masters-level Rutgers University graduate who is currently a prolific lecturer of all facets of black history. His family history extends back over 200 years in the City of Newark, Delaware, as well as connections with Harriet Tubman's legendary efforts of freeing slaves in Dorchester County, Maryland. Syl has been active in the Delaware Heritage Commission, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the Delaware Genealogical Society, and the National African American Civil War Museum. Syl's goal of integrating black history is inspiring.

Cheryl Renee Gooch, PhD, is the author of *Hinsonville's Heroes: Black Civil War Soldiers of Chester County, Pennsylvania*, as well as numerous articles on the African American experience. She is an avid genealogist and has a deep interest in uncovering the overlooked and forgotten African American cultural history. Cheryl's future research advice, especially in the area of pension discrimination and descendant participation, is a valuable contribution to further work in this important subject.

Special acknowledgement to the DGS Board team for review and webpage technical support and DGS past president Irene Heffran Monley for her tireless assistance with formatting and review.

About this Directory

This Directory documents the names, companies, and regiments of 1,868 African American Delaware residents in 49 regiments who were veterans of the Civil War. The total encompasses 1,446 native-born residents and 422 veterans who moved to Delaware after the war.

This Directory does not document all African American veterans. For example, new post-war residents who did not file for a pension are not recorded in any records. There are many other examples. There is no known confirmed archived information that documents the number of Delaware's African American veterans of the Civil War. This Directory research, therefore, is designed to focus only on soldiers with documented confirmation of service.

The Directory defines a Delaware resident within two categories and designates them as "native" and "new" residents.

The first criteria for Delawarean residents are those African Americans who have military records that confirm they were born in Delaware. They are "native" Delawareans. The second criteria are those that moved to Delaware after the war and filed for Civil War pensions as residents of the State of Delaware. They are "new" Delawareans. These two designations were established to help with data analysis.

The word "Native Delawarean" is used in several places in the Directory with specific data analysis. For example: "...trained 153 native Delawareans". This was used to separate native-born data from post-war resident data. Comments on enlistment patterns center exclusively on "native" Delawareans to show a local pattern without data contamination from those "new" post-war veterans who might have lived in far-reaching states at the time of enlistment. Research protocol ensured a connection to each soldier's military record to provide accurate and reliable research results.

The Directory only documents soldiers. It does not include sailors. Unlike sailors, soldiers enlisted in specific regiments that provide time and locational information for data analysis. The Camp William Penn Regiment Service Histories with Analysis section supplies this analysis. There are approximately 350 African American sailors with a Delaware place of birth. This list would require a separate study.

The Directory lists name, company, regiment, and resident status. Soldiers in the Directory with no company designation did not have the company listed in their military file. The majority had notations that the soldier's name did not show up in the regiment's rolls. Most of these situations appear to be some form of 'paper' assignment to a regiment from a health recovery volunteer regiment. Individual research is required on such soldiers by researching additional military records.

About this Directory

There are five topics in this Directory: Research Methodology; Historical Background; Chronology of the 11 regiments enlisting the most Delaware residents; Camp William Penn Regiment Service Histories with Analysis; and the Directory of 1,868 named veterans.

The topics provide an overview of the Directory's essential features including examples of the timing and location of African American enlistments and such focused reviews as desertions, disease fatality patterns, and draft/enlistment/substitution data. These are presented to inspire more comprehensive research.

Camp William Penn was the major muster-in location for Delaware soldiers and served a vast majority of Delaware enlistees. Eleven (11) regiments with Delaware soldiers were formed and trained at Camp William Penn. This section includes the number of veterans by regiment, the timing and patterns of enlistment, and the 11 regimental service histories to provide an overview of what the Delaware members of these regiments experienced during the war.

The ascending hierarchy of organization in these records along with the conventional number of soldiers in each is: company (100); regiment (800); brigade (2,600); division (8,000); corps (26,000 - roman numerals), and army (80,000).

The Directory is a 47-page listing of Delaware African American Civil War soldiers. This list contains name, company, regiment, and type of residency. While not digitalized with the military record hyperlinked in this document, the reader can be assured that each name in this Directory has a confirming service record.

It is recognized that the social status, circumstances, and enlistment motives of African American soldiers in 1863 are extremely complex and that they played out in a context of oppressive discrimination. This Directory makes every effort to present only descriptive data and aspires to avoid any subjective cultural interpretations.

Notwithstanding the social context, this Directory hopes to provide a framework that inspires future research into Delaware African American participation in the Civil War.

Research Methodology

The veteran names and regiment information were collected from two databases at Ancestry.com:

- Ancestry.com. Operations, Inc., 2012, *U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1863-1865*, Original data: *Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union soldiers*. Public domain, The National Archives at Washington, D.C. *These data were sorted by “birthplace”, “Delaware” (exact). This sort target included general terms like “Delaware” and also County, (e.g., “Sussex”), Town, (e.g., “Smyrna”), and Hundred names (e.g., Duck Creek Hundred). Each record listed Delaware as the native state. This sort resulted in over 1,500 names whose military service cards document a Delaware birthplace.*
- Ancestry.com. Operations, Inc., 2012, *U.S. Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934*, sorted by all military pension records that were applied for in Delaware. This sort resulted in over 5,000 pension records filed in Delaware. Each of the 5,000 pension records was examined to determine if the regiment was associated with a U.S. Colored Regiment. This resulted in the collection of 695 pension cards of African American veterans.

Copies or images of these public domain records are not a part of this Directory. Names, company, and regiment listed in this Directory were manually extracted to form the Directory list. Other data listed in the Directory text are research data gathered through examination of original records. Pension card images are also not a part of this Directory.

The original sorted data contained some duplicate names. All the military records with similar first and last names were examined and corrected to avoid duplicate names. Duplicate names are very difficult to tabulate. While, for example, two “Albert Dennys” were easy to find and correct, some were difficult. Data such as age, height, weight, and date/location of enlistment had to be correlated to confirm a duplicate or alias. Notwithstanding the diligence, there may still be a few duplicate names.

Individual pension cards were compared to the list of native-born service members. This identified 269 duplicates of those who already had military records, resulting in 422 “new” Delaware veterans added to the Directory.

Only the primary regiment is listed for each soldier. Readers should be aware that many soldiers may have a service record in other additional regiments.

The names of native Delawareans are the names recorded on the service records. The pension applications reveal some who used alias names during service. The pension database was used to identify alias names. Identified alias surnames were changed to ‘real’ surnames

in the Directory. This was done because it is assumed historians would search for real surnames rather than a singular military alias. Since not all veterans filed for pension some of the surnames in the Directory may still be alias names.

The following data was transcribed from all 695 African American pensions in the original sort: First name; middle initial; last name; company; regiment; name of widow or dependent (where applicable); year filed for widow application (a proxy for death year); whether “native” or “new”; if an invalid application was filed; invalid application approved or disapproved; date of invalid application; and finally, any comments. The database of all pension information on the total 695 Delaware African Americans will be available separately. This future database will provide extensive research material.

This amount of collected pension data will also provide useful and important future research data on such information as the number of disabilities associated with military service versus general disabilities; the percentage of approval versus disapproval for widow and invalid applications; native resident versus newcomer approval/disapproval; and other associated data relationships. Eventually, all of the over 5,000 pension records will be recorded providing another research dimension: comparison results of approval/denial and other data of African American pensions versus all the other 5,000 veteran pensions.

There are some potential record viability issues. The Ancestry place of birth scan sometimes incorrectly tags a military record with a Delaware birth. Many of these were identified and removed, however, some may still be in the Directory. For example, Cornelius Anderson’s record documents he was born in “Cann County, Del.” The Delaware designation is quite clear and “Cann Co.” is probably Kent County, nonetheless, the location is not conclusive.¹ Another example is Jeremiah Willis, whose record shows a birth location of “Buck Co., Delaware”. Researchers should check and confirm birth location data.

There is no indication, if a record lists a Delaware birth location, that the soldier’s family did not, for example, leave the state just after the child’s birth. Such a case would be a strong candidate for exclusion from the Directory. The Directory’s research did not allow for that depth of analysis.

As mentioned previously, there are other similar situations with desertions, court-martials, and discharges that might be candidates for exclusion. Also, in some records, there are obscure notations that a soldier has been removed from regimental records. These require specific individual research and are not within the scope of this Directory.

Concerning this type of record discretion, the research methodology favored inclusion so that historians are provided maximum opportunity to scrutinize these types of individual records.

Finally, researchers are strongly encouraged to examine individual military records to determine if the soldier was present at any of the engagements listed in the regimental histories. A significant number of soldiers were sick or on other detail during the time of a specific engagement. For example, Jeremiah Willis with Company B of the 54th Massachusetts was on Quartermaster duty during the famous first attack on Ft. Wagner.

¹ C. Anderson’s other records show he enlisted in Wilmington, Del. This strongly supports his birth location.

History, Chronology, and Analysis of Local U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments

Historical Background

It was February 1863. The First Battle of Bull Run, Shiloh, and Antietam had already claimed over 20,000 Union casualties. Delaware residents had been receiving news reports on casualties with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Delaware Infantries who fought in these bloody battles. The war was not going well. The Union then won the Battle of Gettysburg on 3 July 1863. Hope began to rise.

The Emancipation Proclamation had gone into effect in January 1863. The recruitment of African American regiments in the spring of 1863 now began in earnest.

By the end of the Civil War, the Union had formed 175 African American regiments with almost 179,000 soldiers. Black Delaware soldiers served in 49 different United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiments. This Directory documents 1,868 African American Delaware veterans. Of this total, 1,446 were native-born and 422 were post-war residents receiving Delaware pensions.

Early in 1863, the United States passed the Enrollment Act of 1863, enacted on 3 March 1863. This was the first military draft.² It allowed draftees to avoid the draft by furnishing a substitute as a replacement. This was not fully implemented in Delaware until the summer of 1863. A total of 10,927 men were drafted. This included 8,356 whites and 2,571 African Americans.³

The following table includes the 49 regiments that enlisted Delaware African Americans showing the regiment name, number of Delaware soldiers, location organized, and date of organization. The list is organized by the number of Delaware soldiers greatest to least.

Regiments that enlisted Delaware African Americans

Regiment	Total	Native	New	Organized	Date
25th U.S. Colored Infantry	218	196	22	Camp William Penn, Pa.	3 Jan '64
6th U.S. Colored Infantry	180	152	28	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Summer '63
8th U.S. Colored Infantry	155	143	12	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Fall '63
41st U.S. Colored Infantry	146	117	29	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Fall '64
32nd U.S. Colored Infantry	116	101	15	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Feb '64

² Schedule I – Consolidated List of all persons of Class I subject to do military duty in Delaware produced in June 1863. *U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865.*

³ Delaware State Journal, 18 August 1863, P.1. This is a complete list of all draftees by county, hundred, and race.

History, Chronology, and Analysis of Local U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments

Regiment	Total	Native	New	Organized	Date
22nd U.S. Colored Infantry	106	90	16	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Jan '64
30th U.S. Colored Infantry	98	68	30	Camp Benedict, Md.	Feb '64
45th U.S. Colored Infantry	76	63	13	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Summer '64
24th U.S. Colored Infantry	73	56	17	Camp William Penn, Pa.	Jan '65
3rd U.S. Colored Infantry	60	40	20	Camp William Penn, Pa.	August '63
5th Mass Colored Cavalry	57	56	1	Readville, Mass.	April '64
29th Conn Colored Infantry	55	54	1	Fair Haven, Conn.	Summer '64
19th U.S. Colored Infantry	48	29	19	Benedict, Md.	Dec '63
43rd U.S. Colored Infantry	46	37	9	Phila, Pa.	March '64
39th U.S. Colored Infantry	45	28	17	Baltimore, Md.	April '64
7th U.S. Colored Infantry	37	4	33	Baltimore, Md.	Sept '63
11th U.S. Colored Heavy Art.	35	35	0	Rhode Island	4 Apr '64
1st U.S. Colored Infantry	32	19	13	Washington, D.C.	22 May '63
28th U.S. Colored Infantry	31	17	14	Camp Fremont, Ind.	Jan '64
2nd U.S. Colored Cavalry	30	27	3	Ft. Monroe, Va.	22 Dec '63
9th U.S. Colored Infantry	28	3	25	Benedict, Md.	Nov '63
29th U.S. Colored Infantry	24	13	11	Quincy, Ill	April '64
31st U.S. Colored Infantry	24	22	2	Hart Island, Va.	Nov '64
127th U.S. Colored Infantry	23	1	22	Camp William Penn, Pa.	August '64
38th U.S. Colored Infantry	15	10	5	St Mary's County, Md.	Jan '64
26th U.S. Colored Infantry	14	12	2	New York City	Jan '64
23rd U.S. Colored Infantry	13	4	9	Baltimore/D.C.	Nov '63
55th Mass. U.S. Colored Infantry	13	13	0	Readville, Mass.	June '63
20th U.S. Colored Infantry	12	9	3	Rikers Island, NY	Feb '64
54th Mass. U.S. Colored Infantry	11	11	0	Boston, Mass.	April '63
2nd U.S. Colored Infantry	10	1	9	Arlington, Va.	June '63
4th U.S. Colored Infantry	8	1	7	Baltimore, Md.	Sept '63
1st U.S. Colored Cavalry	4	3	1	Camp Hamilton, Va.	22 Dec '63
10th U.S. Colored Infantry	3	0	3	Camp Carney Isl., Va.	Nov '63
3rd U.S. Colored Cavalry	2	2	0	Vicksburg, Miss.	Oct '63
12th U.S. Colored Infantry	2	1	1	Tennessee	Summer '63
16th U.S. Colored Infantry	2	2	0	Nashville, Tenn.	Dec '63
27th U.S. Colored Infantry	2	1	1	Delaware, Ohio	Jan '64
36th U.S. Colored Infantry	2	1	1	North Carolina	Feb '64
6th U.S. Colored Heavy Art.	1	0	1	Mississippi	March '64
15th U.S. Colored Infantry	1	1	0	Nashville, Tenn.	Dec '63
18th U.S. Colored Infantry	1	1	0	Missouri	Feb '64
44th U.S. Colored Infantry	1	1	0	Tennessee	April '64

History, Chronology, and Analysis of Local U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments

Regiment	Total	Native	New	Organized	Date
123rd U.S. Colored Infantry	1	0	1	Kentucky	Dec '64
102nd U.S. Colored Infantry	2	0	2	Michigan	Sept '63
115th U.S. Colored Infantry	1	0	1	Kentucky	Summer '64
117th U.S. Colored Infantry	2	0	2	Kentucky	Summer '64
35th U.S. Colored Infantry	1	0	1	North Carolina	Feb '64
48th U.S. Colored Infantry	1	1	0	Louisiana	March '64
	1,868	1,446	422		

The 54th Massachusetts Infantry was among the first African American regiments to organize in the United States.⁴ The 54th organized beginning in February 1863 and 11 native-born Delawareans enlisted in those early months.⁵ Samuel Neal, Company B, age 24, was the first native Delawarean to enlist (25 February 1863) with the 54th Regiment. He was married and was wounded in the right leg in the assault on Ft. Wagner.⁶ Pvt. Neal is also the first native Delawarean in this Directory to have become a soldier in the Union army. Samuel Neal, Pvt. Charles Augustus (Newark, DE) and Pvt. Thomas Hamilton (Delaware City) were the only Delawareans injured at the infamous 18 July 1863 Ft. Wagner failed charge. Charles Augustus was missing in action and never came home.

Another early organized USCT regiment was the 1st U.S. Colored Infantry organized in Washington, D.C. on 22 May 1863. Thirty-two (32) Delawareans joined the 1st Regiment, most in 1864. Three Delawareans joined during its organization. Edwin Bailey (17 June 1863) from Wilmington; Sergeant William Ford (21 June 1863) from Wilmington, and George Miller (17 June 1863) from New Castle County, all enlisted at Mason's Island, Virginia next to the capitol in Washington, D.C. Edwin Bailey's parents were living in Wilmington at the time of his enlistment.⁷ Another Delawarean, George Denby (Smyrna), enlisted on 26 September 1864, but was killed 31 days later at Fair Oaks, Virginia. He had enlisted for one year.

⁴ Fifty-six Delaware natives enlisted with the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry that organized a month before the 54th, but all the Delawareans enlisted with the 5th in late 1863 and early 1864.

⁵ A total of 11 native Delawareans enlisted. The 54th enlisted soldiers from outside Massachusetts including even Canada, so one can assume that some of the 11 came to Massachusetts, but most probably had moved closer to Massachusetts before 1863.

⁶ There is a Samuel Neal, age 22, African American, living in 1860 as a farm laborer on the Bayard Allrick farm in St. Georges Hundred, Middletown, Delaware. Sarah Diehl, age 17, is the only other black resident. 1860 U.S. Census.

⁷ Mentioned in his military record.

Chronology of 11 Local Regiments at Camp William Penn

Camp William Penn in North Philadelphia was the primary training location for local Delaware African American recruits. This camp, established 22 June 1863⁸, trained 1,199 Delaware African American soldiers in 11 regiments. The Camp trained 64 percent of all Delaware Civil War veterans in the Directory. Camp William Penn was located in Cheltenham Hills, North Philadelphia, just west of Melrose Park near W. Cheltenham Avenue. Three regiments organized early in 1863.

The 3rd U.S. Colored Infantry was the first regiment organized at Camp William Penn. It was officially organized starting on 3 August 1863. The first recruits, however, arrived earlier on 26 June 1863.⁹ The 3rd Regiment was staffed first and sent to the field first.

On 3 July 1863, the Battle of Gettysburg inspired motivation to enlist by ending in a complete Union victory. Almost all 3rd Regiment native Delawarean soldiers volunteered in June-July 1863. The draft did not start until 12 August 1863. The first two Delawareans to enlist with the 3rd were Perry Jones and Charles H. Nichols, both on 26 June 1863. Pvt. Jones and Pvt. Nichols, both of Company A, served together in the Quarter Master section and mustered out with the regiment without injury.

The next regiment, the 6th U.S. Colored Infantry, trained 152 native Delawareans. Officially organized on 28 July 1863, at least 93 Delaware soldiers had an enlistment date of August 12-13 and were designated as “draftees”. The same regiment's military records show that 11 percent of the Delaware soldiers volunteered. Twenty-five percent (25%) were substitutes. The substitute enlistment dates started on August 26th and ended on September 24th.¹⁰

The third regiment, the 8th USCT, began training on 22 September 1863 with 143 native Delawareans. Camp William Penn filled the regiment's ranks mostly with excess draftees unassigned after the 6th had filled ranks and left Philadelphia. An individual inspection of the 143 native Delawarean military records revealed 80 drafted, 56 substitutes, and 6 volunteer enlistments.¹¹ Again, all the draftees were enlisted on August 13-14, 1863. The substitutes filled ranks in the next two months. The 6 volunteers had enlistment dates in October 1863. The 8th Regiment was formed to accommodate excess draftees and substitutes from the 12 August 1863 draft.

These three regiments, organized at Camp William Penn, trained the first group of Delaware recruits, a total of 395 soldiers.¹² The 6th and 8th Regiments filled their ranks with a total of 142 drafted African American Delawareans. Both regiments also filled ranks with 92 substitutes. This means 234 Delaware enlistees in both these units were draft-related.

⁸ War Department, Adjutant-General's Office, Washington, Special Order No. 275-6.

⁹ Historical Marker for Camp William Penn, 7322 Sycamore Avenue. By June 29, around 100 soldiers were at the camp in uniform (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 June 1863, p. 8).

¹⁰ How over 36 African American draftees successfully arranged and paid for substitutes was not available in this Directory's data and requires separate research.

¹¹ One file did not document enlistment designation.

¹² This total includes native Delawareans and new veteran residents who received a Delaware war pension. There were 336 native-born Delawareans in those three regiments.

This analysis of draftees and volunteers focuses on regiment patterns, not the impact of the draft on Delaware African Americans during the Civil War. The larger subject of the draft itself would require separate research. As shown, draft data in this Directory shows Camp William Penn was an important training resource for African American draftees and their substitutes after the 12 August 1863 draft. A random analysis of all 1868 veterans, however, suggests that the majority of African American participation in the Civil War was voluntary.

In September 1863, residents of Delaware getting their news about war only from the newspaper did not know much about the details of African Americans' participation in the war or Camp William Penn. The first mention of their involvement was the following interesting story of a Delaware recruit named John Price, published on 30 September 1863.¹³

John Price, age 31, was born in Sussex County. He enlisted as a substitute with the 6th USCT in Smyrna on 8 September 1863. He inspired his fellow recruits' collective support when his slave owner, George Biddle, having followed him from Sussex County, Delaware, in a carriage, arrived in camp and demanded that John Price be returned to him. John's fellow trainees angrily surrounded the carriage, and Mr. Biddle went to the commanding officer, Col. Wagner, to demand his property. His demand was rejected. When returning to his carriage, Mr. Biddle found himself again surrounded by the agitated troops. Col. Wagner intervened and informed the troops he had told Mr. Biddle that John Price could not be taken back. The frustrated Mr. Biddle left, and the troops were delighted.

Camp William Penn Regiment Service Histories with Analysis

We have just discussed the first three regiments that trained Delaware African American soldiers at Camp William Penn in Philadelphia. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the veterans in this Directory trained and served with 11 regiments at Camp William Penn. This section will broadly summarize their regiment service histories and show when they left and what they did during the rest of the war.

By August 1863, there were three major fronts in the Civil War. Union General Grant had taken over in the west and the battles in Tennessee were raging. In the east, the war was centered around South Carolina waterways and the cities of Richmond and Petersburg. In the south, the Union armies had occupied Jacksonville, Florida, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Each regiment's service record shows that as they left Camp William Penn and joined the war, the earlier regiments were sent to the South Carolina, New Orleans, and Florida areas. Then as optimism around Petersburg and Richmond increased in 1864, the later 7 regiments were sent to the Richmond/Petersburg area to fight the war.

As you will see, four of these Camp William Penn regiments helped end the war at Appomattox and one regiment was the first infantry regiment to walk into the burning and vacant capital of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

¹³ *Blue Hen's Chicken and Commonwealth*, Wilmington, Delaware, 30 September 1863, p. 4 from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. This is a factual adaptation of the actual article.

Remember that the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry had already left Boston in May 1863 and had fought the Battle of Grimball's Landing on 16 July 1863, and the first assault on Ft. Wagner on July 18th.¹⁴ They would soon meet the 3rd USCT regiment at Ft. Wagner on Morris Island.

Below is a brief general service record of all 11 of the Camp William Penn USCT regiments that had enlisted Delawareans. These regiments are presented chronologically from the earliest organization date to the latest.¹⁵ Analysis is included in each regimental history.

The 3rd U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized August 3-10, 1863

The 3rd U. S. Colored Infantry enlisted 60 Delaware African American veterans; 40 native and 20 post-war residents. Although the official beginning organization was six days after the 6th Regiment, the 3rd was the first regiment to officially leave Camp William Penn on August 13, 1863, amid great enthusiasm aboard the *USS Star of the South* at the Popular St. Wharf and joined the war.¹⁶

The 3rd USCT joined the Army of the South at Morris Island, South Carolina, arriving by 20 August 1863. They were involved in the final siege and capture of Ft. Wagner and Ft. Gregg from 20 August to 7 September 1863. This was after the infamous 2nd Battle of Ft. Wagner made famous by the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry on July 18th. The 3rd joined in the lengthy siege operations resulting in the Confederates abandoning Ft. Wagner on 7 September 1863.¹⁷ The 3rd regiment was then involved in the operations against Charleston. These were their last engagements. They moved to Hilton Head, then to Jacksonville, and then to Tallahassee, Florida. They mustered out on 31 October 1865.

The roster of the 3rd USCT documents 7 soldiers killed in battle (none from Delaware) with numerous soldiers dying from disease.¹⁸ This does not include Pvt. Charles Bard, Company D, a native-born Delawarean who accidentally killed himself with a pistol at Morris Island, South Carolina, on 18 October 1863.¹⁹

During training, 35 enlistees deserted. The total desertions were 38, with the other three deserting during or after Robert E. Lee surrendered. Although only a subjective observation

¹⁴ According to individual military records, the following Delaware soldiers were present for the 18 July 1863 raid: Augustus, Carter, Cooper, Gaines, Hamilton, Hammond, Harmon, Parker, and Wooden.

¹⁵ *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion, Vol. 3*. Dyer Publishing Co., 1908, starting p. 1723, is the Primary reference for all regiment organization dates and service records. Engagements and locations are included to provide general information regarding the specific regiment's service. Therefore, not all engagements are included. The regiment's chain of command assignments are also not included to avoid disarray.

¹⁶ "Departure of the Colored Regiment", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 August 1863, Page 8.

¹⁷ American Battlefield Trust, *Ft. Wagner, July 18-September 7, 1863*. Ft. Wagner Articles/American Battlefield Trust (battlefields.org).

¹⁸ Two killed at Ft. Wagner (3 Sept); 2 killed Ft. Wagner (26 Aug); 1 on 21 Oct 1864; 1 on 10 March 1865.

¹⁹ Regimental roster, Company D. After the fall of Ft. Wagner, while at Morris Island in operations against Charleston.

of roster records, most of the substitutes appeared to muster out with the company.²⁰ More analysis on general desertions and substitutes is provided with the service records of the 25th Regiment below.

Seven (7) enlisted soldiers killed in action and approximately 68 died of disease.

The 6th U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized July 28-September 12, 1863

The 6th Regiment, with 152 native Delawareans, left Philadelphia on 14 October 1863 and, after an applauded parade through downtown Philadelphia,²¹ went to Yorktown, Virginia to join General Butler's operations against Richmond and Petersburg, including the capture of City Point. They aided Kilpatrick's Cavalry raid in New Kent. The 6th Regiment was involved in the battles of Bailor's Farm, the siege of Petersburg, Chaffin's Farm, New Market Heights, Ft. Harrison, Fair Oaks, and Richmond trenches. They then moved to North Carolina in December 1864 where they had engagements at Ft. Fisher, the capture of Wilmington, the occupation of Raleigh, and the surrender of Johnston's army. They mustered out on 20 September 1865.

The regiment lost 79 men killed in action and 132 by disease.

There is an interesting unpublished story involving the 6th USCT.²² At noon on 3 March 1864, the regiment was at New Kent Courthouse in New Kent, Virginia. The 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry regiment was traveling from Old Church, Virginia, to Williamsburg, Virginia. Along the way, they escorted around 1,000 slaves who had escaped from the various adjacent plantations and who were following behind the regiment headed to Yorktown (Slabtown). As the 17th approached the New Kent Courthouse, they met a brigade of USCT troops including the 6th Regiment. The 6th Regiment greeted the 17th Cavalry with "deafening cheers" and according to the history of the 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry, the white soldiers were very impressed and "...a mountain of prejudice was removed in an instant".²³ At the end of the 17th Regiment, the soldiers of the 6th USCT were then suddenly greeted by the 1,000 just-freed slaves walking behind the 17th Regiment. The 6th Regiment helped escort the slaves as far as Williamsburg. The experience must have been awe-inspiring for everyone.

²⁰ These data were taken from the detailed company rosters in FamilySearch. FamilySearch data are copied from *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5*, Vol 5, Bates, Samuel P., Harrisburg, 1871. These types of records are used to provide fairly reliable guidance and not used as official records, but rather broad information requiring additional research. For example, Asbury Denny, Company A, a Delaware native, was wounded 26 August 1863 in the trenches, and this information is absent in the roster.

²¹ "Departure of the Sixth Colored Regiment", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 October 1863, p. 2.

²² This story is known only through the configuration of two regiment histories: the 17th PA Cavalry and the 6th USCT. The 17th documents USCT soldiers at a specific location, date, and time, and the 6th mentions the same location and date.

²³ Major Spera, W. H., *Kilpatrick's Richmond Raid* in Moyer, H.P., *History of the Seventeenth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry*, HardPress Publishing Co., Miami, FL.: 1911. p. 247. Location confirmed in Regiment Service Record.

The 8th U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized September 22-December 4, 1863

The 8th Regiment, with 143 native Delawareans, left Camp William Penn on 17 January 1864, and went to Hilton Head, South Carolina. They then occupied Jacksonville, Florida and fought in the bloody Battle of Olustee near Lake City, Florida. They moved back to Virginia in August 1864 and saw action at Deep Bottom, Petersburg, Chaffin's Farm, Ft. Harrison, Hatcher's Run, the fall of Petersburg, Appomattox Court House, and the surrender of General Robert E. Lee. At Appomattox, the 8th was in reserve to the 29th and 31st USCT Regiments who covered the front lines on 9 April 1865. They mustered out 12 December 1865.

The regiment lost 115 enlisted men killed in action (most at Olustee) and 132 who died of disease. Only five soldiers died of disease at Camp William Penn. At least ten native Delawareans died at the Battle of Olustee.²⁴

Private George Brown, Company F, who was born in Sussex County and enlisted at Smyrna as a substitute on 13 October 1863 was wounded at Olustee, Florida on 20 February 1864, and then after recovering was killed in action at Deep Bottom, Virginia on 24 August 1864. William Chandler, Company D, a Smyrna native, was also wounded on the same day and killed on 19 September 1864, by an accidental discharge of a comrade's rifle.²⁵

The 25th U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized January 3-February 12, 1864

The 25th Regiment had the most Delawarean soldiers in their roster. One hundred ninety-six (196) natives and 22 post-war Delaware residents enlisted in the regiment totaling 218 soldiers.

One hundred forty-four (144) soldiers of the 25th Regiment died of disease.²⁶ Thirty-one (31) enlisted men died of disease (22% of deaths) at Camp William Penn in Philadelphia before departure in March 1864.²⁷ Ten (10) of those who died of disease in Camp were Delaware natives who enlisted in Sussex County. They were: J. Mitchell; A. Miller; L. Reddin; J. Vigers; W. Beckett; B. Blockson; B. Salmons; A. Short; L. Steele; and J. Lofland. Capillary bronchitis, typhoid fever, tuberculosis (TB), and pneumonia were the causes of death. These Delaware soldiers never made it out of Camp William Penn.²⁸ The Philadelphia newspapers published that, in the week of 22 August 1864, around 100 Philadelphians died

²⁴ Collins, Fisher, Polk, Sipple, Craig, Fiddeman, Hudson, Martin, Harrison, and Jacobs. A review of burials at Lebanon Cemetery, where Camp William Penn soldiers were buried, suggest disease started in the fall of 1863 with the 6th and 8th USCT. It exploded in January and February with the 22nd and 25th USCT.

²⁵ William Chandler, Company D, is could be confused with a William Chandler, Company G. The latter wrote President Lincoln in November 1864, complaining he had never been paid. This is another area of further research.

²⁶ Data extracted from 25th Regiment roster. FamilySearch database.

²⁷ Many soldiers who died at camp were first buried in Lebanon Cemetery in S. Philadelphia. Soldiers were later reinterred at Philadelphia National Cemetery, Section C. Three hundred sixty-four USCT soldiers are buried in Section C who died in camp. Many died at the Summit House. Edward McLaughlin, email message with database to author, November 20, 2021.

²⁸ Most enlisted in January 1864 and died before March.

of TB and typhoid fever.²⁹ Local recruits probably spread the diseases into the camp. Further research is required to determine the scale of disease at Camp William Penn.

The 25th left camp on the *USS Suwannee* on 14 March 1864. After another temporary stop in Beaufort, North Carolina, the regiment began duty in the defense of New Orleans on 1 May 1864. They were then transferred to garrison posts at Barrancas, Florida (six companies) and Ft. Pickens (four companies), Pensacola Harbor, Florida. The regiment performed garrison and defensive services and was not engaged in any battles during the war.

The large number of Delawareans in the roster provides an opportunity to survey the regiment's data about desertions. Many historians have hypothesized that the enactment of draft substitution may have caused a majority of desertions. Soldiers would enlist, collect compensation, and then desert, often repeating the cycle. Since the substitute process had been well-used by 1864, examination of the 25th Regiment military records provide some clarity to the speculation.

The 25th Regiment desertion records show a total of 115 soldiers deserted from the nine companies, an average of 13 desertions per company over the entire war.³⁰ Since Company H had the most desertions, 20, a review of individual records suggest a motive.

As mentioned previously, the troops left camp 14 March 1864, for New Orleans on the Steamer "Suwannee". The steamer sprung a leak and was forced to temporarily stay in Beaufort, North Carolina, until April. Of the 20 total desertions in Company H, five deserted while in Camp William Penn. Eleven deserted in Beaufort after the boat leak when troops moved to defensive service onshore. Four deserted in Florida waiting to finally head to New Orleans. When the regiment landed in New Orleans in May 1864 Company H had no further desertions. This suggests that the cause of desertion was more related to non-combat situational circumstances than exploiting substitute laws. These limited data indicate further research is needed to test the substitute hypothesis.

The regiment mustered out in Pensacola Harbor, Florida on 6 December 1865.

The 22nd U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized January 10-29, 1864

The 22nd Regiment was home to 90 native Delawareans and 16 post-war pension residents. Interestingly, they were ordered to Yorktown, Virginia the same month they mustered in. This suggests that the soldiers were only issued clothing and weapons without specific tactical training.³¹ The problem of disease at Camp William Penn may have forced them to move quickly to the field to decrease the risk of terminal disease with new recruits.³²

²⁹ *The Evening Telegraph*, Philadelphia, 29 August 1864, p.2.

³⁰ Data obtained from the regimental records of the 25th USCT which were broader than the 219 records in this Directory.

³¹ A random inspection of the soldier's records shows most enlisted in Wilmington around 9 January 1864. There are, however, some that enlisted in December 1863 and another, Shepard Robinson, who enlisted on 18 January 1864.

³² Fourteen (14) soldiers of the 22nd died of disease and were buried in Section C, Philadelphia National Cemetery between 25 January 1864 and 18 February 1864. It appears that death by disease in camp started with the 6th and 8th USCT in September/October 1863. Edward McLaughlin, email message with database to author, November 20, 2021.

They could perform tactical training in the field. This possibility is supported by the fact that the 22nd stayed in Yorktown for almost three months before going on an expedition to King and Queen County on March 9th.

The 22nd was involved in the siege operations at Petersburg, the battles of Deep Bottom, Dutch Gap, Chaffin's Farm, New Market Heights, Ft. Harrison, Fair Oaks, and Chaffin's Farm. Noteworthy is the fact that the 22nd Regiment occupied the trenches and picket lines around Richmond during the city's surrender the first week of April 1865 and were in a position to be among the first Union troops to enter the city after it was abandoned. On 3 April 1864, the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry was the first to enter Richmond. They were followed immediately by the 36th, 22nd, and 38th USCT regiments. On 4 April 1865, President Lincoln walked the streets of Richmond and the 22nd USCT was officially part of the historic event. The 22nd Regiment also participated in the funeral of President Lincoln and the search for John Wilkes Booth after he assassinated President Lincoln.

The 22nd Regiment moved to Texas in May 1865 and mustered out on 16 October 1865. The regiment recorded 70 enlisted men killed and mortally wounded and 144 enlisted men died of disease.

Note: Which regiment first entered the abandoned City of Richmond is controversial. One view states that USCT troops were only the first to cross the line between Henrico County and Richmond, not the main part of the city. Another states the USCT troops were told to stand down just before entering the city proper. Another, General August Kautz, in command of a division of USCT stated explicitly that the USCT troops under his command were the first to enter the city.³³ However, Major General Weitzel stated that Company A and K of the 36th USCT Regiment of General Draper's 1st Brigade were the first infantry soldiers to walk into Richmond behind the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry.³⁴ General Weitzel was commander of the XXV Corps and was in charge of the 1st Brigade consisting of the 22nd, 36th, 38th, and 118th USCT Regiments. General Weitzel also accepted the surrender of Richmond from the mayor.

The United States flag flew from the Richmond Capitol building at 8:15 in the morning on 3 April 1865. The 1st Brigade of USCT troops may have helped raise that flag.³⁵ If the 36th Regiment was the first, then Anthony "Toney" Ward, Company K, 36th USCT Regiment was the first Delaware African American to march into Richmond, Virginia during its occupation by Union forces on 3 April 1865, and later the next day to help escort President Lincoln through the city.³⁶ Pvt. Ward after the war lived in Wilmington at 1412 N. Lincoln Street with his wife Mary F. Ward,

³³ Lankford, Nelson. *Richmond Burning: The Last Days of the Confederate Capital*. Penguin Books: New York, p. 131.

³⁴ Erickson, Mark St. John, "Black troops from Hampton Roads among the first Union forces to occupy Richmond". *Daily Press*, 2 April 2015.

³⁵ *Ibid.* This requires further research to confirm.

³⁶ Residence based on a match between pension records and the Wilmington 1902 Directory. Mary F. Ward matches the Delaware widow petition card for "Toney" Ward, Company K, 36th USC Inf. Directory says "Anthony" with Mary as a widow. Mary's date of filing was 14 February 1902. This is highly probable, but requires a second confirming reference.

Henry Bailey, a Wilmington native, was also with the 36th USCT, Company I, however, he opted to stay in Texas after he mustered out on 28 October 1866.³⁷

The 43rd U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized March 12-June 3, 1864

The 43rd Regiment, with 37 native Delawareans, left Camp William Penn and arrived at Annapolis, Maryland, on 18 April 1864. They guarded Army of the Potomac supply trains through the Wilderness Campaign to Petersburg until June 15th. The regiment was involved with the siege operations of Petersburg and Richmond, including the Mine Explosion at Petersburg on 30 July 1864. They participated in the battles of Weldon Railroad, Poplar Grove Church, Boydton Plank Road, and Hatcher's Run until October 28th. The regiment was again involved in the siege operations of Richmond until March 1865. The 43rd then fought at Hatcher's Run and joined the Appomattox Campaign that included the fall of Petersburg. After a brief stay back at Petersburg, the 43rd Regiment went to Texas where they mustered out on 20 October 1865, and were transported back to Philadelphia.

The regiment suffered 48 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded and 188 enlisted soldiers who died of disease. Of the soldiers who died of disease, 19 died in camp at Camp William Penn.³⁸ Most of the soldiers killed in action died at Petersburg on 30 July 1864. Only one native Delawarean was killed in action: Pvt. Thomas Hutchinson, age 36. Thomas was born in Murderkill Hundred, Kent County, Delaware, to James and Mary Hutchinson.³⁹

The 45th U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized June 13-August 19, 1864

After a month of training, four companies of the 45th were sent to Arlington Heights, Virginia for garrison duty with the XXII Corps. The remaining six companies joined the X Corps, Army of the James, at City Point, southeast of Richmond, in September 1864. The earlier four companies' first exposure to fighting was the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, Virginia. This was followed by the battle of New Market Heights, Ft. Harrison, Darbytown Road, and the Battle of Fair Oaks October 27-28, 1864. The four companies of the 45th Regiment were in the trenches around Richmond until March 1865.

All the companies, with 63 native Delawareans, joined together with the XXV Corps at the Battle of Hatcher's Run March 27-28, 1865.⁴⁰ The 45th Regiment then participated in the Fall of Petersburg, Appomattox Campaign Battle of Appomattox, and Surrender of General Lee on 9 April 1865. The 45th Regiment then moved back to Petersburg briefly and then moved to Texas where they mustered out on 4 November 1865.

Note: Knowing which four companies were with the XXII Corps is important for locating specific soldiers within the total regiment up to March 1865. Records with this information are hard to find in general military information. However, Companies A, B, and D had several deaths at Camp Casey, which is near Washington. Company H recorded a

³⁷ Henry Bailey, Co. I, 36th USCT military records.

³⁸ 43rd USCT Regimental roster.

³⁹ Military records and 1850 U.S. Census data.

⁴⁰ The *Compendium of the War of Rebellion*, Vol. 3, states the 6 companies that went to City Point then went to Texas until November 1865. The same publication also says the 4 companies at Arlington Heights joined the regiment at Hatcher's Run. This appears contradictory and would require further research.

soldier death at Hatcher's Run in October 1864. This roster research suggests that the four companies of the 45th that had duty with the XXII Corps were: Company A; Company B; Company D; and Company H. Deeper research is needed for confirmation.

The 41st U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized September 30-December 7, 1864

The 41st Regiment enlisted 117 native Delawareans and 29 post-war residents. They arrived for guard duty at Deep Bottom, Virginia on 20 October 1864. Assigned to the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the X Corps, they moved to Ft. Burnham near Richmond and then fought the Battle of Fair Oaks. Their main battles were Hatcher's Run and the Fall of Petersburg. They then pursued General Lee to Appomattox. The regiment fought on the skirmish line at the Battle of Appomattox and then the surrender of Robert E. Lee. They moved back to Petersburg and, in May 1865, then to Texas where they mustered out on 10 November 1865. The regiment was transported to Philadelphia where they disbanded on 14 December 1865.

No enlisted men were killed in action. Fifty-five (55) died of disease. Captain John Falconer of Company A died on the skirmish line at Appomattox on 9 April 1865. This well-liked officer died at the last battle of the war. Westley Down, his company cook, age 40, who enlisted on 5 September 1864, in Camden, Delaware, must have known Captain Falconer well.

William Gould, age 35, who was born in Wilmington and enlisted in Elizabeth, New Jersey, was the tallest soldier in Company A at 6' 1". Unfortunately, he was reduced in rank from corporal to private and then died in the hospital in Brownsville, Texas, of acute dysentery on 14 October 1865. He was buried in New Orleans.⁴¹

John Truitt, Sussex County, also with Company A, was wounded in Petersburg on 2 April 1865. He missed Appomattox, but re-joined the regiment in Texas where he mustered out.⁴²

The 32nd U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized February 7-March 7, 1864

The 32nd Regiment with 101 native-born and 15 post-war residents arrived in Hilton Head, South Carolina, on 27 April 1864. They spent their entire tour of duty in South Carolina. In June, they moved to Morris Island and supported the goals of helping General Sherman's capture of Savannah by cutting off Charleston, a supply point for Savannah. One could say the 32nd was part of Sherman's march to the sea because they were ordered to Honey Hill, South Carolina, to help an expedition of Sherman's army cut off supply and rail lines there.

The Battle of Honey Hill on 30 November 1864, was historically significant because it is said to be the first major combat engagement by African American forces against the Confederacy.⁴³ The 32nd Regiment held the far-right flank with four companies of the 54th

⁴¹ William Gould military records. Note transcribed on first page.

⁴² This is a good example of why it is difficult to identify specific soldiers who were present at Appomattox.

⁴³ Town of Ridgeland, South Carolina description of the Battle of Honey Hill. Ridgelandsc.gov

Massachusetts Colored Infantry in reserve. The 32nd and the five companies of the 55th Massachusetts Colored Infantry were the only U.S. Colored Infantry troops to charge through thick woods to a large Confederate earthwork. All involved Union regiments consisted of: the 32nd USCT, 55th USCT, the 35th USCT, 127th New York, 56th New York, 25th Ohio, 144th New York, 102nd USCT (reserve), and a Naval brigade of sailors and marines.

The 32nd Regiment was also engaged in the battles of Boyd's Neck, Devaux's Neck, James Island, Dingle's Mills, Statesboro, Boykin's Mills, and the occupation of Charleston and Camden, South Carolina.

No Delawareans were killed at Honey Hill; three native soldiers were killed at the Battle of Devaux's Neck on 7 December 1864: Andrew Williams; George Hopkins; and Solomon Cooper.

The regiment lost 35 killed in action and 113 died of disease. They mustered out at Hilton Head on 22 August 1865.

The 127th U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized August 23-September 10, 1864

The 127th Regiment had only one native Delawarean and 22 soldiers who became residents of Delaware after the war.

At the end of training, the regiment joined the Army of the James and immediately participated in the siege of Petersburg. They were involved in the battles of Chaffin's Farm, New Market Heights, Ft. Harrison, Darbytown Road, and Fair Oaks. They joined the trenches at Richmond and then joined the Appomattox Campaign and fought at Hatcher's Run and the Fall of Petersburg, Appomattox Court House, and the surrender of General Lee. They moved back to Petersburg, Virginia, and then to Brazos Santiago, Texas, where they mustered out on 20 October 1865.

John W. Tillman was the only native-born Delawarean in the regiment. He was with Company C. John was 37 when he enlisted. He was born in Lewes, Delaware. He was the son of John and Rebecca Tillman. He was living in Wilmington in 1850.

The 24th U.S. Colored Infantry – Organized January 30-March 30, 1865

It was now near the end of the war and 56 native Delawareans saw this last chance to join the army. A Union victory was within reach, but not yet visible. President Lincoln had met with Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens for peace talks. The talks failed. On 31 January 1865, the U.S. Congress approved a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery. On March 4th President Lincoln is sworn in for a second term. The war was centered in Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia. Delawareans were reading about the Union's capture of Ft. Fisher on Morris Island at the end of January.⁴⁴ There was a great deal of optimism in Delaware. The war was almost won.

Responding to this optimistic backdrop, 56 native-born Delawareans enlisted and went to Camp William Penn. This was the seventh largest number of Delaware soldiers to train at

⁴⁴ *Delaware State Journal*, 27 January 1865, p.2.

Camp William Penn. They joined the 24th Regiment. Seventeen were later post-war residents.

The 24th Regiment moved to Washington, D.C. on 5 May 1865. This was almost one month after Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox. In June, they moved to Point Lookout, Maryland guarding prisoners, then to Richmond, Virginia, and then were mustered out on 1 October 1865. They went home seven to nine months after they enlisted. The veterans were eligible for pensions after six months in service. Considering a signing bonus and pension eligibility, this was an advantageous tour of duty.

Special Note on Appomattox and the Surrender of Robert E. Lee

There were seven African American regiments at Appomattox.⁴⁵ These regiments were: 127th; 29th; 45th; 8th; 116th; 41st and the 31st USCT Regiments. They were with the Army of the James, XXIV Corps, 2nd Division, 2nd and 3rd Brigade. Much is written about these regiments at Appomattox, but the narrative is, for the most part, limited to the basic facts and leaves the impression that if the regiment was at Appomattox, they participated in and witnessed the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, the end of the Civil War, and the battle over slavery. That impression is not quite accurate. Their positive experience of the ending of the war is much broader.

The USCT troops at the beginning of the Appomattox Campaign had participated in the Fall of Petersburg and the surrender of Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. Richmond fell on 3 April 1865. The USCT regiments were then part of the 63,285 Union forces chasing General Lee's 26,000 Confederates.⁴⁶ The journey from the Petersburg/Richmond area to Appomattox was over 90 miles. It rained starting on April 4th with temperatures in the 50s.⁴⁷ The roads were terribly muddy.

The Confederates were pretty much beaten. On the hike to Appomattox, many Confederates deserted. They were starving. Some dropped their muskets on the march because of the weight. The USCT troops chasing them were pretty much fed and were in high spirits after witnessing the surrender of Richmond. The USCT troops knew the end of the war was near. Thus, the witnessing of the end of the war for them began with the surrender of Richmond. They were now on the march to Appomattox participating in the end of the war.

The battle of Appomattox was on 9 April 1865. Only the 29th, 32nd, and 116th USCT Regiments were on the front line of the battle. The other four regiments were in reserve. While the Confederates put up a good fight, there were only 164 Union soldiers killed and the Confederate loss of the battle prevented their escape. The USCT troops recognized the battle was conclusive. This was the second major event that signaled the end of the war and the USCT knew it and felt it.

⁴⁵ The 5th Massachusetts Cavalry was assigned to the Army of the James Headquarters.

⁴⁶ American Battlefield Trust, *Appomattox Court House, Lee's Surrender*. Appomattox Court House Battle Facts and Summary | American Battlefield Trust (battlefields.org)

⁴⁷ Krick Robert K, *Civil War Weather in Virginia*. University of Alabama Press, 2007, p. 155

On 7 April 1865, General Lee received General Grant's first letter offering surrender. This began the negotiations that resulted in the formal surrender on 9 April 1865. The USCT Brigade was ordered back to Petersburg on April 7th. It is not known, however, when they actually started back. The USCT probably heard about the surrender negotiations in the process of moving. Regardless of when they left the area, they were not present in the vicinity of the Appomattox Court House. They were about one mile away in the field with the rest of the Union army. Either way, the USCT troops knew the inevitable was occurring and thus this was the third event that signaled the end of the war and they must have been celebrating these events.

The real emotional ceremonial event took place outside the Courthouse on 12 April 1865 when the Confederate soldiers formally stacked their arms in the presence of formally positioned Union soldiers and received their parole documents. All USCT troops were at or near Petersburg when this happened.

If you asked a USCT veteran who served at Appomattox about his experience of the end of the war, he would probably describe his participation from the perspective of the emotional and significant fall of Richmond where black Union soldiers marched into the city and escorted President Lincoln's victorious walk through the city. They would also probably explain the details of watching the Confederate Rebels crumble under the long 90-mile walk to Appomattox and how that was like watching their fight for slavery crumble with them. Then, of being victorious in the last battle with Lee's army and hearing that surrender was in process. And, finally, back at Petersburg hearing the final, formal public announcements and celebrations, and being proud of being a part of making that historic event happen.

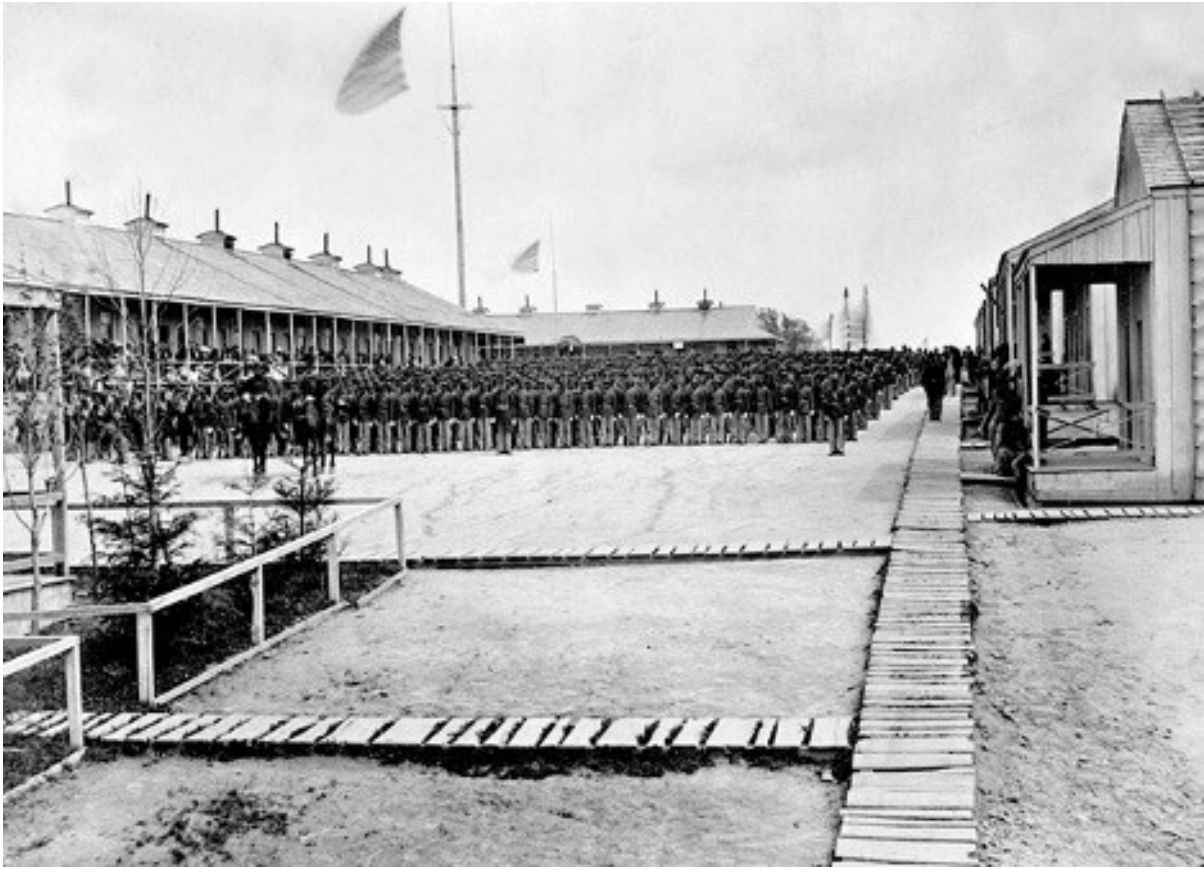
There were over 250 soldiers who could call themselves Delawareans who lived that historic event.⁴⁸

These regimental summaries covered the 11 Camp William Penn regiments that trained 64 percent of Delaware African American soldiers.⁴⁹ The other 38 regiments were home to 669 African American veterans. Each of these regiments did not have many Delawareans in their ranks. Many of these soldiers are pensioners living in Delaware after the war. Regimental service records for these regiments are easily found with any search using the regiment name.

⁴⁸ There were a total of 450 Delawareans in the USCT regiments involved in Appomattox. The number 250 is an estimate based on accommodating the potential number who were sick or who had died or deserted prior to Appomattox.

⁴⁹ The 54th Massachusetts and 1st USCT were mentioned with a total of 43 Delaware veterans.

Delaware Directory of African American Civil War Veterans



Camp William Penn

The directory of 1,868 African American Delaware residents who were veterans of the Civil War is available at the Delaware Genealogical Society website (delgensoc.org).