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NEW YORK'S BLACK REGIMENTS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

by

WILLIAM SERAILE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1977

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

The Civil War is a subject that has intrigued both historians and laymen. The politicians, generals and battles of that conflict have been closely examined, while numerous white participants have left their diaries, journals and thoughts. In contrast, little is known about the 178,975 black soldiers who were called the United States Colored Troops. We know more about the battles these men fought in than we do about the backgrounds and feelings of those blacks who enlisted in the Union army.¹ Not all white officers of black regiments bothered to keep diaries or to record their experiences. Mainly illiterate, few blacks wrote letters describing their exploits. The literate ones that contributed to newspapers made an important addition to history, but unfortunately many of these publications are no longer extant.

Historians have been influenced by Thomas Wentworth Higginson's journal of his experiences and observations as colonel of a slave regiment raised in South

¹See for example, William Wells Brown, The Negro in the American Rebellion (Boston, 1867); George Washington Williams, A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865 (New York, 1888); Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953).

Carolina.² This radical abolitionist's account of fugitive slaves in the army reveals much about the bondsman's character and views on the war; yet it tells us nothing about black Northerners who made up about twenty percent of the total black enlistment. Northern blacks did not generally exhibit the same behavior traits as slaves. They were less docile and were not inclined "to put on the mask." These free men possessed less of that automatic obedience to which admirers of slave regiments constantly alluded in their reports. For example, Daniel Ullmann wrote to Senator Henry Wilson on December 4, 1863, "their qualification in most respects are equal to any and in one superior, to wit, their habit of subordination."³

Black regiments raised in the North have been ignored by researchers mainly because they amounted to few in numbers. Although nearly 33,000 were credited to the quotas of northern and western states, the numbers raised in individual states were negligible. Pennsylvania received credit for enlisting 8,612 blacks, while Ohio, New York and Massachusetts raised 5,092, 4,125 and 3,966, respectively. These figures pale in comparison with the 24,052 credited to Louisiana, or the 23,703 raised in

²Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Army Life in a Black Regiment, with an introduction by Howard Mumford Jones, (East Lansing, 1960).

³The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, ser 3, III, 1126.

Kentucky, and the 20,137 recruited in Tennessee.⁴

When the various architects of black recruitment such as Thomas Hunter, James Lane, Daniel Ullmann, Lorenzo Thomas and George L. Stearns spoke of the "noble experiment" of putting blacks into the military as fighting men, they were referring to the slave and not to the Northern free black. Understandably, historians have devoted much research to the question of slave recruitment, since the majority of the black soldiers had been unfree.⁵ Dudley Cornish has contributed much to our knowledge of the black soldier in general.⁶ What is needed now is a complete examination of Northern blacks who enlisted into the Union Army. I hope that this account of the New York regiments will prove to be a useful start in that effort. Surprisingly there has not been a study of the three regiments credited to the Empire State known as the Twentieth, Twenty-sixth and Thirty-first United States

⁴Ibid., ser 3, Iv, 1270.

⁵See for example, John W. Blassingame, "The Recruitment of Colored Troops in Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri, 1863-1865," Historian, XXIX, 4 (August, 1967), 533-545; Richard H. Abbott, "Massachusetts and the Recruitment of Southern Negroes, 1863-1865," Civil War History, XIV, 3 (September, 1868), 197-210; Albert E. Cowdrey, "Slave into soldier: The Enlistment by the North of Runaway Slaves," History Today, XX, 10 (October, 1970), 704-715.

⁶Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (New York, 1956).

Colored Troops. Among Northern states, New York's 49,005 blacks were nearly twice that of the black population in New England, and second only to Pennsylvania's 56,949. The regiments were not raised until 1864, a year after the Lincoln Administration sanctioned the enlistment of Negroes. Although the men were generally loyal, they were also quite ordinary and did not have any medal of honor winners in their ranks or performed any heroic deeds long to be remembered in the annals of military history. In that respect they were totally unlike the 54th Massachusetts Colored Volunteers that achieved everlasting fame in its heroic assault of Fort Wagner on Morris Island, South Carolina.

The 26th Regiment has been completely ignored in the secondary accounts, while references to the 31st have been limited to its participation in the Union defeat at the Mine Explosion before Petersburg on July 30, 1864. The 20th Regiment has received more attention, but that has been limited to the political difficulty of raising black regiments in key Northern states. Horatio Seymour, Democratic Governor of New York, refused to authorize the enlistment of blacks at a time when New York

citizens, especially its foreign element, was hard hit by the draft. This book will investigate Seymour's stubbornness on both constitutional and racial grounds; it will also examine the pressure groups combating the governor over the issue of black volunteering in the Empire State.

In addition, this study will also examine the occupation of the men in comparison with that of white and other black regiments.

Several recent works about black soldiers have taken the viewpoint that they were less inclined to indulge in vices and were better disciplined than whites. Similarly it has been held that the Germans in the Union army ranked high in "amenability to discipline."⁷ The validity of that thesis as it pertains to blacks as well as the question of black desertion is open to question. How did blacks compare to whites as deserters? Did both races desert for the same reasons? This is significant since racists have often called for the exclusion of blacks from the military on the alleged ground that

⁷Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War; Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox (Garden City, New York, 1954); Jack D. Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History (New York, 1974); Ella Lonn, Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy (Baton Rouge, 1951), 649.

they would desert. Although black soldiers fought in a number of battles and shed their blood, many like the regiments under study, spent the majority of their time in fatigue and garrison duty. Ullmann noted in Louisiana that "months have passed at times without the possibility of any drill at all."⁸

The Civil War started out as a war over the question of preserving the Union and ended up destroying slavery. Did the conflict help to enlighten white New Yorkers to the need of removing racial barriers in employment, education, suffrage and other areas?

Excluding racism, blacks and whites shared similar problems of inadequate food, clothing, shelter, poor or outdated equipment, salary arrears and excessive marching. Nevertheless, blacks suffered these difficulties throughout their service time, while some whites were confronted with these problems only in the first years of the war. This study will focus on these problems as they affected the black regiments raised in New York. Despite the racism confronting them, black troops persevered in their efforts to maintain the Union and to destroy slavery. They not only proved to the nation that they could handle the responsibilities of a

⁸War of the Rebellion, ser 3, III, 1126.

soldier, but that they were men worthy of the rights of citizenship.

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CHAPTER I

NEW YORK'S BLACK COMMUNITY, 1860-1863

Afro-Americans constituted 1.3% of New York State's population in 1860. The 49,005 blacks were mainly concentrated in the New York City area with 12,574 in Manhattan, 4,999 in Brooklyn, 3,387 in Queens, 2,270 in Westchester and 1,798 in Suffolk. An additional 6,601 were scattered throughout the up-state counties of Columbia, Dutchess, Orange and Renssalaer. The other 17,376 were widely dispersed in the small hamlets of the state.¹

As a small but visible minority, they faced many issues that made life difficult. Chief among them was the lack of job opportunities, segregated schools and public facilities, denial of suffrage, and the failure of the Federal and State governments to accept them as volunteers to crush the slaveholders' rebellion.

After the Civil War most blacks held Abraham Lincoln in high esteem, if not reverence, yet in 1860 he was an unknown factor to many blacks. They did not know if he truly supported their aspirations or not.

¹United States Census...8th Census, 1860, 328.

Most were not as forthright as Frederick Douglass, who wrote to Gerrit Smith on July 2, 1860, "I can't support Lincoln-but whether there is life enough in the Abolitionists to have a candidate I cannot say."²

Douglass, who actively supported a radical abolitionist program, was dismayed by Lincoln's victory. The former slave noted that the nation did not have to fear disunity because of Honest Abe's election. "He and his party," Douglass wrote, "will become the best protectors of slavery where it now is...." Southern fire eaters believed Lincoln to be an abolitionist, but Douglass predicted that the president-elect and the Republican party would scatter "to the winds (the assumption) as false and groundless."³

Even if there were many blacks who, like George A. Johnson of Ithica, "rejoice [ḡ] in the election of Lincoln," few remained ardent supporters after hearing that the president's inaugural address contained no denunciation of slavery or the 1850 fugitive slave law. In early March 1861, the Weekly Anglo-African criticized the newly sworn-in president. It commented, "our sorrow is the more profound, our hope the more shattered, and our gloom the more assured." "We gather no comfort from

²Frederick Douglass to Gerrit Smith, July 2, 1860, The Gerrit Smith Papers, Schomburg Collection, NYPL, microfilm reel 5.

³Douglass' Monthly, III (December 1860), 370.

the inaugural of President Lincoln," commented the editor, for "the Republican party is for the white man."⁴ Equally bitter was Douglass who wrote:

Some thought we had in Mr. Lincoln the nerve and decision of an OLIVER CROMWELL, but the result shows that we merely have a continuation of the PIERCES and BUCHANANS, and that the Republican president bends the knee to slavery as readily as any of his infamous predecessors.⁵

It is not known if Douglass spoke for the masses. The majority of the black adult male population could not vote because of a state constitutional restriction; therefore many, perhaps, did not follow politics closely. Educated blacks, however, resented the inferior status placed upon them. In 1859 thirtyfive delegates attended the State Convention of Colored Citizens in Troy on September 13 and 14. Adopting a resolution in favor of equal manhood suffrage, they protested against the revised constitution of 1821 that limited the vote to those blacks owning \$250 worth of freehold property.⁶

⁴For Johnson's comments see Weekly Anglo-African (New York), November 24, 1860. For comments on the inaugural address see Ibid., March 16, 1861. Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States From George Washington 1789 to Richard Milhous Nixon 1969 (Washington, D. C., 1969), 119, 120.

⁵Douglass' Monthly, III (April 1861), 434.

⁶New York Times, September 14, 1859.

Although only 21% of New York State black males met the property requirement, attitudes against granting them the vote were hostile. State Senator Theophilus C. Callicot of Brooklyn stated on February 10, 1860 in Albany, "Sir, the proposition to put negroes on a footing of political equality with white men is repugnant to the sense of the American people." The Brooklyn politician believed that if blacks were given the vote and fugitive slaves granted a sanctuary, "New York will become a negro paradise, and our population will be as mongrel as that of Mexico or South America."⁷

The World questioned the necessity of placing the equal suffrage question on the 1860 ballot, since in 1846 it had been rejected by the voters, 223,834 to 85,306. Arguing that New York should do what it could to elevate the Afro-American to make him a useful citizen, The World cautioned against granting him the vote because then he "and his brethren would become the dupes and tools of demagogues who would despise (him) while they use them."⁸

⁷James McPherson provided the figure of 21%. See James McPherson, The Negro's Civil War, (New York, 1965); 242. Speech of Hon. Theophilus C. Callicot...against the Personal Liberty Bill..., (Albany, 1860), 12; New York Times, February 15, 1860.

⁸The World, September 14, 1860.

Blacks offered counter-arguments. Attempting to organize themselves, they sought to "educate" the white community about the need to revise the state constitution. In March 1859, Frederick Douglass asked, "Is there not intelligence enough, and vigor enough in the blacks in (New York State) so to revolutionize... the leaders of party as to make Equal Suffrage a necessity for them, as well as a triumph to ourselves?" The Principia, a New York City paper, reported in 1860 that "colored" people were law abiding and paid taxes. It asked, "What excuse, then, can there be, for not allowing them the equal exercise of the right of suffrage?"⁹

On August 13, 1860, twenty-five black residents of Ithaca formed an Elective Franchise Club in order "to operate a club of working colored men who would leave no stone unturned in their efforts to secure for their brethren the right of free suffrage." At the first meeting, the Reverend Basil Mackall was elected president; G. A. Hayborn, vice-president; George A. Johnson, secretary and Henry Moore, treasurer. The

⁹Douglass' Monthly, I (March 1859), 33. The Principia, October 13, 1860; For background to the 1821 constitution see Merrill D. Peterson, Democracy, Liberty and Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820's (Indianapolis, 1966), 215.

delegates unanimously adopted a resolution calling for an end to property restrictions and for free male suffrage.¹⁰ In Manhattan the New York City Suffrage Committee was formed with the noted physician and abolitionist, James McCune Smith, as chairman and James P. Miller and John J. Zuille as secretaries. The Committee urged eligible black voters to support in the November election the special bill to establish equal suffrage. On August 23 the New York County Suffrage Committee appointed the Reverend H. A. Thompson as a collecting agent to solicit funds in either single donations or weekly subscriptions to aid "the cause of suffrage extension."¹¹

Although Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, requested Christians to vote in favor of equal suffrage, Douglass felt on the eve of the election that "neither Republicans nor Abolitionists seem to care much for [the Equal Suffrage Movement]"¹² Recent research has shown Douglass to have been correct.

¹⁰Douglass' Monthly, III (October 1860), 345.

¹¹Ibid., 345, 346. Herbert Aptheker, ed., A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States (3 vols., New York, 1967), I, 45-458.

¹²Douglass' Monthly, III (November 1860), 366.

Although many Republicans supported the equal suffrage program, others opposed it or abstained, especially in heavily Democratic areas or marginal Republican ones because "making equal suffrage a test of party fidelity might be fatal to the party."¹³

On election day sixty-three percent of the voters rejected the measure. Douglass castigated those Republicans who refused to support suffrage extension. He noted that in Rochester white drunkards were brought to the polls to help defeat the measure. Douglass considered the defeat due not to white fear of black political domination but rather to "one of blind ignorance and prejudice." With the tone of an injured but not cowed fighter, he argued, "our cause is just, wise, and proper, and must not be dropped."¹⁴

A letter to the editor of the Weekly Anglo-African in mid November complained that New Yorkers had failed to "erase from the state constitution, that last relic of barbarism which denies to us...the right of

¹³Phyllis Frances Field, "Republican and Black Suffrage in New York State: The Grass Roots Response," in Robert P. Swierenga, ed., Beyond the Civil War Synthesis: Political Essays of the Civil War Era (Westport, Connecticut, 1975), 156-158.

¹⁴Douglass' Monthly, III (December 1860), 369.

franchise--except under the most humiliating conditions." Those conditions required white males over twenty-one to be a citizen for ten days, a state inhabitant for one year preceeding any election and a four months resident of the county in which he would vote. Blacks, in addition to the \$250 property requirement, had to be a state citizen for three years and a one year resident in the voting district.¹⁵

Despite the vigorous efforts of a racial coalition to erase the property restriction, blacks did not vote in New York on equal terms until 1870, when the 15th Amendment went into effect.

Overshadowing the suffrage question for most black New Yorkers was the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. It is not known how many blacks were runaways. Undoubtedly, some had escaped from slavery years earlier and resided in New York as free persons. The Fugitive Slave Law threatened their very existence. The New York Times reported that the 1860 census revealed a 2.18% decrease in the state's black population. Nevertheless, that statement was in error as the Empire State's black population decreased by only sixty-four persons between 1850 and 1860.

¹⁵See comment of George A. Johnson in Weekly Anglo-African, November 24, 1860; for voting requirements see The Principia, October 20, 1860.

Nevertheless, the Population decline indicates that some had left the state for Canada or elsewhere.¹⁶

There was both white and black support for defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act. Blacks defied it out of a sense of survival, while whites were motivated differently. Some were repulsed "at the sight of slave-hunters searching for human prey in northern neighborhoods." Others saw in the denial of the right of a jury trial to blacks the possible erosion of their own constitutional rights.¹⁷ Charles S. Spencer of Manhattan informed his colleagues in the Assembly that "southern bloodhounds" did not have "right to howl upon the track of the weary fugitive." He called for the passage of a law that would free all runaway slaves coming into the state because such a law would "roll back the black and threatening wave of southern oppression...(and would) show to the... world that New York detests the institution of slavery."

¹⁶New York Times, September 27, 1861. See the Seventh Census of the United States (Washington, 1850), 63. United States Census Office 8th Census (Washington, 1860), xiii.

¹⁷Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago, 1961), 250.

In 1859 a personal liberty bill passed the Assembly but was defeated in the Senate.¹⁸ In the summer of 1860 Troy residents in upstate New York rescued fugitive Charles Nally from the marshals.¹⁹

Some blacks did what they could personally to harbor runaways and to assist them to obtain entry into Canada. The Reverend J. W. Loguen, a runaway slave from Tennessee, was active in helping over 1,500 fugitives to reach Canada. All of this was done at considerable personal expense. Seven residents of Syracuse informed the Weekly Anglo-African of Loguen's activities in their city. The open letter asked New York City residents to assist Loguen in his efforts to aid escapees. They were told how Loguen used his own home as an asylum and that he was in need of money, food and clothing for the fugitives. The letter warned the residents not to give any money to a white man named

¹⁸An Appeal for Freedom Made in the Assembly of The State of New York March 7, 1859 by Hon. S. Spencer of the City of New York (Albany, 1859), 8, 20, 21; Report of the Select Committee on the Petition to Prevent Slave Hunting in the State of New York Transmitted to the Legislature February 11, 1860 (Albany, 1860), 2, 4, 6.

¹⁹Troy Daily Press, August 19, 1860 as cited in Weekly Anglo-African, October 14, 1865.

William Brown who was soliciting funds allegedly for Loguen.²⁰

The issue of secession and the coming of the war were events that blacks viewed with both caution and mixed hope. In late 1860 the Weekly Anglo-African considered secession a Southern attempt to avoid paying debts to Northern capitalists and merchants and a reaction to the futility of convincing the North of the blessings of slavery. Remaining neutral, the paper commented, "we have no tears to shed on the occasion nor do we give vent of expression of joy...."²¹ On January 5, 1861 the Weekly Anglo-African reported that the nation's woes were caused by racists and slaveholders, not by slaves or free blacks. The New York paper warned the incoming Republican administration not to barter away the "matter of full justice" to its black population. Prophetically, the Weekly Anglo-African stated, "the battle then is not...in direct behalf of the colored man, nor will it be brought to a successful close until it shall have espoused his cause...."²²

The plight of blacks on the eve of the Civil War warranted the attention of nineteen "colored" Brooklyn

²⁰Weekly Anglo-African, November 24, 1860

²¹Ibid., December 22, 1860.

²²Ibid., January 5, 1861.

ministers, including Henry Highland Garnet, whose call for a slave rebellion in 1843 shocked the nation, and Charles B. Ray, former editor of the Colored American. Meeting on January 14 at Shiloh Prebysterian Church, they set aside February 22 as a day for Christians to fast and to pray for God's interposition in their behalf.²³

Frederick Douglass, however, saw the inevitability of war. "Let the conflict come and God speed the right..." he wrote. Differing from Douglass, the Weekly Anglo-African urged caution. "Before we enter into [a] compact to save the Union, we must have something better than flattery to convince us that after freely giving our blood to again build up the Union... [that] we shall not be as in the past, pariahs and outcasts." In response to a Tribune editorial on March 16 calling for the arming of blacks the paper retorted, "Messrs. Republicans before you hand us bullets give us ballots."²⁴ Nevertheless, once war had broken out, the Weekly Anglo-African stated, "God speed the conflict. May the cup be drained to its dregs, for only thus can this nation of sluggards know the disease and its remedy."²⁵

²³Ibid., February 2, 1861.

²⁴Douglass' Monthly, III (March 1861), 419.
Weekly Anglo-African, March 23, 1861.

²⁵Weekly Anglo-African, April 20, 1861.

New York was not ready to accept patriotic black volunteers. An unruly crowd disrupted a band of black marchers who were carrying an American flag. Their drums and fifes were taken away and they were told that "Niggers could not be allowed to carry that flag!" Nevertheless, at the risk of being punished by Southern sympathizers, Pastor Hodges' congregation hung an effigy of Jefferson Davis on a gibbet at 11th Street and Broadway in Brooklyn.²⁶

In August 1861, James W. C. Pennington, Former slave, Congregational minister, abolitionist and author of The Fugitive Blacksmith, cautioned black politicians that the question confronting them was, "ARE WE BOUND BY PRINCIPLES, OR SWORN TO HELP FIGHT THE BATTLES OF THE PRESENT CIVIL PRO SLAVERY WAR?" The orator thought it "unpolitical, unphilosophical, unmanly and [nearly] traitorous to our own race" for black politicians to "sit back in the shade and take no part" in the struggle. He fervently believed that an invading army of 25,000 black men would "recapture King Cotton."²⁷ In 1861 New York and the nation was not willing to accept 200 black volunteers, let alone 25,000.

²⁶Ibid., May 4, 11, 1861

²⁷Ibid., August 10, 1861.

Frederick Douglass was disturbed about the role slavery played in the war. Two weeks before the announcement of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, he wrote to Gerrit Smith:

I had attributed your silence of late to what I suppose must be your (illegible) disgust at the wretched management of the war. I shudder at what the future may still have in store for us. I think that the nation was never more completely in the hands of the slave powers. This government is now in the hands of the army and the army is in the hands of the worst type of American.²⁸

Douglass, however, erred when he considered the nation under the control of slave interests. Republicans were committed to the concept of free labor which the existence of slavery threatened, and their moral repugnance of the institution provided them with an ideology that threatened the survival of the "peculiar institution."²⁹ It was inevitable that the war would eventually challenge the right of slavery to exist.

Fugitives, slavery, and the war were not the only issues confronting blacks in the early 1860's.

²⁸Douglass to Smith, September 8, 1862, Gerrit Smith Papers, microfilm reel 5.

²⁹Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (London, 1970), 309-312.

Education or the lack of it was of concern to many.

"May a Negro Go To College?" asked the New York Times.

In 1859 Union College in Schenectady decided to let the student body determine if a Mulatto should be admitted. It rejected his application, although later he was admitted after it was proven that he was a half-breed Indian "without a particle of African blood in his veins." Douglass' Monthly, however, reported the student to be David Rosell and a Negro. The Times was critical of the students who "would lend their sympathy, if not more active aid, in thwarting the odious fugitive slave law. But they would not suffer a man of Negro blood to study in Union College."³⁰

The question of equal schools was of major importance to New York's black communities. Common practice and not statute or the state constitution kept the schools segregated. In Lockport, an upstate city near Buffalo, the black school was separate and unequal. In the community of 250 blacks less than twelve were reported to be in school. A black visitor described the institution as "a miserable house, about ten by fourteen feet square, to which no white person would send a child, were it a

³⁰New York Times, February 10, 1859. Douglass' Monthly, I (March 1859), 33.

school for white children, and in which there is no stimulus nor encouragement to make a child study." Many of the black children, reported the observer, were too humiliated by the conditions to attend classes.³¹

Frederick Douglass urged his race to "attack the school officers in their meetings, and demand our rights, and if they refuse, then we are to sue for them in the courts of justice..."³² It is unlikely that any legal suits occurred. Instead people either accepted the status of segregated schools or did what they could to get new buildings for black children.³³ Douglass considered New York City the "most unpromising field" for school integration because he believed it to be under control of "the General Government at Washington, that is the South."³⁴ New York politics was then dominated by Democrats who accepted the doctrine of white supremacy.

Between April 30, 1860, and May 1, 1861, Manhattan's

³¹Weekly Anglo-African, January 7, 1860 as quoted in James McPherson, The Negro's Civil War, 247.

³²Douglass' Monthly, I (March 1859), 33.

³³That was the approach of the New York Society for Promotion of Education Among Colored Children in 1859. See Aptheker, A Documentary History of the Negro People, I, 398-402.

³⁴Douglass' Monthly, I (March 1859), 33.

blacks had five colored schools and three colored primary schools to which to send their children.³⁵ The New York City Board of Education report for the period ending December 31, 1860 indicated that there were 2,377 pupils enrolled in the colored primary schools with an average attendance of 879. The average attendance for the period ending December 31, 1861, 1862 and 1863 were 944, 938 and 724 respectively. Brooklyn had three colored schools with 927, 989 and 788 students for the years ending January 31, 1861, 1862 and 1864, respectively. In 1860 only two percent of the 46,976 students attending school in Brooklyn were black, yet that community could not integrate them into the system.³⁶

New York City was not interested in integrating its schools during the Civil War period, but that did

³⁵Trow's New York City Directory for the Year Ending May 1, 1861, (New York, 1861), 19.

³⁶Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City and County of New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1860, (New York, 1861), 91. Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education, 8. Twenty-First Annual Report..., 113, Twenty-Second Annual Report..., 111. Sixth Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools of Brooklyn, New York for the Year Ending January 31, 1861, (Brooklyn, 1861), 7. Seventh Annual Report..., 8. Ninth Annual Report..., 6.

not mean that it completely neglected the black schools. The Superintendent's report for 1861 described the black schools as "institutions [that] are steadily and gradually improving in scholarship and efficiency." Poor attendance was attributed partially to "the want of suitable classrooms."³⁷

In the social realm, black New Yorkers had their cultural activities and various societies. Most of the social events were held in the churches of which black Manhattanites supported one Baptist and five African Methodist Episcopal Churches in 1860. A Prebysterian Church was established later. In addition to the churches, black New Yorkers could boast of an African Civilization Society, a New York Society for Promoting Education Among Colored Children, the Weekly Anglo-African newspaper and the Anglo-African Magazine.³⁸

Blacks had their picnics, church suppers, dances and other forms of social gatherings. In late December 1860, the Weekly Anglo-African described a tea given at Zion A.M.E. church on November 6, a benefit for the church's elder, the Reverend David Stevens. Among the guests were Henry Highland Garnet, president of the African Civilization Society, militant abolitionist and noted orator.

³⁷Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education... of New York..., 17, 49-50.

³⁸Trow's New York City Directory...Ending May 1, 1861, 7, 28, 33, 38.

"Whether it was owing to the hardness of the times," the Weekly Anglo-African reported." or to good judgment of the ladies we cannot say, but we are happy to state that much economy was exhibited in their dresses." A tea was given at the Second Bethel A.M.E. church on Second Avenue in Manhattan. "This entertainment which lasted three nights," commented the black paper, "continued on Thanksgiving evening with an overflowing house."³⁹

Ads for discreet exercise for young ladies frequently appeared in the Weekly Anglo-African. The February 2, 1861, issue printed an advertisement for a class in calisthenics, polite physical education and parlor dancing as a recreation for young women to be held every Saturday from 4 to 6 p.m. at 76 Bleeker Street.⁴⁰

Educated blacks displayed an interest in music and concerts. An ad in the December 29, 1860 Weekly Anglo-African stated, "Madame Magnan begs to inform her friends and the public that she is prepared to give instructions on the Spanish guitar and in singing at her residence at 154 Sullivan Street." The same issue announced that the ladies of Brooklyn and Weeksville

³⁹Weekly Anglo-African, December 29, 1860.

⁴⁰Ibid., February 2, 1861.

were sponsoring a concert and soiree on January 3 in Harmony Hall on Marion Street in Brooklyn. Professor William Baker was listed as conductor. On April 11, 1861, sixty public school children in Brooklyn sang in a concert at the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The 25¢ admission fee went towards buying a piano for their institution. In April the Brooklyn Excelsior Literary Society held its first exhibition and festival.⁴¹

Black New Yorkers had some concern with what they considered to be inaccurate census returns for their race, especially in Manhattan, and with unequal employment opportunities. Black Manhattanites believed that the census takers erred in 1860 when they reported that the island had 12,574 "persons of color."

The Weekly Anglo-African claimed in February 1861 that more blacks lived in New York City than reported by the census takers. The census was taken in June and July of 1860 when many blacks were away working on steamboats or working at summer resorts. Some blacks were counted as white because of their "good hair texture." The paper reported that in the decade between June 1850 and June 1860, "at least one thousand colored persons turned white in the city of New York." This was probably an accurate

⁴¹Ibid., December 29, 1860, April 20, 1861.

estimate because the 1860 census listed the black population in Negro and Mulatto columns. Therefore, only those persons who looked Negroid or racially mixed were counted as being non-white.⁴² According to the paper a prominent grocer, as well as one of the best merchant tailors, banking clerks, bank porters and at least one enormously shrewd and exceedingly wealthy black broker had crossed the color line.⁴³

The Weekly Anglo-African disagreed with the Herald's 1861 assertion that 85 blacks owned \$356,425 in real estate while 738 blacks had \$213,785 in personal estates or a combined total of \$570,210. The black paper estimated the number of the race owning real estate to be nearly 500, with \$1,356,425 tied up in real estate holdings and \$1,234,000 in personal estates for a combined total of \$2,690,425.⁴⁴

In its February 16, 1861 issue, the Weekly Anglo-African published the Herald's list of employed blacks by occupations. The list of 5,039 employed individuals indicated the majority worked in menial

⁴³Ibid., Feb. 16, 1861.

⁴⁴Ibid., February 9, 1861. New York Herald, January 25, 1861. The figure of \$1,400,000 for black real estate holdings for 1859 is given by Peter Bergman, The Chronological History of the Negro in America (New York, 1969), 220.

or low paying jobs. A partial summary showed 1,165 servants, 686 waiters, 621 washerwomen, 515 laborers, 243 porters, 128 sailors, 81 barbers and 24 chimney sweeps. There were only 46 carmen because licences were hard to obtain prior to Mayor Fernando Wood's administration. In 1860 Manhattan had only 2 dentists, 2 printers, 1 electrician, 4 bakers, 1 blacksmith, 16 ministers, 8 doctors and 17 teachers (Weekly Anglo--African cited 33) who were black.⁴⁵

Regardless whether blacks were wealthy or poor, Baptist or Methodist, urbanites or rural folk, they all faced the common problem of prejudice and discrimination. To some, blacks personified evil and ugliness. The New York Times depicted Negroes as exotic in an editorial, "The Mystery of Negrophilism." It wanted to know why in 1862 there was such an interest in the Negro. The Times concluded that blacks were unattractive, lacked a romantic history and had no affinity to whites. America, according to the Times, had an "abnormal passion" for blacks who were exotic hot house plants diligently nursed "as though Africa was not teeming with millions...that hunt...buy...sell...kill, and...eat negroes; negroes that go naked through life and negroes that clothe their shame

⁴⁵Weekly Anglo-African, February 16, 1861, New York Herald, January 25, 1861.

with beads on their necks and rings on their fingers."⁴⁶

There were those who viewed blacks with increasing alarm in 1862 because the Civil War was taking over tones of freeing the slaves. For the Irish, however, blacks were a competitor for the low paying jobs on the streets and docks on New York. In 1860, 47.62% of Manhattan's population was foreign born. About 25% or 203,740 of the 805,651 immigrants in New York City were Irish. There had been an increase of 346,839 foreign newcomers in Manhattan since 1850, and for many of them the black man stood between them and a livelihood.⁴⁷

Numerous conflicts developed between Irish and blacks in the New York City area. On August 4, 1862, over 400 Irishmen assaulted a Brooklyn factory employing black women and children. The mob attempted to burn the helpless people in the factory, but police intervention saved them. The Times cited racial hatred as the reason for the attack and urged Catholic priests to use their influence to curb the unwarranted attacks. It viewed the Irish attack as immoral since "there is no class of persons in this community more quiet, orderly, peaceable, respectful and even courteous, than the colored people."⁴⁸

⁴⁶New York Times, June 14, 1862.

⁴⁷United States Census...8th Census 1860, xxix, xxxii.

⁴⁸New York Times, August 5, 1862.

Earlier views of the causes of the July 1863 draft riots attributed the violence to Irishmen who were incensed that blacks were taking stevedore jobs on the waterfront as strikebreakers.⁴⁹ Recent research, however, has posited the view that only three longshoremen were identified as rioters and none of them were known to have attacked blacks. Nor were there any onslaughts against establishments employing blacks.⁵⁰ Although racial prejudice rather than economic issues were the general causes of the riot, the immediate eruption of violence was due to the drafting of several members of Black Joke Engine Company Number 33. The firemen who believed that they should be exempted from the draft as they were from militia duty went on a rampage and destroyed the draft office in the 19th ward of Manhattan. The mob action resulted in the loss of 119 individuals. Incensed Negrophobes within the mob element burned down the orphanage for colored children. Reportedly, over 5,000 blacks fled to the swamps and woods near Bergen, New Jersey and to Weeksville in Brooklyn. The Riot led to a decline in New York's black population from

⁴⁹See for example, Albon P. Man, "Labor Competition and the New York Draft Riots of 1863." Journal of Negro History, XXXVI, 4 (October, 1951), 375-405.

⁵⁰Adrian Cook, The Armies of the Streets: The New York City Draft Riots of 1863 (Lexington, 1974), 204-205.

12,700 in 1860 to fewer than 10,000 in 1865. One Irish woman's black husband was missing. The Tribune reported, "if one could judge from her lamentations, the natural antipathy of the Irish for the negro was certainly overcome in this instance."⁵¹

To help the victims, the New York merchants, many of who belonged to the Union League, formed a committee of relief which raised \$40,779.08 by direct appeal to reimburse property losses as well as to assist those who became widows or orphans as a consequence of the riot. After consulting with black ministers, who made over 3,000 visits ascertaining need, the committee provided help for 12,782 persons.⁵²

In the aftermath of the Draft Riot, some of the "previously integrated streetcar began limiting blacks to special cars," while other railroads fearing violence refused to accept black passengers who either had to walk miles to their jobs or give them up for lack of transportation.⁵³ In January 1864, James W. C. Pennington

⁵¹Ibid., 56, 57, 194, 206; Report of the Committee of Merchants for the Relief of Colored People Suffering From the Late Riot in the City of New York (New York, 1863), 7; New York Tribune, August 7, 1863. For contemporary accounts of the riot see the July 17, 18, 1863 issues. Paul Renard Migliore, "The Business of Union: The New York Business Community and the Civil War" (Ph.D dissertation, Columbia University, 1975), p. 333.

⁵²Report of the Committee of Merchants, 3,10,11,42,45.

⁵³Ibid., 12. Migliore, "The Business of Union: The New York Business Community and the Civil War", p. 333.

advanced the dubious argument that the Irish rioted because they opposed "colored protestant laborers... not colored laborers." According to him, many black washerwomen lost business because whites were afraid to leave valuable clothes in their care after the Irish had destroyed many expensive items of clothing.⁵⁴

Even before the riot, some blacks found it difficult to remain in The United States. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, the South's demands for the extension of slavery, the Dred Scott decision of 1857, the denial of equal suffrage, legal and social disabilities and verbal calumnations convinced thousands of American blacks to seek dignity away from this country's shores. Interest in migration to Canada, Africa or the Caribbean was not a new thing in 1860, since every black generation in pre-Civil War America had to contend with it. Most Afro-Americans were opposed to emigration and colonization, but for some it offered hope for a new life.⁵⁵

In 1860, a black minority intellectually supported the recently formed African Civilization Society which

⁵⁴The Principia, January 7, 14, 1864. For an account of Negrophobism among the Irish see Williston H. Lofton, "Northern Labor and the Negro During the Civil War," Journal of Negro History, XXXIV, 3 (July, 1949), 254-273.

⁵⁵Aptheker, A Documentary History of the Negro People..., I, 471-473. Leon Litwack, North of Slavery, (Chicago, 1961) Forrest G. Wood, Black Scare, (Berkeley, 1970).

was led by Henry Highland Garnet, Daniel Payne and Martin Delany. Proposing to civilize and Christianize Africa, the society hoped to give dignity to the African race in the diaspora. In March 1861 it decided that Garnet should take a select group to Yorubaland (Nigeria) for the purpose of settlement. It was recommended that \$10,000 be raised to cover the expenses for twenty settlers.⁵⁶

Both Liberia, a black republic since 1846, and Yorubaland were remote areas with a hostile climate that would at best attract only a few hundred emigrants annually. However, in the western hemisphere, Haiti beckoned, and thousands of North American blacks gave serious thought to emigrating there. In 1859 Fabre Geffrard, military hero of the wars with the Dominican Republic, overthrew the regime of Emperor Faustin I and installed himself as president for life. The nationalistic Haitian offered to pay the expenses of all Negroes, Mulattoes and Indians from North America who wished to come to his island as agriculturalists.⁵⁷

While Afro-Americans debated the pros and cons of Geffrard's offer, The World wrote, "The only hope of a bright future for the colored race is in an exodus to

⁵⁶Constitution of the African Civilization Society ..., (New Haven, 1861), 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8. Earl Ofari, "Let Your Motto Be Resistance," The Life and Thoughts of Henry Highland Garnet, (Boston, 1972), 71-102.

⁵⁷James Redpath, A Guide to Haiti, (Boston, 1861), 3.

some country where the contrast of color will not exist to crush out the aspirings of the soul." The New York Times considered Haiti to be a paradise for blacks; a place "where white men get the kicks and negroes the candy--where the black man gets the oyster and the white man the shell."⁵⁸ A vocal minority of whites and blacks viewed Haiti as a place where cotton, tobacco and sugar could be grown in direct competition with the slave states.⁵⁹

Despite the advantages of free passage, three acres of free land, military exemption, religious and educational freedom and the right to form their own communities, most blacks were reluctant to depart for Haiti. Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet and James McCune Smith played major roles in the debate. Douglass, who opposed mass migration, cautioned blacks to remain in America to combat the injustices of racial oppression and slavery. Bitterly, Douglass announced in 1861 that he was "not an Emigrationist."⁶⁰

Garnet, president of the African Civilization Society, who recognized the difficulties of trying to create an interest in Africa, quickly gave his attention

⁵⁸The World, October 10, 1860. New York Times,

⁵⁹Weekly Anglo-African, January 26, April 20, 23, 1861 Redpath, A Guide to Haiti, 174-175

⁶⁰Douglass' Monthly, I (May 1859), 68. III (January 1861), 386. III (March 1861), 420. IV (July 1861). 484.

to the Haitian movement. Haiti represented to the orator a place where a "negro nationality" could blossom. Garnet attacked the anti-emigrationists as desirous of seeing qualified black men and women remain in the United States as the "drudges and menials of white men who will not employ or work with them."⁶¹

James McCune Smith, graduate of the University of Glasgow and former editor of The Colored American, was embittered by the emigrationists' desire to leave America and their slave brothers. The noted physician criticized Garnet and his supporters. "For my part," wrote Smith, "I ask to be excused from emigrating either to Abbeokuta (Nigeria) or Haiti...." Smith chastised Garnet for "advising [people] to go to Haiti [because] you direct them to sink lower" instead of aiming higher. "Shake yourself free from these migrating phantasms," admonished Smith, "[and] do not...leave an earnest and devoted people without a leader."⁶²

⁶¹Weekly Anglo-African, January 19, 1861. For similar views from others see February 2, 14, April 20, 1861 issues. My article "Afro-American Emigration to Haiti During the American Civil War" will appear in the July 1978 The Americas.

Eventually a combination of events dampened the spirit of "Haitian fever", and only about 2,500 Afro-Americans from mainly the eastern seaboard emigrated to the island. Numerous negative letters sent back to America by dissatisfied settlers, the inefficiency of Haitian officials to quickly survey land, the ending of slavery in Washington, D. C., and the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation provided many blacks with a renewed faith in the United States. The total failure of the Île à Vache experiment convinced many that it would be a mistake to leave the United States. In 1862 Bernard Kock sought to convince Lincoln to allow him to "settle" contrabands on the small island leased to him by Haiti. The president declined to deal with Kock, but he accepted the offer of two New York merchants, Paul S. Forbes and Charles K. Tuckerman, to settle former slaves at Île à Vache. They hired Kock to be the manager of the island, but many died of diseases and lack of shelter.⁶³

⁶²For Smith's remark see Weekly Anglo-African, January 12, 1861. Willis D. Boyd, "James Redpath and American Negro Colonization in Haiti, 1860-1862," The Americas, XII (October, 1955), 169-182. For examples of problems associated with the Haitian Emigration Movement see Correspondence of James Redpath...December 31, 1861 to May 12, 1862, manuscript, Schomburg Collection, NYPL.

In the early 1860's New York blacks were verbally and physically abused; they were victimized by legal disabilities and economic privations. Nevertheless, they fought back in various ways, albeit peaceful ones, to show that America was theirs as much as it was anyone's. Some sought to escape from racism by migrating from America's shores, but this proved to be a futile measure as most preferred to deal with the realities they knew instead of looking for a panacea in faraway lands. Resistance became their motto to overcome racism whether it appeared in a legislature that would not allow them the vote on equal terms, or in a government that would not accept them, as soldiers, to help defend the Union.⁶⁴

⁶³Bernard Kock to A. Lincoln, October 1, 1862, Robert Todd Lincoln Papers (Washington, 1947), ser 1, nos. 18665 & 18799 on microfilm, Columbia University. New York Herald, March 22, 1864 P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865, (New York, 1961), 247. Report on Colonization and Emigration Made to the Sec. of the Interior by the Agent of Emigration, (Washington, D. C., 1862), 20-21.

⁶⁴John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom. 4th ed., (New York, 1974), 187.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE TO RAISE BLACK REGIMENTS IN NEW YORK STATE, 1861-1864

Recent historians have devoted many pages to the recruitment of blacks into the Union Army. Yet little has been recorded about the regiments raised in the Empire State.⁶⁵ Both the federal government and the State of New York, initially, displayed either indifference or hostility, or both, to the suggestion of using black volunteers to fight the Confederacy. Later, the opposition emanated especially from Albany in the person of the Democratic governor, Horatio Seymour.

The firing on Fort Sumter in April, 1861, was viewed by many abolitionists as a sign from God that the end of slavery was near. Surely they thought that the federal government would use the war to emancipate the slaves. Within a few days of the outbreak of hostilities, Northern blacks, including many in New York, offered their services to the Union. But less

⁶⁵Recent historians who have written about black participation in the Civil War but only touch briefly on the efforts to raise regiments in New York include James McPherson, The Negro's Civil War (New York, 1965); Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (New York, 1956); and Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953).

than a fortnight after the capture of Fort Sumter, the police department of New York City prevented Afro-Americans from meeting on the grounds that the meeting "might lead to some unpleasantness in New York as well as exasperate the South." A few days later the Weekly Anglo-African asked, "Have We A War Policy?" The editor stressed that blacks must assist their slave brothers, but "no Governor would allow colored soldiers to muster into service and if he did, the General Government would reject such aid." Therefore, he concluded, the paper's philosophy "is against the policy...[of] organiz[ing] volunteer companies." Instead, he asserted, "let us... organize for military purposes...procure arms, and hold ourselves as Minute Men to respond when the slave calls."⁶⁶

On May 1, 1861, blacks in New York City met to discuss a resolution, "that we tender our services to the Governor (Edwin D. Morgan) of this State, to serve during the war, either as firemen...to act as a Home Guard, or to go South, if their services should be required."⁶⁷ The assembled body defeated the resolution because the majority believed that their efforts to raise troops would be rejected by the state. Nevertheless, some began to drill in a privately hired hall until the chief

⁶⁶The Weekly Anglo-African, April 27, May 11, 1861.

⁶⁷The Pine and Palm (Boston), May 25, 1861, quoted in McPherson, Negro's Civil War, 30.

of police warned that "he could not protect them from popular indignation and assault."⁶⁸

Later in the summer, the Weekly Anglo-African altered its uncompromising view and told its readers to seize arms and to prepare themselves for the government's call. The war was more than just a white man's war, the paper argued, for the "fate [of blacks] hangs upon its issues." "The South must be subjugated," warned the editor, "or [free blacks] shall be enslaved."⁶⁹

Frederick Douglass, boldly informed the nation how best to end the war. In an editorial, he wrote, "LET THE SLAVES AND FREE COLORED PEOPLE BE CALLED INTO SERVICE AND FORMED INTO A LIBERATING ARMY." Douglass deemed it foolish for the Union to continue to fight the Confederacy with one hand. He asked, "why does the Government reject the negro? Is he not a man? Can he not wield a sword, fire a gun, march and...obey orders like any other [from]...the State of New York?"⁷⁰

While the war continued to go badly for the Union, individual whites and blacks sent letters and telegrams to

⁶⁸Horace Greeley, The American Conflict: A History of the Great Rebellion in the United States of America, 1860-64 (2 vols., Hartford, 1864-66), II, 514-515.

⁶⁹The Weekly Anglo-African, August 24, September 14, 1861, quoted in McPherson, Negro's Civil War, 30-31.

⁷⁰Douglass' Monthly, III (May 1861), 451, and IV (September 1861), 516.

to Albany and Washington requesting permission to raise black regiments. On July 26, 1861, Robert Crowley wrote to Governor Edwin D. Morgan that "three colored regiments, armed and equipped, ready for immediate service, and to be sustained through the war at private expense" are willing to fight for the government through the State of New York. Morgan turned down the offer on the grounds that there was "no authority to enroll colored men." A twenty-five foot scroll containing 400 signatures of New Yorkers calling for black enlistment was sent to Lincoln.⁷¹

While Morgan was denying Crowley's offer, Lincoln received a letter from New York City signed by R. H. Vandyne and others. They inquired if the government would accept black troops to quell the rebellion. Late in August, a correspondent from Dunkirk, New York, wrote to Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, asking him if he would accept "a regiment of free colored people from this direction." Edward Vernon of New York City informed the secretary on September 17, that "a Black Regiment from this city could be put into the field in thirty days. Will you be kind enough to inform me of your decision on the subject." Cameron

⁷¹Elon A. Woodward, comp., The Negro in the Military Service of the United States, 1639-1886 (8 vols., Washington, D. C., 1888), II, 813. Frederick Phisterer, comp., New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1865 (3rd ed., 6 vols., Albany, 1912), I, 22. The undated scroll is located in the New-York Historical Society.

wrote back, "I...suggest that your application be made to Governor Morgan, who has charge of the whole subject in the State of New York."⁷²

Since no state was raising black regiments in 1861, Governor Morgan felt that the authority resided in the White House. Lincoln's official policy was that the war was being fought to preserve the Union. Thus it was a quarrel between whites only. The commander in chief had consistently, through the secretary of war, refused to accept nonwhite volunteers. Perhaps he opposed the arming of free blacks because he feared that they would make poor soldiers. He told a delegation from Chicago: "If we were to arm then [the slaves], I fear that in a few weeks the arms would be in the hands of the rebels."⁷³ Lincoln may have had nonslaves in mind also.

Yet, within two years he would not only issue a proclamation to end slavery but would call for the use of slave soldiers to end the rebellion. Like other politicians and opinion makers in the Midwest, Lincoln

⁷²Negro in the Military Service, II, 815, 820, 822, 823.

⁷³Philip Van Doren Stern, ed., The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1940), 722.

between 1861 and the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation had to wrestle with the question of whether or not the war should take on the extra dimension of destroying slavery.⁷⁴ By the fall of 1861, the chief executive was of the view that nothing should be done to destroy the delicate relationship existing between the border states and the Union. After General John C. Fremont declared martial law in Missouri, Lincoln wrote to him regarding the proclamation in a private and confidential letter: "I think that the closing paragraph, in relation to...liberating slaves of traitorous owners, will alarm our Southern Union friends, and turn them against us--perhaps ruin our fair prospect for Kentucky." His serious tone did not imply, however, that he was totally against emancipation. On April 16, 1862, he signed a bill abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia. In the message to Congress he stated, "I have never doubted the constitutional authority of congress to abolish slavery in this District; and I have ever desired to see the national capital freed from the institution in some satisfactory way." During the summer of 1862, he appealed to border state representatives to vote for compensated emancipation, and on

⁷⁴Jacque Voegeli, Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War (Chicago, 1967), see Chapter Two; Hans L. Trefousse, The Radical Republicans (New York, 1969), 169, 177, 182, 211, 218.

July 22, 1862, discussed with his cabinet the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. It was perhaps at that meeting that he issued his "Memorandum on Recruiting Negroes," in which he stated that he had no objections to recruiting among free blacks or among slaves of "loyal owners with their consent." Several weeks later, Lincoln warned a group from Indiana that the arming of "the negroes would turn 50,000 bayonets from the loyal Border States against us that were for us." Despite this sober comment, the president was quietly assessing his strength. He convinced the politically important Midwest that emancipation would not lead to a mass northern migration of freedmen. By January 1, 1863, Lincoln was not only committed to emancipation but to the raising of black troops to suppress the rebellion.⁷⁵

New York abolitionists were encouraged by the proclamation and the subsequent organization of black troops in Massachusetts. The former Know-Nothing leader, Daniel Ullman, wrote to Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts on February 28, 1863 that he was secretly recruiting in Manhattan "a hundred or more

⁷⁵Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (9 vols., New Brunswick, N. J., 1953-55), IV, 506; V, 192, 317-319, 338, 356-357; Voegeli, Free But Not Equal, Ch. 2, passim; John Hope Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation (Garden City, New York 1963), passim.

colored men who can read and write, to act as Sergeants." Ullman, fearful of a hostile reaction from whites, added, "I consider it to be altogether necessary that this movement should not be known to the public."⁷⁶ Meanwhile Lincoln was coming more to the private conclusion that blacks were not only needed as support troops but could prove to be the psychological weapon needed to end the war quickly. In a confidential letter to Governor Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, who had reportedly expressed thoughts about raising a black military force, Lincoln stated: "The colored population is the great available, and yet unavailed of, force for restoring the Union. The bare sight of 50,000 armed and drilled black soldiers upon the banks of the Mississippi would end the rebellion at once."⁷⁷

Although the official sentiment in Washington favored the creation of black regiments, governors were still in charge of volunteer quotas. If a Republican had been in office in New York State, the recruitment of blacks would probably have gone smoothly. Democratic

⁷⁶Negro in the Military Service, III, 1115.

⁷⁷The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 3rd ser. (5 vols., Washington, D. C., 1899-1901), III, 103.

candidate Horatio Seymour, however, won the bitterly fought election of 1862. Republicans viewed him as a sympathizer with Jefferson Davis and believed that "every vote given for Seymour is a vote for treason."⁷⁸ Seymour was not immune to the strong Negrophobic views of the state's Democrats. Thus, in early 1863, Seymour was unwilling to accept nonwhite recruits.

Cognizant of this attitude, Frederick Douglass in his famous editorial entitled, "Men of Color, to Arms!" urged New York blacks to go to Massachusetts where they could enlist to fight for the liberty of the government and of the slaves.⁷⁹

Still hoping for federal authorization, correspondents sent letters of inquiry to the War Department. In April, Henry M. Herman, a major in the United States Volunteers, informed Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that after six weeks of recruiting, twenty-four hundred blacks were enrolled as soldiers in the First Brigade of the New York State Colored Volunteers and were awaiting government recognition. At this point in the struggle,

⁷⁸The New York Herald, October 9, 1862, quoted in De Alva S. Alexander, A Political History of the State of New York (4 vols., New York, 1906-23), III, 43-44. See also Sidney D. Brummer, Political History of New York State During the Period of the Civil War, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, no. 103 (New York, 1911), 227-47

⁷⁹Douglass' Monthly, V (March 1863), 801.

organizational efforts took over in the form of the Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers. On May 3, 1863, a committee was formed to meet with Lincoln to find out what facilities would be extended by the War Department toward the authorization of black troops in New York. The committee consisted of Edward Gilbert, Dexter Fairbanks, James Fairman, and Lewis Francis--all prominent white New Yorkers. They met with the president and presented him with a memorial calling for the organization and mustering of ten thousand troops under the auspices of Major General John Frémont. Among the memorial's signers were Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, and Peter Cooper, all influential in New York's social and political circles.⁸⁰

Lincoln's reply was brief and disappointing: "That Governor Seymour is Governor of a Loyal State, the National Government declined to act in reference to colored enlistments in that State until it could be shown that [he], under his own signature, refused to encourage volunteering in that way."⁸¹ Aware

⁸⁰Negro in the Military Service, III, 1173; Henry O'Rielly, First Organization of Colored Troops in the State of New York to Aid in Suppressing the Slaveholders' Rebellion (New York, 1864), 1.

⁸¹O'Rielly, First Organization of Colored Troops, 2.

of the importance of using Afro-American troops, Lincoln was not ready to confront Seymour who controlled a key state.

John Frémont, because of his aborted attempt at freeing the slaves in Missouri, was a popular choice as a commander of black men. Early in March, a delegation of Poughkeepsie residents had gone to Washington to offer their services. Lincoln read a letter from the group which offered "the service of ten thousand of the sable sons, called the Fremont Legion, to be led to the field of battle." A copy of the letter was forwarded to Fremont asking him to be "the Joshua to lead us to the field of battle." The general, quite concerned that Lincoln would blame him for the delegation's prose, confided to Charles Sumner that he had rejected the legion's offer because he "disapproved the project of raising and sending to the field, colored troops in scattered and weak detachments."⁸²

Throughout the summer of 1863, Abraham Lincoln was pursuing a policy to put more former slaves into uniform. In a letter to Stanton, dated July 21, he

⁸²Washington Republican, March 18, 1863, quoted in Douglass' Monthly, V (March 1863), 840-41; Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, VI, 243n.

wrote, "I desire that a renewed and vigorous effort be made to raise colored forces along the shores of the Missi[ssi]ppi." A similar note was forwarded to General Ulysses S. Grant on August 9, but significantly, concerning the raising of black troops, Lincoln added, "I believe it is a resource which, if vigorously applied now, will soon close the contest."⁸³ The president was anxious to end the war with the help of black troops. Yet he preferred to recruit in the Confederate states, where he did not have to worry about powerful governors like Horatio Seymour.

The struggle continued in New York as recruiters were being shunted back and forth between Washington and Albany. In July of 1863, the Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers asked Seymour to appoint Colonel James Fairman to organize black volunteers. On August 13, after weeks without a reply, Lewis Francis informed Seymour that "if Colonel James Fairman, or any other known to be in sympathy with the movement of using Colored Troops...be appointed by you to recruit such troops at least four thousand Colored Volunteers can be raised in this State." Smith Requa, the association's contact in Albany, wrote to Lewis Francis that the governor "was... opposed to the whole system of using negro regiments."⁸⁴

⁸³Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, VI 342, 374.

⁸⁴O'Rielly, First Organization of Colored Troops, 2-3; Negro in the Military Service, III, 1665, 1667, 1668.

At this point the question arises, why was Seymour so negative? He was against the draft and surely the volunteering of Afro-Americans would eliminate or curtail the need for military induction in New York. But local and national Democrats held racist views, and Horatio Seymour was no exception, as a brief look at his political career indicates. Upon receiving the nomination for governor at the Democratic state convention on September 10, 1862, he expressed this opinion of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation: "The scheme for an immediate emancipation and general arming of the slaves throughout the South is a proposal for the butchery of women and children, for scenes of lust and rapine, of arson and murder unparalleled in the history of the world." Seymour believed that slavery was the business of the individual states. In his first annual message to the legislature, January 7, 1863, he wrote, "when the leaders of the insurrection at the Extreme South say that Free and Slave States cannot exist together...and when this is echoed from the Extreme North by the enemies of our Constitution, both parties say they cannot, simply because they will not,

respect the laws and the Constitution."⁸⁵

One can only conclude that he sympathized with the institution of slavery because in the same message he added, "we must restore our Union as it was before the outbreak of the war." It is not surprising that in his second annual message, January 5, 1864, Seymour made no mention of using black troops to quell the rebellion. Alexander J. Wall, one of Seymour's biographers, wrote in 1929 that the governor opposed the use of colored troops because "the war was not one for the abolition of slavery" and because he knew "that the people of the North would not consent that 4,000,000 free negroes should live in their midst." Wall noted too that "during the first six months of 1863 Governor Seymour did everything in his power to keep up volunteer enlistments in the state of New York."⁸⁶ That statement, of course, is exaggerated in light of his opposition to black recruitment.

Due to Seymour's hostility and unwillingness to cooperate, efforts at raising black regiments inched along.

⁸⁵Thomas Cook and Thomas Knox, Public Record: Including Speeches, Messages, Proclamations, Official Correspondence and Other Public Utterances of Horatio Seymour ... (New York, 1868), 54; Charles Z. Lincoln, ed., State of New York: Messages from the Governors... (11 vols., Albany, 1909), V, 456.

⁸⁶Lincoln, ed., Messages from the Governors, V 473-74; Alexander J. Wall, A Sketch of the Life of Horatio Seymour, 1810-1886, with a Detailed Account of His Administration as Governor of the State of New York during the War of 1861-1865 (New York, 1929), 23, 32-33.

On July 10, 1863, favorable news came from Washington in a letter from William Whiting, solicitor to the War Department, to Edward Gilbert of the Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers. Whiting informed Gilbert that "on the 22nd of May, the War Department issued a General Order (No. 143) establishing a bureau...for the organization of Colored Regiments, whereby the system of employing them as part of the forces of the United States has become the fixed and permanent policy of the Government." Seymour was still recognized, however, as "loyal" by Lincoln even though the governor was hostile to nonwhite enlistments as revealed in a letter from Smith Requa to the members of the association. On October 12, 1863, Edward Gilbert wrote to Stanton and stated, "should the President, in view of the [~~negative~~] action of Governor Seymour, see fit to grant authentications for raising colored regiments in this state...I doubt not that New York would send several regiments."⁸⁷

The bitter and fruitless struggle began to receive newspaper coverage. On October 14, the Evening Post wrote about the association's efforts to raise

⁸⁷O'Rielly, First Organization of Colored Troops, 3-4; War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 215-16; Negro in the Military Service, III, 1665, 1671

black recruits and printed Seymour's refusal. It also published the contents of Smith Requa's letter to Edward Gilbert and Lewis Francis which read in part: "Does [Seymour]...intend...to prevent volunteering, and [to] make another draft necessary? While the Governor was delaying his answer,...not less than six hundred...colored men...enlisted in Rhode Island...some four hundred more left here and entered in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Thus we have lost a full regiment...[Does] he desire the Union armies to be deprived of needed reinforcements, and leave them at the mercy of superior rebel numbers?" New York was losing too many men to other states and something had to be done quickly. On November 9, the Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers issued an open plea for concerned New Yorkers to attend a meeting on Monday evening, November 16, to discuss Seymour's hostility. The circular was signed by sixty-six people including Peter Cooper, William C. Bryant, and P. T. Barnum. As a result of the request, a group was formed to see Lincoln, since Seymour would not act. Reverend Henry Highland Garnet reiterated that blacks were going to Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut to enlist.⁸⁸

⁸⁸The [New York] Evening Post, October 14, 1863; War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 1082-1083; O'Rielly, First Organization of Colored Troops, 5, 7.

Meanwhile Edward Gilbert inquired of Stanton "whether authority...could not be obtained directly from the president" in light of Seymour's constant refusals. Stanton's reply was disappointing: "in reference to raising in the State of New York, a corps of colored troops...I am directed to say...that it is not considered expedient to grant...authority."⁸⁹

On November 19, 1863, William K. Strong of New York City telegraphed Stanton, "Will you authorize the raising and organization of colored troops in this State and credit the same to the State's quota?" The next day, Henry O'Rielly, secretary of the Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers, reiterated in a letter to the War Department the point raised in Strong's telegram and concluded, "This application to the National Government results from the refusal of certain State functionaries to recognize colored men in the call for volunteers."

The association received unexpected good news five days later. Stanton replied by telegram to William K. Strong that black troops raised would be credited to New York State, and until authorized by Congress no bounty would be paid and the salary would be ten dollars per month.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Negro in the Military Service, III, 1731, 1740.

⁹⁰War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 1081, 1082, 1092.

The War Department was now willing to accept recruits from New York as long as it was on its terms. This is indicated by the exchange of the following letters. On November 26, Brigadier General Francis B. Spinola of Brooklyn wrote to Stanton, "in regard to enlisting of colored troops...I enlisted six volunteers of that class yesterday and will, in my opinion be able to fill up a full regiment in a short time." Four days later, a reply, signed by Edward D. Townsend, assistant adjutant general of the War Department, was sent to Spinola informing him that his action was disapproved because "Colored troops will not be recruited in the State of New York by any person until regularly authorized by the Department."¹⁰⁰

During this time, the Union League, the patriotic Republican began to work closely with the Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers. Thus, such prominent New Yorkers as Alexander Van Rensselaer, Le Grand B. Cannon, James Roosevelt, Elliot Cowdin, Charles Kirkland, Sherman Bacon, and George Bliss, Jr., became engaged in the effort to raise and equip black volunteers in the state. In late November, the Union League Club wrote to Governor Seymour asking for his assistance in raising "colored" soldiers.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., III, 1097, 1105.

On November 27, Seymour sent a reply stating that "the matter rests entirely with the War Department." Believing that the governor was evading the issue, the club on December 1, contacted Secretary of War Stanton: "We...ask an authorization for a regiment of colored troops to be raised in the State of New York.... The Union League Club is composed of over 500 of the wealthiest and most respectable citizens of New York."¹⁰¹

Stanton initially decided to refuse the request. He reportedly asked Senator Edwin Morgan, "Do you think I am going to make a fool of myself?"¹⁰² After being told by Morgan that his refusal would discourage five hundred of New York's leading and politically active citizens, Stanton reconsidered and sent a letter signed by Charles W. Foster, assistant adjutant general, to George Bliss, Jr. The letter gave approval to the Union League Club "to raise in the State of New York one regiment of infantry to be composed of colored men, to be mustered into the service

¹⁰¹The Organization of The Union League Club is described in Guy James Gibson, "Lincoln's League: The Union League Movement During the Civil War" (Ph.D. dissertation, Volunteering Presented October 13, pp. 57-77. George Bliss), 3, 5; War of the Rebellion, ser. of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864 (New York, 1864), 3, 5; War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 1106-7.

of the United States for three years or during the war." Foster added, "to these troops to bounties will be paid [although whites received them]. They will receive \$10 per month [whites received \$13] and one ration (per day), \$3 of which monthly pay may be in clothing. The regiment will be known and designated as the Twentieth Regiment U. S. Colored Troops."¹⁰³ Evidently by this time, the government had concluded that Seymour, indeed, was a hindrance to black recruitment. Upon receiving authorization, the club dispatched a letter to Albany asking Seymour to "give the movement [his] aid and countenance." The governor did not reply to the request for him "to put a stop to the recruitment in [New York] State of [colored] men for other States."¹⁰⁴

On December 10, 1863, Edward D. Townsend, assistant adjutant general, ordered James B. Fry, provost marshal general of the War Department, to "instruct the officers of your department in the State of New York to enlist into the service of the United States, ...all

¹⁰²Banquet Given by the Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864 to Commemorate the Departure for the Seat of War of the Twentieth Regiment of U. S. Colored Troops Raised by the Club (New York, 1865), 15.

¹⁰³War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 1117-18.

¹⁰⁴Bliss, Union League Club Report, 9.

suitable colored men who may offer themselves for enlistment." All qualified recruits were to be sent to Rikers Island in New York Harbor, where the Twentieth Regiment was being organized.¹⁰⁵

The Union League Club sought the cooperation of the state's prominent black population in raising the regiment. A week before Christmas, 1863, the club issued a circular stating that the Twentieth Regiment would be the only one authorized for recruitment in New York. The circular cited Vincent Colyer as the general superintendent of recruiting, and it called for written applications from those who wanted authorizations to recruit. Lieutenant Colonel Nelson B. Bartram of the Eighth Regiment, United States Colored Troops, was offered the position of colonel of the Twentieth Regiment, and the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet was asked to be the chaplain (by regulations the only officer who could be black) but was disqualified by a physical defect.¹⁰⁶

On December 19, fourteen days after receiving approval for the Twentieth Regiment, the Union League Club applied for authorization for raising a second regiment. Charles W. Foster wrote to George Bliss, Jr., on

¹⁰⁵War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 1163.

¹⁰⁶Bliss, Union League Club Report, 11-12, 16-17.

January 4, 1864: "I am directed by the Secretary of War to say that your request is hereby complied with, and the regiment will be known and designated as the Twenty-sixth Regiment U. S. Colored Troops." Bliss notified Stanton later in the day that he could raise more men if the army provided the Twentieth with new Springfield muskets because "it is a good policy to show [blacks] that the Government puts into their hands the best of arms." Later in the month, Bliss requested and received authorization to raise the Thirty-first Regiment United States Colored Troops.¹⁰⁷ New York was able to furnish the army with 2,300 men in less than sixty days after receiving authorization for the Twentieth Regiment. This was due to the presence in the state of approximately nine thousand eligible black men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.¹⁰⁸

Once the regiments were authorized and trained, they received an emotional send off from the residents of New York City. On January 5, 1864, wives of Union League Club members appointed a committee to secure a stand of colors for the Twentieth Regiment. Some of those involved were

¹⁰⁷War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, III, 4, 10; IV, 4, 55.

¹⁰⁸George W. Williams, A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865 (New York, 1888), 119. In 1860 there were 10,208 black men in New York State, according to the report of Joseph Kennedy, superintendent of the Census.

Mrs. Henry Van Rensselaer, Mrs. John Jay, Mrs. John Jacob Astor, and Mrs. George Bliss, Jr.¹⁰⁹

On March 5, the Twentieth Regiment marched from 26th Street to Union Square. At a mass rally, Charles King, president of Columbia College, told the crowd and the regiment, "You are in arms, not for the freedom and law of the white race alone, but for universal law and freedom." King added, "On! on! then, soldiers of the 20th...nowhere have they [black troops] turned back from the bloodiest conflict or failed to follow their leader into the very jaws of death." President King, reported the Tribune, climaxed the day by presenting the regiment with a flag emblazoned with a conquering eagle, a broken yoke, and the armed figure of liberty.¹¹⁰

The Twenty-sixth Regiment was scheduled for a public reception on March 16, 1864, but it was canceled due to stormy weather. The next day, Easter Sunday, before a steamer transported the regiment to the war zone, John Jay presented a flag to the Twenty-sixth on behalf of the white women of New York City. Vincent Colyer unfurled before them a blue silk banner trimmed with gold and inscribed "Unconditional Loyalty." He wished the men Godspeed on behalf of several benevolent societies of colored men of New York City.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Ibid., Iv, 10-11.

¹¹⁰New-York Tribune, March 7, 1864

¹¹¹Bliss, Union League Club Report, 27-30.

Altogether 4,125 black men served in the three regiments or about two percent of the total Afro-American enlistment in the Civil War. It is not certain whether these men actually served under the auspices of the state, for in 1885 Major General John Farnsworth wrote from the adjutant general's office in Albany to the black historian George W. Williams: "This State did not organize any colored troops. Three regiments were recruited by authority of the United States in this State. The State received credit for enlistments made, but the credit was given by the United States.... There are no records of these regiments in this office from which the information you desire could be obtained."¹¹²

Whether they officially fought for the State of New York or for the United States is a moot point. The men of the three regiments fought bravely and gave their lives for the preservation of the Union and for the complete abolition of slavery.

It was a difficult struggle to raise black regiments in New York, yet black and white alike pooled their resources. Without the constant political agitation from

¹¹²W. Spencer Carpenter, "The Negro Soldier's Contribution in the Wars of the United States," A.M.E. Review, XXIX (January 1913), 222; Williams, History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 119.

influential whites, the Department of War would probably never have consented to authorize the recruitment of New York's Afro-Americans. Yet all of their efforts would have been for nothing if blacks had not been willing and even eager to confront the slaveholders' wrath on the battlefield. Overall only a small percentage of black recruits came from New York; yet their contribution was part of a concerted effort to free millions from bondage.

CHAPTER III

NEW YORK'S RACIAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE BLACK REGIMENTS AND THE BOUNTY FRAUDS

Afro-Americans have fought in all of the wars involving the United States from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam conflict. The presence of blacks in uniform did not lessen hostility against that group as some whites refused to recognize them as equal defenders of the flag. This was particularly true of the Civil War. Animosity against blacks was high as the draft riots and the views of the Democratic newspapers showed. Racial hostility was partially responsible for creating a climate that led to the raising of New York's black regiments. Le Grand B. Cannon, president of the Union League Club, cited the organization of the "colored" troops as the most "memorable in its annals." He considered it as an act of "purging [New York City] from the taint of that wicked, infamous and inhuman riot of July [1863]."113

113 Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864 to Commemorate the Departure for the Seat of War of the Twentieth Regiment of United States Colored Troops Raised by the Club (New York, 1886), 7.

Understandably, the club was proud of its achievements, yet it almost failed to grasp the opportunity to recruit blacks. George Bliss, Jr., reported in his autobiography that it originally intended to raise white troops to replace those that were heavily decimated. Nevertheless, the chairman of the committee, Alexander Van Rensselaer, stated in November 1863, "that it would not [do to] put any additional men in the service, and that we must go to work and raise some colored troops." Bliss reported that the members 'kind of shivered' at the suggestion. Finally after five or six days the committee accepted Van Rensselaer's challenge. A different interpretation of the raising of the regiments was offered by John A. Weeks. Commenting in 1880, the Union Leaguer recalled that during the draft riots a club member said 'within a year a fully equipped negro regiment shall march from the club-house to the front.' This was suggested to show the Irish that they did not control the streets.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴Union League Club Proceedings at the Dinner of the Early Members of the Union League Club of the City of New York Tuesday May 20th, 1880, (New York, 1880), 38; Autobiography and Letters of George Bliss Presented by His Daughter Mrs. Lewis H. Watkins June 1968 (unpublished manuscript in the possession of the New-York Historical Society), 164; Will Irwin, Earl Chapin May, and Joseph Hotchkiss, A History of the Union League Club of New York City (New York, 1892), 31.

In March 1864, when the Twentieth Regiment was scheduled to march down Broadway in Manhattan, there was some apprehension about possible street violence. Nelson B. Bartram, the regimental commander, did not hesitate to march his recruits through streets where eight months earlier blacks were executed on sight by enraged Irish. With the police commissioner, Thomas C. Acton, offering protection, however, Bartram requested that the police clear one block so that his men could assemble. He believed that "if a regiment well armed and well officered could not march through New York in spite of a mere mob,...it would not pay to send it to the front." To be safe, Bartram ordered the right and left companies to carry loaded muskets with twenty rounds of ammunition apiece.¹¹⁵

The Union League decided to have a band proceed the regiment down Broadway. Bliss wrote, "We applied to [Harvey B.] Dodsworth [who] said 'he would be d-----d if any of his men should march down ahead of niggers!'" Graffula, another respected band leader refused his services. Helmsmuller's Twenty-second Regimental band offered to play, but Jackson S. Schultz had already arranged for the Seventh Regiment Infantry band

¹¹⁵Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864, 30; Union League Club Proceedings...1880, 75.

to march in front of the black troops.¹¹⁶

As previously mentioned, New Yorkers enthusiastically cheered the black regiment as it marched down Broadway. To many in attendance, cheering was perhaps their way of showing Afro-Americans that they did not approve of the draft riots. The New York Herald, however, viewed the warm reception as the work of miscegenationists. "Even our veteran troops," quipped the Herald, "were never so enthusiastically greeted as were these ex-bootblacks, scrubbers, waiters and whitewashers." It continued, "Nothing but the theory of miscegenation can account for this difference between the reception of whites and negro troops." The Herald judged the giving of a flag to the regiment by 150 of New York's most refined women "a pretty fair start for miscegenation." It attacked President Charles King's address as "second hand bombast to a lot of ignorant darkies."¹¹⁷

The moderate New York Times succumbed temporarily to the amalgamation fears. It published the rumor that the Union League Club had a night bell that permitted interracial couples to enter the premises after dark where they were married by a black minister. Allegedly, two

¹¹⁶Autobiography and Letters of George Bliss, 163, 164; Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864, (New York, 1864), 40, 41.

¹¹⁷New York Herald, March 9, 1864.

elite white gentlemen fought over the affection of a black washerwoman. "We shrink from putting on paper," the Times commented, "the stories which reach us as to the prevalence amongst young white ladies of a preference for colored men--pure blacks having the precedence in all cases where there is room for choice." A week later the news paper reported that its miscegenation news was erroneous and that many blacks took exception to the view that they wanted white mates.¹¹⁸

Whether the newspapers created public opinion or merely reflected it is a debatable point. However, cheering crowds notwithstanding, New Yorkers generally did not care for, nor respect, black men in or out of uniform. The Union League Club found it impossible to procure space for recruiting headquarters. Jackson S. Schultz finally rented some rooms to the Union League that were originally rented by the Merchant's Committee providing relief to blacks in the aftermath of the July riots. "It was only by that subterfuge," Bliss wrote, "that we could get a place in the City of New York fit to use as headquarters for raising a colored regiment."¹¹⁹

The three regiments were trained on Rikers Island in the East River, and the Federal Government had steam-

¹¹⁸New York Times, March 26, 30, 1864; For views on miscegenation see Forrest G. Wood, Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction, (Berkeley, 1970), 53-79.

¹¹⁹Autobiography and Letters of George Bliss, 171-72.

boats to carry the recruits to the island. As Bliss remembered, "we found pretty soon that our recruits whom we were putting on to those boats were abused worse than any negroes had been on the plantations, and they were abused by men who wore the uniforms of the United States." Complaints from the Union League resulted in several of these individuals receiving orders to report to the war zone.¹²⁰

As a group, the Union League Club overcame its initial reported revulsion and worked hard to make the raising of the black regiments a success. Nevertheless, some of the members still could not accept black men as their equals. When the organization tendered a dinner invitation to the officers of the Twentieth Regiment which included the black chaplain, George W. Le Vere, a crisis developed. "I wish you could have seen the backs of some of the members of the Club." reported Bliss, "when they understood that a colored man was going to be invited down there socially! They 'humped' them away up! Le Vere came and gave one of the best speeches heard in the Club."¹²¹

Le Vere was involved in another incident that revealed the racism of the Rikers Island dining staff.

¹²⁰Ibid., 172.

¹²¹Union League Club Proceedings at the Dinner of the Early Members of the Union League Club, 72; Bliss, Autobiography and Letters of George Bliss, 176.

After a week on the island, he went to Colonel Nelson B. Bartram and said "that he had stayed there about as long as he could, unless he had something to eat." No one in the general officers mess would wait on him, and he had to procure his own food, a humiliating experience for a commissioned officer. Inviting Le Vere to eat with him, Bartram told his officers to report any discourtesies to the chaplain to him [Bartram] personally. He promised to 'make it lively' "in that mess room unless Mr. Le Vere was treated rightly." The caterer heard about the colonel's intentions and Le Vere had no more problems.¹²²

During the winter of 1864 the men had problems surviving the frigid days and nights. It is true that white regiments had similar difficulties but their deprivations were caused by the circumstances of war. It seems incongruous that men who were within eyesight of New York City had to suffer so severely. The total indifference shown to the black soldiers at Rikers Island was indicative of the government's lack of concern for them. Bliss informed C. W. Foster, Assistant Adjutant General in Washington, that there was much sickness at the training camp and that one recruit's legs were so badly frozen that they had to be amputated. The military

¹²²Union League Club Proceedings at the Dinner of the Early Members of the Union League Club, 71-72.

failed to provide the men with sufficient stockings or blankets. Many tents lacked wooden floors, a condition which added to the misery of the men. Jackson S. Schultz visited Rikers Island on a Sunday morning in January when the temperature was below zero. The troops had to burn fires to keep warm. The Union League Club eliminated some of the physical problems by providing floors and stoves for the tents. It also constructed a hospital building and receiving barracks to tend to the sick. "Schultz managed to get blankets even though he did not have a requisition form and it was a Sunday. The quarter master gave him blankets even though he could have been demoted for it."¹²³

While the pain of cold limbs could be alleviated by blankets; it was more difficult to remove the hurt experienced when the soldiers realized that they were being cheated out of their bounty. It is impossible to assess how important bounties were as an inducement for enlistment because the motivational factors for volunteering were not readily apparent. Black men, unlike whites, received ten dollars a month, of which three dollars were deducted for clothing. Nearly thirty dollars

¹²³ Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864, 28; George Bliss, Jr., to C. W. Foster, January 21, 1864, Regimental Papers Filed With Muster Rolls 20th U.S.C.I. Letters, 12/63 to 10/65, Record Group 94, National Archives.

was withdrawn from their first pay for uniforms.¹²⁴ The Union League Club's Committee on Volunteering reported in 1864 that "many of the men left situations where they were getting wages as high as sixty, forty and thirty dollars the month, and cheerfully enlisted for the...small pay of ten dollars a month...." It is conceivable that some enlisted because relief checks were given to their families, although in some parts of the state and in the City supervisors did not want to pay relief money to 'wives of colored men.' Possibly the promise of large bounties encouraged some to enlist.¹²⁵

The records of the Twentieth, Twenty-sixth and Thirty-first United States Colored Regiments abound with affidavits of men who were cheated out of their bounties. Brokers, recruiting agents, surgeons, and military officers were involved in taking advantage of unsuspecting and illiterate recruits. Williamsburgh, Tarrytown and Dunkirk had dismal records in their dealings with black recruits, but probably the most notorious was

¹²⁴Autobiography and Letters of George Bliss, 167; Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering, 30, 31.

¹²⁵Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering, 39; James Ford Rhodes mentioned that New York County offered bounties of \$677. \$300 came from the county, \$75 from the state, \$302 from the United States to new recruits and \$100 extra for veteran troops. Blacks did not initially receive federal bounties but the high figure attracted some. James Ford Rhodes, History of the Civil War 1861-1865, edited with an introduction by E. B. Long, (New York, 1961), 300-301.

was Lafayette Hall in Manhattan under General Francis B. Spinola.¹²⁶ Appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers on October 1, 1862, Spinola recruited in New York City from October 16, 1862 to January 16, 1864, when he was relieved. His machinations were remarkable.¹²⁷

Lafayette Hall was a notorious recruiting hall, where men were drugged and then enlisted. The Union League Club reported that 262 recruits were enlisted by one man there, and that of the \$78,600 due them, they only received \$21,161 or about \$84.50 a person which was considerably less than the \$300 state bounty. Bliss informed the Times on December 30, 1863 that over 148 men had received on the average about \$50 of their bounty money at Lafayette Hall and that black men should avoid that area.¹²⁸

Recruits in the Twentieth Regiment signed numerous affidavits describing how men connected with Lafayette Hall or Spinola's Brooklyn office had cheated them of their bounties. Very few recovered their money. Private Oliver Combeck, Co. B, described his experiences

¹²⁶Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering.

¹²⁷War Department to Commissioner of Pension, November 12, 1879, Pension File of Francis B. Spinola, Soldier Certificate #166389, Records of the Veteran Administration, Record Group 15, National Archives.

¹²⁸New York Times, January 3, 1864; Autobiography and Letters of George Bliss, 173.

to Chaplain Le Vere who prepared his statement. Combeck was recruited in Goshen, New York, by Henry Little, a white man, who promised him \$325. "Little told me that he wanted me to go with him, I told him that I would like to enlist for the Rhode Island regiment, he then told me that that was the regiment that he belonged to and that it was on Rikers Island." Little tried to make Combeck drunk but was unable to get him to take one drink. After reaching Lafayette Hall Little told him that they were no longer giving the \$325 bounty all at once but that "[he]" would get fifty dollars there and the two hundred and seventy five dollars when [he] got on rikers island and that he [Little] would be there to see that [Combeck] got it." Combeck, who was sworn in on December 7, 1863, received \$50.¹²⁹

Henry Little defrauded Private Samuel Craft, Co. F, who enlisted at Lafayette Hall on December 19, 1863. Little represented himself to Craft in Allenville, New York, as a captain in the 20th U.S.C.T. and promised him \$300. In New York City Little took Craft to a "sporting house on Mercer Street" and from there to dinner. Craft received only \$100 for volunteering. On October 9, 1864, Craft deserted from Camp Parapet, Louisiana.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Affidavit of Pvt. Oliver Combeck, Co. B, 20th USCT, 2/29/64, Compiled Service Records, Record Group 94, National Archives.

¹³⁰ Affidavit of Pvt. Samuel Craft, Co. F, 20th USCT, 3/12/64, Ibid.

Warren N. Cuffee, Co. D, enlisted at Lafayette Hall on December 21, 1863. Two whites approached him in Sag Harbor, New York, and asked him to hire out to the government as a mule driver for \$100 plus furlough. "He told me I should only have six months to serve," Cuffee stated. "I told him I would not enlist as a soldier, he told me he would give me one hundred dollars down in my hand and 25 dollars per month. Then I told him I would go. I then signed...." Cuffee only received the \$100.¹³¹

Charles Davis, Co. A, was enlisted at Lafayette Hall on December 11, 1863, by Frederick Mitchell of Washington, D. C., who asked him to come to New York to drive ambulances for \$25 monthly. Mitchell paid Davis' way to Manhattan. "When we got off the Jersey City ferry boat on the New York Side," Davis stated, "he [Mitchell] hired a hack and drove me about the City a long time. This was done, I expect, to prevent me from finding the ferry again, for this was the first time I had ever been in New York City." Davis signed enlistment papers because Mitchell allegedly threatened to shoot him if he did not sign. Davis received \$20.¹³²

Private John Glasby, Co. D, was promised \$700.⁷⁵

¹³¹ Affidavit of Pvt. Warren N. Cuffee, Co. D, 20th USCT, 3/12/64, Ibid.

¹³² Affidavit of Pvt. Charles Davis, Co. A, 20th USCT, 2/27/64, Ibid.

by Henry Little who was recruiting for a Rhode Island regiment, which was Glasby's first choice. After he enlisted at Lafayette Hall on December 16, 1863, Glasby received \$100.¹³³ Pvt. William H. Halsey, Co. B, enlisted December 9, 1863 because Little promised him \$350. After he signed the enlistment papers, Halsey reported, "Little gave me some money rolled up in a paper. I unrolled the paper and found only twenty--five dollars,...I showed it to the man that sworn me, they looked at each other and said nothing. All the bills except two I afterward found to be such as I could not pass."¹³⁴

In an unusual case, Recruit Charles Ongway of Co. H, enlisted at Lafayette Hall on December 30, 1863. George H. Cassidy, former quartermaster of the 16th Virginia Volunteers and Captain Bean, also of the 16th, brought him to New York from Washington. Ongway, who had waited on the colonel of the 16th and was acquainted with Bean, received \$100 for enlisting. The War Department's investigation showed that the 16th Virginia Volunteers had been mustered out in June 1863 and that only the civil courts could prosecute.¹³⁵

¹³³Affidavit of Pvt. John Glasby, Co. D, 20th USCT, 2/29/64, Ibid.

¹³⁴Affidavit of Pvt. William H. Halsey, Co. B, 20th USCT, 2/27/64, Ibid.

¹³⁵Affidavit of Pvt. Charles Ongway, Co. H, 20th USCT, 3/12/64; C. W. Foster to John A. Dix, 3/28/64, Ibid.

Some of the cases were tragic, for often the men who were cheated were the only support of their families. Private and later Corporal Newberry Jackson, Co. D, was recruited in the village of Jerusalem in Hempstead, Long Island, by a Mr. Longley who promised him \$477 to join Spinola's Brigade. He enlisted on December 17, 1863, and received \$100 with a promise to obtain the rest at a later date. George W. Dubinson, a friend of Jackson in Jerusalem, wrote on May 23, 1864 to Major General John A. Dix, commander of the Department of the East in New York City, "Newberry Jackson... cheated out of \$200 by a man called Longley, and his wife and mother understood that you had arrested said Longley...and that you have the money under your control. The wife is able to take care of herself, but has Jackson's mother to take care of who is very old and infirm." Dubinson then asked if the money could be forwarded to a responsible person. It is not know if Jackson received his money, but he was grateful to his friend for his concern. As Jackson wrote to Dubinson on June 29, 1864, "I feel happy heare from you all it revive me mutch...please to send me letter soon for i am a good soldier in Co D US Colored Infantry. I have not yet bin punish...but they want to promote me to corpel but i will not have the place i am good privet

and am now ready to go in the field to fight.¹³⁶

Jackson probably represented many others who were cheated but who wanted to remain in the army as good soldiers.

Privates Joseph C. Smith and William H. Hart of the 20th were defrauded of \$250 bounty money at Lafayette Hall. The loss of money meant more than just a personal hardship, for their families were affected too. One of Smith's children died and had to be buried at the expense of neighbors. Hart's mother was on her death bed without the comforts his bounty money could have provided her. In addition to Smith and Hart eighty other recruits in the 20th Regiment were cheated out of \$250 bounty money.¹³⁷

In a few cases the military authorities were provided with detailed information and were able either to arrest the guilty parties or force them to return the stolen money. Private William Cornish, Co. F, was made drunk by two blacks, George Sickels and his cousin Sandy Ferris, who took Cornish from Morrisina, Westchester County, to Lafayette Hall. They promised him a \$325 bounty, but he received only \$100 from a white man. A letter from Samuel S. Powell, friend of the Cornish family, to General Dix described William's mother as an invalid who was de-

¹³⁶Affidavit of Pvt./Corporal Newberry Jackson, Co. D, 20th USCT, 1/19/64; George W. Dubinson to John A. Dix, 5/23/64; Newberry Jackson to G. W. Dubinson 6/29/64, Ibid.

¹³⁷Affidavit of William Henry Hart, 1/19/64; Letter of S. T. to Major Bowers, 1/25/64, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous, 1/1863 to 2/1866, 20th USCI, Record Group 94, National Archives.

pendent upon her sister and her son. Dix ordered the arrest of the two perpetrators as well as that of Patrick Mackey who drew the bounty money. The \$200 in question was returned.¹³⁸

David Huff of Co. F, was brought to New York from Newark by a black man named Charles Murray and promised \$200 by two whites, Reuben Odell who kept a porter house in Newark and Frank McCormick who had a criminal record in Newark. Huff received \$100. In his words, "Frank McCormick had on military clothes and represented himself as a captain in the 20th Regiment and Odell said he was first sargent." General Dix ordered the two to return the money, and when they refused he had them arrested.¹³⁹

With so much damaging evidence against Lafayette Hall specifically and General Spinola generally, court martial charges were filed. Before the trial began on July 16, 1864, H. Mascwell, Jr., described how a fellow stockholder in the American Spiral Butt Haige Company, Hawley D. Clapp, told him that he was advancing bounty money to recruits and that he was making more than the \$700 a day he earned running a successful Manhattan hotel, the Everett House.¹⁴⁰ Testimony was provided about drugged recruits who needed support to stand up and could only

¹³⁸ Affidavit of William Cornish, Co. F, 20th USCT, 2/25/64; Samuel S. Powell to Major General John A. Dix, 2/29/64, Compiled Service Records, Record Group 94, National Archives.

¹³⁹ Affidavit of Pvt. David Huff, Co. F, 20th USCT, 2/27/64, Major Charles O. Joline to Lt. Col. R. C. Buchanan, 3/17/64, Ibid.

answer questions when diligently urged to do so.¹⁴¹

Spinola mustered into the service approximately 400 blacks. Robert Nugent, Captain of the 13th U. S. Infantry and Spinola's successor at Lafayette Hall, stated that since he had dismissed the brokers only one black had enlisted at the hall. And no wonder. He had discovered that "the most outrageous frauds were perpetrated on the unsuspecting Negroes. Not more than fifty dollars having been paid any of them, and in many instances they were put off with as low a sum as five dollars of the three hundred to which they were entitled."¹⁴²

General Spinola was charged with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and neglect of duty to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. Specifications against him included permitting so called brokers to extort money from recruits at Lafayette Hall, permitting intoxicated or drugged men to be enlisted, allowing blank certificates that were signed by surgeons to be filled in by others, and for enlisting two French sailors who could not speak English.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Statement of H. Mascwell, Jr., 3/11/64, Court Martial of Gen. Spinola, MM 1527, Record Group 153, National Archives.

¹⁴¹ Statement of Charles Huntting, probably 2/64, Ibid.

¹⁴² Statement of Captain H. F. Brownson, 1/23/64, Ibid.

¹⁴³ Charges and Specifications Against Francis B. Spinola, Ibid.

On August 14, 1864, Judge Advocate Norman J. Hall withdrew the charges to make them more specific. The new trial began in September and ended in December. Norman notified President Lincoln on March 26, 1865:

That many cases of gross wrong and cruelty occurred at Lafayette Hall while under the command of the accused is placed beyond a doubt. It is also unquestionably true that the public mind was misled in its expectation that force, kidnapping, intimidation, drugging and corrupt administration would be developed in the testimony. None of these crimes are proved [as regards Spinola and we cannot convict him for misdeeds of brokers and runners]. Very many [soldiers] are shown to have shared their bounties with the brokers, on the understanding that he was to assist them to desert.

Norman concluded that Spinola failed to protect the name of the army and it was doubtful if he had any future usefulness for the service. President Johnson accepted Spinola's resignation on June 8, 1865.¹⁴⁴

Spinola later became a congressman from New York and drew a pension from June 9, 1865, based on gunshot wounds received at Bull Run. His monthly pension was increased to \$15 on October 13, 1886. He was finally denied an additional increase because he could not prove

¹⁴⁴Norman J. Hall to Col. D. T. Van Buren, 8/14/64; Hall to A. Lincoln, 3/26/65, *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, July 24, 26, 27, August 2, 18, 1864; *War Department to Commissioner of Pension*, 11/12/79, Spinola's Pension File, RG 15.

that his varicose veins, right shoulder injury, hydrocele and rheumatism were service related.¹⁴⁵

Perhaps an unidentified black soldier in 1863 most fittingly reacted to Spinola's deviousness. Bliss was on Rikers Island when he heard that the general had taken about \$37,000 of bounty money. "I saw one of our colored soldiers, and I said to him, 'well, my friend, do you think you can fight for the country?' Said he, "Massa, I don't think this yere country is worth fightin' foh." Said I, 'what is the matter?' 'well,' said he, 'the boss here won't let me go down and clean out General Spinola.'"¹⁴⁶

The bounty fraud problem plagued the men of the 26th United States Colored Troops also. Dunkirk ranked with Lafayette Hall for unscrupulous principles. Lt. James C. Spry of Company H wrote on February 3, 1864, to the provost marshal of the upstate city that many recruits had been lured into the service by the promise of large bounties to be paid there or at Elmira but had received little or nothing. Spry commented that many were married men who enlisted

¹⁴⁵Bureau of Pensions to Spinola, 12/18/80; Adjutant General's Office, War Dept to Commissioner of Pension, 9/12/88, Spinola's Pension File, RG 15.

¹⁴⁶Union League Club Proceedings at the Dinner of the Early Members of the Union League Club, 74.

in order to support their families. "Small sums were given them in most cases to secure confidence, but beyond that they have received nothing." Spry did not blame the military or the elected officials of Dunkirk but rather "a mean, cowardly class of go between, who represent themselves to the negroes as [one word illegible] recruiting officers." The lieutenant enclosed twenty-four names and the circumstances of their entrapment. Some men were lured by the promise of \$777 for enlisting. Collectively the twenty-four were promised \$12,124 but only received \$1,444. Spry commented "they all need their money, and expect it. They will have little heart to do their duty if they do not get it." This was an understatement.¹⁴⁷

Like the 20th, most members of the 26th were unable to recover their lost bounties. Some investigations showed the recruit to be at fault or the credibility of the accused to be unimpeachable. Thomas H. Belt, Co. H, swore in an affidavit, dated February 24, 1864, that he was promised \$670 to enlist. He stated that a black man by the name of Brown took him to his house in the Buffalo area where they stayed for four or five days. Then a Mr. Stillwagon

¹⁴⁷Lt. James C. Spry to provost Marshal, Dunkirk, New York, Regimental Papers, Letters, 1/64 to 10/65, 26th USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives.

led him to the marshall's office where he enlisted. On three different occasions Stillwagon gave him money which amounted to a total of \$50. General Dix ordered Major A. S. Diven, Assistant Adjutant Provost Marshal General in Elmira, to recover the money if investigation proved Stillwagon guilty, or to place him in custody if the money was not recovered. The investigation revealed that Stillwagon had indeed given Belt \$50, a due bill for \$50 payable upon his arrival at Elmira and a certificate for \$200 payable upon joining his command. James S. Lyons, who paid out the bounty, testified that Belt knowingly and willingly assigned the \$50 check and the \$200 certificate over to William N. Brown in order to pay off his debts to the latter. Diven had no choice but to inform General Dix that Belt was evidently confused since Stillwagon was an authorized recruiting agent and a respectable citizen and businessman. Lyons was a member of the Board of Supervisors, and Belt was notified several times of the consequences of his actions.¹⁴⁸

Like their white counterparts, some blacks enlisted for the bounty money and then deserted. Colonel William B. Woosler of the 29th Connecticut Infantry

¹⁴⁸Statement of Thomas H. Belt, 2/24/64; Dix to Diven, 2/28/64; William Rogers to Diven, 3/9/64, Ibid.

(colored) informed Colonel William Silliman of the 26th Regiment that Miles Shepard and Elisha Thomas who received bounties had deserted his regiment and were now in Silliman's. Woosler sent a man who could identify them.¹⁴⁹

The bounty frauds were common because many of the recruits were illiterate. Almost all of the affidavits contained their marks instead of signatures. Unscrupulous officers, surgeons, brokers and "friendly" agents--white and black--saw a chance to get rich quickly. In December 1863, Brigadier General William Hays, Assistant Adjutant Provost Marshal General in New York City, issued circular No. 27 ordering provost marshals and recruiting officers to verify that sworn--in recruits had received their New York City bounty of \$300. If it were determined that this was not the case the recruit enlistment papers were to be destroyed. The provost marshals and recruiting officers were to tally the number enlisted by them daily and to sign a certificate indicating that each recruit received his \$300.¹⁵⁰ This order did not apply outside of New York City. Captain Ewell of Co. E, 26th United States Colored Troops

¹⁴⁹William B. Woosler to Col. Silman [Silliman] 3, 31/64, Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Circular No. 27, 12/11/63, Court Martial of General Spinola, RG 153.

notified Colonel D. Y. Van Buran, Department of the East, that thirty-three men in his company had been cheated in Dunkirk. Eight of the men were promised \$677 apiece when they enlisted on December 30, 1863, and all but one received only \$50. Samuel Deltz, alone, received \$150 because he was advised by a constable friend "in presence of the cashier not to allow himself to be put off with \$50 as others had been."¹⁵¹

The records of the 31st U.S.C.T. reveal the same tale of soldiers losing all or part of their bounties because they could not read the documents to which they were affixing their marks or because they trusted the agents who purchased their meals or provided them with lodging in Manhattan or elsewhere before enlisting. Captain Thomas Wright of the 31st reported in April 1864 that forty men in his command had been cheated out of \$8,163.¹⁵²

It was a tragedy for men to be cheated out of all or part of their bounty money, but at least they were committed to serving time in the army in order that the union would be preserved and slavery destroyed. But what about those men who normally had no desire

¹⁵¹Captain J. E. Ewell to Col. D. Y. Van Buran, 3/11/64, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous, 26th USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives.

¹⁵²Captain T. Wright to Vincent Colyer?, 4/12/64, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous, 31st USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives.

for a military life but suddenly and under frightening circumstances found themselves in the army? Kidnapping and forced induction into the service plagued blacks in the New York City area. On August 18, 1864, two policemen were acquitted of kidnapping but were found guilty of being off duty without permission when they took two blacks to Boston for the purpose of enlisting them and collecting their bounties.¹⁵³ Seaports like New York attracted many sailors from all over the world. Some black and white foreign seamen, succumbing to the temptations of wine, women and fast living, quickly found themselves, bewildered and frightened, in an army training camp.¹⁵⁴

In 1864 a case involving the kidnapping of two black British subjects aroused the attention of the United States State Department. James S. Bassett wrote on February 28 from Rikers Island to E. M. Archibald, the British consul in New York that he and Thomas Been were sailors on the "Sarah R. Chapman" out of Bermuda. They left the ship to buy some tobacco and were attacked by five men who, with the use of guns, forced them to enlist in Tarrytown under the names of Samuel Rollins and John Smith. Rollins (Bassett) was

¹⁵³New York Times, August 18, 1864.

¹⁵⁴Ella Lonn, Foreigners in The Union Army and Navy (Baton Rouge, 1951), 451-455.

in Company A of the 26th U.S.C.T. while his friend was assigned to Co. E of the same regiment.¹⁵⁵ The news of the kidnapping reached the Attorney General of Bermuda who informed the governor that "several Bermuda vessels have been recently much crippled at New York by the difficulty of keeping their crews from being taken, even from on board their vessels and carried off for compulsory or voluntary enlistment. The case now brought under Y[our] E[xcellency] notice is not by any means a solitary one." Governor W. S. Orde informed Lord Lyons, the British minister in Washington, of the matter. Consul Archibald in New York notified Lord Lyons that kidnapping was widespread due to attempts to curb the bounty frauds and the bounty of \$15 men were given for bringing in recruits. Lord Lyons contacted Secretary of State William H. Seward who in turn notified Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton ordered General Dix to investigate.¹⁵⁶ On March 15, the two British subjects were ordered to report under guard to General Dix's headquarters. On March 16, just over two weeks after Bassett wrote the

¹⁵⁵ James S. Bassett to E. M. Archibald, 2/28/64, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous, 26th USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives.

¹⁵⁶ S. Brownlow Gray to the Governor of Bermuda, 2/14/64; W. S. Orde to Lord Lyons, 2/19/64; E. M. Archibald to Lord Lyons, 3/1/64; Lyons to William Seward, 3/7/64; Seward to Stanton, 3/10/64; Stanton to Dix, 3/12/64, Ibid.

British consul, they were discharged from the regiment by special order No. 67.¹⁵⁷

The number of men victimized by bounty frauds or kidnapping is unknown, because in some instances men were ashamed to admit that they had been cheated or decided to make the best of a bad experience. Some of the victims were probably very bitter about their lot but the majority were remarkably tolerant of their loss. The record indicates that few blacks deserted in New York or even raised a ruckus over the bounty frauds during the training period at Rikers Island. This is due probably to the fact that men volunteered knowing that their salary was unequal to that of whites and viewed military service more in moral-patriotic terms rather than in financial ones. It is not clear if native born whites were equally plagued by the problem of bounty frauds. Bell I. Wiley does not mention this in his monumental study of Billy Yank. Foreign seamen, however, were often kidnapped and drugged, then enlisted, and left with about one-fourth or less of their bounty.¹⁵⁸

Black soldiers were constantly exposed to racism. It faced them in training camps, in urban areas, on assignments, and on the battlefield and even in death

¹⁵⁷Special Order No. 67 from Brigadier General Jackson, Rikers Island, N. Y. 3/15/64, Regimental Papers-- Issuance 26th USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives.

as they were generally buried apart from whites. To gain respect, blacks had to show themselves to be better soldiers than whites. Most attempted to be good soldiers, nevertheless, some could not cope with the pressure of army life compounded by racism and they became trouble-makers. Ultimately the majority of the men served their regiment and country with devotion if not distinction.

¹⁵⁸Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis, 1952) For a white regiment's problem with bounties see John J. Pullen, *The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War*, (Philadelphia, 1957), 9-11. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 451-452.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEN AND OFFICERS OF THE NEW YORK BLACK REGIMENTS

The men who served in the black regiments as well as their officers were serving in a noble experiment to show that blacks could fight for their own freedom. These men not only experienced all of the problems that whites faced such as poorly made weapons, lack of shoes, inferior food and payless months, but the extra dimension of racism. The majority of the recruits accepted the challenge and fought to end slavery as well as to preserve the Union. While most whites enlisted for the steady income, choice of unit, bounties, patriotism and excitement of war, motives of which Bell I. Wiley wrote, "none of which was deeply felt," most blacks volunteered to be part of the instrumentality destroying slavery.¹⁵⁹

According to Frederick Phisterer, 4,125 men served in the three regiments (3,766 were listed in the regimental descriptive books). For reasons

¹⁵⁹Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis, 1952), 37-39; Dudley Cornish, The Sable Army: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (New York, 1956), 261.

different than those used by whites, some blacks lied about their age, place of birth, name and status of freedom. James McHenry, Co. I, 26th U.S.C.T., enlisted under that name, although his true name was James Henry Washington. He enlisted under an alias because he did not want to be "recognized if taken prisoner."¹⁶⁰ It is likely that he was a runaway slave who feared Confederate retribution in case of capture.

The 1,325 men listed in the 20th Regiment's Descriptive Book varied from 151 in Co. A to 92 in Co. F. Companies K, I and E had 145, 141 and 140 men respectively, whereas Companies C, G, and H accounted for 139, 137 and 130 men. The regiment was rounded out with 128 and 122 men in Companies D and B.¹⁶¹

The men who served in the Twentieth Regiment were not thrill-seeking youngsters but mature men with the average age of 26.6 at the time of enlistment. Seventeen percent (230) were teenagers; fifty-two percent (693) were in their twenties; twenty-two percent (287) were in their thirties, while nine percent (119) were forty years old or older, with the oldest recruit being fifty-one. The ages of four of the men were

¹⁶⁰Frederick Phisterer, comp., New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865 (3rd ed., 6 vols., Albany, 1921, I. 62; Deposition of James McHenry, June 14, 1887, Pension File of Henry Bird, Co. K, 26th USCT, Widow's Certificate #348131, RG 15, National Archives.

¹⁶¹Compilation of Troops, Descriptive Book, 20th Regt., USCT, RG 94 National Archives.

unknown or not stated.¹⁶²

Although the Twentieth Regiment was raised in New York State, just over half of the recruits were born in the Empire State. Approximately seven percent of the enlisted men were born in New Jersey and Virginia each, with about five percent citing Canada, Maryland and Pennsylvania as their place of birth. The recruits not only listed twenty-three states as birthplaces, but also the West Indies, South America, Mexico and Africa. Regardless of where they were born, all of the recruits were described in the descriptive book as black, Negro or colored. Although many of the men enlisted in New York, it is conceivable that they came to the state for the sole purpose of joining the regiment. Many of the Southern born recruits probably joined the regiment in the South, but it is not known how many were slaves, because men often lied about their status in order to obtain bounties.¹⁶³

The pre-war occupations of the 20th Regiment differ from those cited by a white Maine regiment and from predominantly slave regiments raised in Kentucky as well as the pre-war occupations of all white Union

¹⁶²Ibid., Compilation of recruits by companies. The average age of the Union forces was 25.8 at time of enlistment. E. B. Long with Barbara Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, with a Foreward by Bruce Catton (Garden City, New York, 1971), 707.

¹⁶³Compilation of birthplace of recruits by companies, *Descriptive Book, 20th Regiment USCT, RG 94.*

forces. Forty-seven percent of the 20th's recruits listed "laborer" as their occupation, while twenty-six percent were farmers, with about nine percent as dockworkers, sailors or boatmen. In contrast the 20th Maine had thirty-two percent and twenty-four percent of its men as pre-war farmers and laborers respectively, whereas forty-eight percent of all white soldiers listed "farmer" as their occupation, with twenty-four percent claiming mechanics and sixteen percent citing "laborer". Herbert Gutman has determined that 97.44% of the 20,039 slaves who joined the army in Kentucky cited "farmer" or "laborer" as their occupation. Significantly, while Manhattan had over 1,000 black servants, only ten recruits in the three regiments gave that occupation, a fact which suggests that most of the servants were women or that employers were careful not to lose good male workers to the military.¹⁶⁴

The Twenty-sixth Regiment totalled 1,230 men with 119, 124 and 117 assigned to Companies A, B and C respectively. Companies D, E, and F accounted for 133, 122 and 115 men, whereas Companies G, H, I and K had 120, 119, 132 and 129 men respectively.¹⁶⁵ The average age

¹⁶⁴Compilation of occupation of recruits by companies. John J. Pullen, The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1957), 13; William F. Fox, Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865 (Albany, 1889), 62, 63; Herbert Gutman "Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery," (review) Journal of Negro History, LX (Jan. 1975), 123-126; New York Herald, January 25, 1861. The War of the Rebellion, ser 3, IV, 1270 cite 23,703 blacks for Kentucky.

was 26.8 years with twenty percent (247) being teenagers; forty-seven percent (578) were in their twenties; twenty-three percent (278) were in their thirties, while ten percent (126) were forty or above with the oldest, fifty-nine. The age of one recruit was unknown.¹⁶⁶

Although Docton Thomas of Company I said in 1894 that the "greater protion of our regiment [was from the South], "the stated birthplace of the men indicated that only about twenty-three percent were born in either the border states or the deep South.¹⁶⁷ Just over half of the men were born in the Empire State. Nearly three percent of the recruits were foreign born (excluding Canada) with the West Indies contributing fifteen. Eighteen others came from Portugal, Spain, The Cape Verde Islands, Chile, The East Indies, India, Mexico, France, Central America and Africa.¹⁶⁸ Forty-six percent of the recruits had been laborers, while twenty-four percent and seven percent

¹⁶⁵Descriptive Book 26th Regt. USCT, Companies A to K, compilation of recruits assigned to the regiment, Record Group, 94, National Archives.

¹⁶⁶Compilation of the ages of the recruits by companies.

¹⁶⁷Compilation of birthplace of men by companies; Desposition of Docton Thomas, July 7, 1894, Pension File of Wm. Fox, Co. E, 26th USCT, Mother's Certificate #402712, Record Group 15, National Archives.

¹⁶⁸Compilation of birthplace of men by companies, Descriptive Book 26th Regt. USCT, Record Group 94.

were pre-war farmers and seamen, respectively.¹⁶⁹

The Thirty-first United States Colored Regiment differed from the Twentieth and the Twenty-sixth in that nearly fifty percent of its recruits came from Connecticut and Washington, D. C., combined. Of the 1,211 men listed in the regiment's descriptive book, 429, or Thirty-five percent, were raised in the Nutmeg State and 156, or Thirteen percent, were enlisted in the nation's capital. On June 8, 1864, the 30th Connecticut Volunteers (colored) and the 31st U.S.C.T. were consolidated into the 31st U.S.C.T.¹⁷⁰ The breakdown of the soldiers by companies shows 127 men in Company A; 123 men for Company B; 145 men for Company C; 136 men for Company D; 131 men for Company E; 131 men for Company F; 108 men for Company G; 103 men for Company H; 112 men for Company I and 95 men for Company K.¹⁷¹ The average age of the recruits was 25.3 years. Eighteen percent (225) were teenagers; fifty-six percent (685) were in their twenties; sixteen percent (196) were in their thirties while seven per cent were age forty or above with the oldest reportedly being sixty-four. The age of about two percent (27) was either unknown or not stated.¹⁷² Unlike the recruits of the 20th

¹⁶⁹Compilation of occupation of men by companies.

¹⁷⁰Descriptive Book 31st Regt. USCT, companies A to K, RG 94; 31st USCT Order Book, Cos. A, B & D to K, Regimental Order No. 4, 6/8/64, RG 94, National Archives.

¹⁷¹Compilation of recruits assigned to companies, Description Book 31st Regt. USCT, RG 94.

¹⁷²Compilation of age of recruits by companies.

and 26th Regiments, nearly a majority of the soldiers in the 31st were southern born, a fact which suggests that many were runaway slaves at the time of enlistment. Forty-eight percent of the recruits were born in Southern states with only eighteen percent and six percent coming from New York and Connecticut respectively. Five percent of the men either did not state their birthplace, or the writing was illegible. Four percent of the recruits were foreign born (excluding Canada), with thirty-two or two percent coming from the West Indies. Foreign countries represented included Africa, South America, Mexico, Portugal, France, China, England, the East Indies and Spain. All of these men were listed as black, Negro or colored, and circumstance which suggests that perhaps recruiting officers described them as black because they were not white. All had standard American names; either they had acculturated or that the military gave them names easy to pronounce.¹⁷³

The occupations of the soldiers in the 31st Regiment were similar in types and numbers to the other two regiments, with forty percent citing "farmer" and twenty two percent stating "laborer."¹⁷⁴

It is not known if the six who gave Africa as their birthplace were smuggled into the United States in violation of the Act of 1807 outlawing American involvement in the African slave trade. The youngest was twenty-one while the

¹⁷³Compilation of birthplace of men by companies.

¹⁷⁴Compilation of occupations of men by companies.

oldest was forty-three. All except one was a seaman.

As a source of information, the regimental descriptive books are inaccurate because more men were drafted than the books indicate. The three descriptive books cite forty-seven draftees in the three black regiments with thirty-six coming from the Twentieth Regiment. Official letters and telegrams, however, provide higher figures. The Twentieth Regiment had about 840 men in the fall of 1864, due to death by disease or transfers to the navy. Colonel Bartram requested permission on September 5 to go to New York to obtain 150 recruits "from the different draft and recruiting depots in [New York] State." He was granted a thirty day leave for that purpose.¹⁷⁵ The draft was necessary because in the fall of 1864 the Union League Club was only paying a bounty of five dollars to recruits.¹⁷⁶ On November 11, and later on December 22, the War Department ordered Brigadier General E. W. Hinks, Commanding Draft Rendezvous in New York City, to "assign and forward" 78

¹⁷⁵Bartram to J. Schuyler Crosby, September 5, 1864; Special Order No. 241, order of Gen. Banks, September 7, 1864, Compiled Service Record of Nelson B. Bartram, Record Group 94, National Archives.

¹⁷⁶George Bliss, Jr., et. al. to S. W. Waldron, October 1, 1864, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 20th USCI, RG 94.

and 19 drafted men respectively to the Twentieth Regiment United States Colored Troops in the Department of the Gulf.¹⁷⁷ On November 29th the Draft Rendezvous at New Haven acknowledged a War Department order requesting 50 black draftees to be sent to the 31st U.S.C.T. in Virginia. Eleven days later 17 additional draftees were forwarded to the 31st Regiment. Between November 29, 1864 and January 10, 1865, 167 draftees were assigned to the 31st U.S.C.T. ¹⁷⁸

All types of black men enlisted and served their country in the Civil War. Most were illiterate but seem to have been honest and hard working. Some, however, were lazy and prone to criminality, as will be noted in Chapter 5. Among the enlisted men was William Derickson of the 26th Regiment, whose white mother was murdered during the bloody New York draft riots. His clothes were saturated with camphor and straw was piled over him; quick police action saved Derickson from death.¹⁷⁹ Enoch Carter, a thirty-one year old seaman who served in Co. E, 31st U.S.C.T., was promoted to corporal on May 1, 1864. He saw action at the Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., War Dept. Adj. Gen. Office (telegram) to Brig. Gen. E. W. Hinks, Nov. 11, 1864.

¹⁷⁸Parker to Merrill, Nov. 29, 1864, Regt. Papers--Letters, 31st USCT, RG 94; H. Clay Wood to A. Cady, Dec. 10, 1864; H. Clay Wood to Commanding Officer 31st USCT, Dec. 16, 1864, Jan. 10, 1865, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 31st USCT, RG 94.

The descriptive book for his company described him after the battle as "a brave [and] a good soldier." Carter was promoted to sergeant on March 2, 1865, but for unknown reasons he deserted at White Ranch, Texas, on July 1, 1865.¹⁸⁰

The bravery of black troops was exemplified by Henry Clarkson, Co. F, 26th U.S.C.T. This New Jersey born farmer enlisted on January 14, 1864 and died on July 7, at John's Island, South Carolina. As he described in his company's descriptive book, he "was first wounded in [the] arm and ordered to [the] rear to have the wound dressed, but through desire to help though with the fight kept on with his company; only a few moments elapsed when he was blown to pieces by one of the enemy's shells."¹⁸¹

William H. Decato of Co. F, 26th Regiment, had his musket shot to pieces in his hands at John's Island, but he escaped unharmed. The same thing happened to Daniel E. Mills of Co. F of July 7, 1864, but on August 1 he carelessly shot off his right four fingers.¹⁸² Black

¹⁷⁹She was described as white by Benajamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953), 241; Henry W. Bellows, Historical Sketch of the Union League Club of New York: Its Origin, Organization, and Work 1863-1879 (New York, 1879), 186.

¹⁸⁰Descriptive Book 31st USCT, see Co. E., RG 94.

¹⁸¹Descriptive Book 26th USCT, see Co. F, RG 94

¹⁸²Ibid.

regiments generally were provided with inferior weapons, and it was probably an outdated piece that cost David Fitch, Co. A, 26th U.S.C.T., his right hand. On August 28, 1864 his musket accidentally discharged while he was on duty at Fort Duane, South Carolina. On November 8, 1864 he died of typhoid malarial fever in the General Hospital at Beaufort, South Carolina.¹⁸³

The record does not indicate what percentage of the men were slaves at the time of enlistment. About twenty-two percent of the 4,125 soldiers were born in the South, and many probably had been in bondage. Evidently some slaves enlisted as free men in order to obtain bounties. Perry Talbot, whose real name was Perry Thompson, enlisted as a free black but was a slave. In some cases slaves volunteered with the consent of their owners. Warner Moore, slave of Henry Welshaus of Martinsburg, West Virginia, enlisted into Co. F, 20th U.S.C.T. on December 19, 1863 in New York City. William Henry Barber was mustered into the 20th Regiment at Hempstead, New York, on December 30, 1863. His owner, Caroline V. Spalding of Washington, D. C., submitted a claim for

¹⁸³Ibid., See Co. A. Some white troops received inferior weapons too. The Tenth New York Volunteers received 1842 Springfield muskets. Charles W. Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers (National Zouaves,) in the War of the Rebellion (New York, 1882), 28.

compensation on January 17, 1867, which was approved.¹⁸⁴

The Union League Club, instrumental in raising the 20th and 26 Regiments, U.S.C.T., and part of the 31st, displayed faith in the recruits, honesty. The "quartermaster had full credit for personal supplies in New York and the letters and packages of these recruits received free transport, through the services: of the Union League Club. Jackson S. Schultz opened accounts with the regimental quartermasters and supplied them with several thousand dollars worth of personal items such as tobacco. "For every dollar and cent thus advanced," Jackson commented, "I was paid. The same cannot be said of any [white] regiments that ever went from [New York City]." ¹⁸⁵

Insufficient pay was one of the reasons why the men established credit with Schultz. Like other black recruits the soldiers of the New York raised regiments received only seven dollars a month after paying for their clothes. Prior to leaving New York for New Orleans the troops of the 20th Regiment were issued \$24.50 worth

¹⁸⁴War Department to Commissioner of Pensions, November 22, 1901, Pension File of Pvt. Perry Talbot, Companies C and F, 31st USCT, Soldier's Certificate #752743, RG 15; Claim for Compensation for Enlisted Slave, Compiled Service Record, Pvt. Warner Moore, Co. F, 20th USCT, RG 94; Compiled Service Record, Wm. Henry Barber, Co. E. 20th USCT, RG 94.

¹⁸⁵Henry W. Bellows, Historical Sketch of the Union League Club, 194; Banquet Given by the Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864 to Commemorate the Departure for the Seat of War of the Twentieth Regiment of...Colored Troops (New York, 1886), 29.

of items for which they had to pay. The personal items included a forage cap, a flannel lined sack coat, a pair of trousers, two pairs of knit drawers, a pair of infantry boots, two pairs of stockings, an overcoat, a blanket, knapsack, haversack and canteen.¹⁸⁶

Who were the officers of the black regiments? During the civil War racial prejudice limited the number of commissioned black officers to about one hundred.¹⁸⁷ There were no commissioned black line officers serving with the New York regiments. James B. Schermerhorn, a black civilian, was examined by a military board on September 22, 1864. He passed the rigorous examination and was assigned to the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. as a second lieutenant. He did not serve in the regiment, however, and his name does not appear in the records of the War Department.¹⁸⁸

Chaplains were the only black commissioned officers to whom the enlisted personnel of the 20th, 26th and 31st Regiments could feel free to take problems. Henry Highland Garnet, the militant New York Prebysterian minister, was the original choice for chaplain of the 20th Regiment, but

¹⁸⁶Account of Clothing Issued to Recruits for the 20th Regt. US Col'd Troops by Capt. S.H.H. Parsons, Provost Marshal 14th Dist. NY, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous Jan. 1863 - Feb. 1866, 20th USCT, RG 94.

¹⁸⁷Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm (New York, 1966), 214.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 217; Stuart L. Butler (National Archives) to William Seraile, October 27, 1976.

he was disqualified by an injury. His replacement was George Le Vere, who was pastor of a Congregational church in Brooklyn. Le Vere was appointed chaplain on January 25, 1864, when he was forty-three. On December 30, 1863, he notified the Union League that he wanted to be chaplain of the 20th Regiment and was willing to "cheerfully conform to any and all the rules and regulations of the Service [Service]."189

Le Vere was eminently qualified, as numerous endorsers indicated. Recommendations were forwarded to the Union League by Henry M. Wilson, pastor of the 7th Avenue Presbyterian church in Manhattan; Richard Storrs, pastor of the Church of the Pilgrims; William J. Buddington, pastor of the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church in Brooklyn and later United States Congressman from South Carolina; S. Tulbret, pastor of Zion A.M.E. Church in New York City; John Carey, minister of the Baptist Church, New York City, and Henry H. Garnet, Acting Chaplain of the 20th Regiment. Garnet wrote, "I know the Rev. Geo. W. Le Vere well. Have known him for twenty-five years--a more suitable man for chaplain of the 20th Regt of US Colored Vol[unteer] I do not know. I most cordially recommend him for the post."190

¹⁸⁹George W. Le Vere to Vincent Colyer Dec. 30, 1864 [1863] Compiled Service Record, George W. Le Vere 20th US Colored Infantry, RG 94.

¹⁹⁰Garnet's letter was probably written on January 9, 1864, Ibid.

An equally laudable endorsement came from Milton Badger and Daniel P. Noyes, Congregational clergymen and secretaries of the American Home Missionary Society in New York City. They described Le Vere as a man of "unblemished character" who was "respected in the community for his intelligence, devotedness and fidelity. His heart is in the service of his country."¹⁹¹

The record shows that Le Vere served well as chaplain, a remarkable fact considering that as a commissioned officer he was paid at the same rate as black enlisted men, instead of the \$100 monthly salary for chaplains. On June 10, 1865 he requested and was granted a leave totaling 50 days because his wife became an invalid and was unable to care for two small children. He did not apply for a pension. It is not known if he died soon after the war ended, or if he left the New York area, because his name does not appear in either the Brooklyn or New York directories for the years 1865-1870.¹⁹²

Benjamin F. Randolph was appointed chaplain of the 26th Regiment U.S.C.T. in March 1864 by William Silliman, the Colonel commanding the regiment, after Randolph had

¹⁹¹Statement of Milton Badger and Daniel P. Noyes, dated February 22, 1864, Ibid.

¹⁹²Le Vere to C. T. Christensen, June 10, 1865. See special orders Nos. 157 (June 13, 1865) and 370 (July 14, 1865), Ibid.

presented letters of recommendations, proof of ministry and a recommendation from the Prsbytery of Buffalo.¹⁹³ It is not known if Randolph had any special relationships with the enlisted men, but his value to one officer got him into trouble. Due to confusion he was placed under arrest on May 28, 1865 for being absent without leave. In a letter dated that day, M. S. Litchfield explained to General Gilmore, "when the detail expired I was at Savannah...and finding his [Randolph] services of such I wished to have him remain. Genl. Foster then there directed that he continue." Litchfield forgot to send in a request for an extension of time for Randolph who was subsequently arrested for being absent without leave. Once Litchfield made the proper explanations Randolph was released on June 2 and returned to duty.¹⁹⁴

On July 4, 1865, months after the collapse of the South's resistance, Randolph submitted his resignation which was accepted. He was discharged on August 3 and left to become pastor of a church where he believed that he could do his race more good as a civilian than as an army chaplain.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³Statement of W. Silliman, March 23, 1864, Compiled Service Record, Benjamin F. Randolph, 26th USCI, RG 94.

¹⁹⁴Wm. Guernsey to W. L. M. Burger, May 28, 1865; M.S.L. Litchfield to /Q. A. Gilmore/ May 28, 1865; M.S.L. Litchfield to /Q. A. Gilmore/ May 28, 1865; Special Order No. 141, June 2, 1865. Ibid.

¹⁹⁵B. F. Randolph to W. L. M. Burger, July 4, 1865; Special Order No. 417, August 3, 1865. Ibid.

Augustus Alvord, chaplain of the 31st Regiment U.S.C.T., came up from the ranks. Originally, he was a private in the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery. He served that regiment as a part-time clerk from November 24, 1863 until December 1864. On January 16, 1865 Alvord submitted recommendations from five clergymen and a signed certificate from the Ecclesiastical Council of Bolton, Connecticut, attesting that he was an ordained minister. Alvord was appointed chaplain on January 20 by order of Major Thomas Wright, commander of the 31st Regiment.¹⁹⁶

Chaplain Alvord submitted his resignation on July 26, 1865 due to "unavoidable causes preventing my being of sufficient service in the Regt to warrant retaining the position longer." Poor health probably forced him to leave the army. Lieutenant Dudley C. Bixby of the 31st commented on August 15, 1892 that in July 1865, the regiment was marching in Texas, often covering thirty miles in a day "under the torrid heat of that climate with water unfit for use as our only alternative." Bixby stated that many were without food and water because the sutlers and supply wagons could not keep up. According to Bixby the march affected Alvord who came out of it with chronic

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Wright to George Greenman, January 20, 1865; Statement of Augustus Alvord, August 21, 1865, Compiled Service Record, Chaplain Augustus Alvord, 31st USCT, Rg. 95.

diarrhea. At the time of his death in 1904, Alvord was receiving a pension for bowel problems.¹⁹⁷

White men commanded the black Civil War regiments, and as officers they represented a mix lot. Some were abolitionists, while others detested their assignments. The establishing of examining boards in 1863 that tested prospective officers of black troops in their knowledge of tactics as well as their moral, mental and physical conditions helped to eliminate most evil minded or sadistic persons from positions of command. As a group, the white officers of black troops were better than the ones that commanded the Union forces in early 1861.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, some of the officers were less than courageous. The War Department's records show that twenty-four officers of the 166 black regiments deserted, while eighteen were dishonorably discharged.¹⁹⁹ During the Civil War 9,019 men applied for commissions in black regiments, with 3,790 being examined and only 2,318 receiving appointments. Nearly

¹⁹⁷Augustus Alvord to John F. Lacey, July 26, 1865, Ibid. Affidavit of Dudley C. Bixby, August 15, 1892, Pension File of Augustus Alvord, Widow's Certificate #581546, RG 15.

¹⁹⁸George G. Meade, ed., The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade (2 vols., New York, 1913), I, 213. In a letter to his wife dated November 24, 1861 he described the officers as a rule to be "ignorant, inefficient and worthless."

¹⁹⁹Frederick Phisterer, Statistical Record of the Armies of the United States (New York, 1883), 67.

half or 1,767 were discharged from white regiments, batteries, etc. to command "the sable troops." Opportunities for advancement were outstanding for men who felt that they were making little progress in the regular army. For example, Charles F. Ulrick was appointed 1st Lt. of Co. C, 31st U.S.C.T. on March 14, 1864. He was promoted to captain on November 28, 1864.²⁰⁰

It is not known how the officers of the 20th, 26th and 31st U.S.C.T. were viewed by other white officers, but since the Twentieth Regiment spent most of its war service in Louisiana, perhaps Daniel Ullmann's comment is applicable. Ullmann, who was authorized by Stanton on January 1, 1863 to organize "colored" troops for the Department of the Gulf, noted that white officers in his brigade were called 'Nigger officers' by their colleagues.²⁰¹

The presence of officers who had confidence in their troops was obviously an important factor in maintaining morale. Adjutant Dudley F. Phelps of the Twentieth Regiment U.S.C.T. believed that blacks were more

²⁰⁰The War of the Rebellion, Ser. 3, V, 518; Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm, 221; Descriptive Book, Co. C, 31st USCT, RG 94.

²⁰¹Address by Daniel Ullmann, L. L. D. Before the Soldiers and Sailor's Union of the State of New York on the Organization of Colored Troops and the Regeneration of the South, Delivered at Albany Feb. 5, 1867 (Washington, 1868), 3.

courageous than whites and more "amenable to discipline...and, indeed, with good officers, I believe that the colored men make the best soldiers almost in the world."²⁰²

Several officers of the 20th were highly recommended. In support of his appointment to command, Lt. Colonel A. E. Mather received a fitting recommendation from his commanding officer. Mather quickly rose through the ranks, from 1st Lt., to captain and then major. Although wounded in the shoulder at the battle of Salem Heights, he remained "at his post through the entire action. He bore the colors off the field" and was promoted to major for his gallantry. Mather "commanded his regiment [121st New York Volunteers] at the assault upon the enemy's works at Raffahannock on November 7, 1863 and captured two battle flags, one color lance and seven hundred prisoners." Mather was known for his "uprightness of character" and as a strictly temperate man.²⁰²

Captain Delos T. Stiles of Co. H of the Twentieth Regiment represented the type of officer who saw in black troops not cannon fodder but exemplary soldiers that

²⁰²E. Upton to James S. Wadsworth November 18, 1863, Compiled Service Record, Lt. Col. A. E. Mather 20th Regt USC Infantry, RG 94.

could help end the war and restore the Union. In a letter to the recruiter, Major George L. Stearns, Stiles revealed his perception of "colored men." Like Stearns, he wanted to experiment with an artillery battery, if "not a regiment of infantry or calvary", to show that blacks were fit to be soldiers. "My heart is with the colored troops," Stiles wrote, "and hope to be actively engaged with them the moment my health will allow; which is already so much improved that I could engage in recruiting at the North." Stiles hoped that "the few drafted men of color just rendezvousing in this State [New York] be obtained for our experiment in organizing a regiment it would bring it to a test at once."²⁰³ Stiles' health problem may have been mental, because he committed suicide by drowning on May 19, 1864.²⁰⁴

Nelson B. Bartram, commander of the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T., was a former New York City schoolteacher and principal who served as Lt. Colonel of the 17th New York Volunteers. He was chosen over several senior officers to command the District of Carrollton, Louisiana, with up to 8,000 men under his command. Bartram was not a self-serving individual. He had contracted rheumatism

²⁰³Stiles to Stearns September 3, 1863, Compiled Service Record, Capt. Dolos T. Stiles Co. H 20th USCT, RG 94.

²⁰⁴Ibid., Thomas Cushing to J. J. Woodward June 1, 1864.

²⁰⁵Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864 (New York, 1864), 26; Pension File of Col. Nelson B. Bartram, 20th USCT, Widow's Certificate #283612, RG 15.

and heart trouble in the service but refused to apply for a pension.

Contrary to popular belief not all captured officers of black regiments were killed by the Confederacy. 1st Lt. Henry A. Downing, Company D of the 31st Regiment, was captured at the Battle of the Crater near Petersburg, Virginia, on July 30, 1864, paroled March 1, 1865 and exchanged on May 2.²⁰⁶

Generally, the officers of the three New York regiments were decent men, albeit, some of them had their individual quirks or run-ins with higher authorities. For unknown reasons Henry C. Ward served as colonel of the 31st U.S.C.T. under an alias. His real name was William H. Crabble, a fact which only came to light when he applied for a pension.²⁰⁷ 2nd Lt. Charles A. Jenkins, Company A, 20th U.S.C.T., joined his regiment at New Orleans on August 14, 1864. Jenkins was arrested on December 19, 1864 and court-martialed on January 19, 1865. He was found guilty of leaving his post for the purpose of going boating and for failing to drill his commands four hours a day as ordered. Jenkins protested that he was not pleasure seeking but was using the boat to look for smugglers at Bayou La Branch, Louisiana. Originally sentenced to forfeit all pay and allowances due him and to be dismissed from the

²⁰⁶Descriptive Book 31st USCT (see Co. D) RG 94.

²⁰⁷Pension File of Col. Henry C. War (William H. Crabble) 31st USCT, Soldier's Certificate #917043, RG 15.

service, he was reprimanded when General Sherman recommended that he be suspended from rank and pay for three months.²⁰⁸

Although the officers of the three New York regiments were generally fair minded, they had very little contact with the enlisted men, outside of official business. In some instances men felt that the officers did not "understand" them and thus were quick to bring them up on charges. Many, probably, agreed with the unnamed sergeant in the 54th Massachusetts Colored Volunteers who wrote to a friend, "we want black commissioned officers; and only because we want men we can understand, and who can understand us. We want to be represented in court martial, where so many of us are liable to be tried and sentenced."²⁰⁹

The number of officers in the three regiments varied depending on death, resignations and transfers. Approximately forty-five officers served in the Twentieth Regiment with thirty-five still holding commissions in the regiment in the fall of 1865. As of June 30, 1865, the Twenty-sixth Regiment had thirty-three officers assigned to it. Altogether, about forty officers served the regiment. Thirty officers were in

²⁰⁸ Compiled Service Record, Charles A. Jenkins, Co. A, 20th USCT, RG 94; Proceedings of the Court-Martial of Lt. Charles A. Jenkins 20th USCT, RG 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General's Office, National Archives.

²⁰⁹ The Liberator, (Boston) October 7, 1864.

the Thirty-first Regiment as of October 1, 1865. Approximately seventeen left the regiment prior to October 1. Sixty percent or twenty-five of the officers in the Twenty-sixth Regiment were in uniform when appointed to that black regiment.²¹⁰

For some whites, the Civil War offered an opportunity to lead blacks in a noble experiment, to show skeptics that "men of color" could and would fight to extinguish slavery. For others, service in black regiments meant opportunities for faster promotions or a chance to be a "leader." Some viewed command of black recruits as an easy assignment, since blacks were viewed as being "docile" and more used to hard work and orders than whites. Regardless of the motivational factors that put them into black regiments, white officers along with their troops helped to restore the Union and destroy slavery.²¹¹

²¹⁰ See David J. Pillsworth File in 20th Regt., USCI folder, New-York Historical Society; Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864, 53, 54, 55; Roster of Officers of the 20th Mustered into the U. S. Service (No date--probably April 1864), Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 20th USCT, RG 94; Roster of the 26th USCT (June 30, 1865), Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 26th USCT, RG 94; Roster of Commissioned Officers 31st USCT for October 1, 1865, Regt. Papers-Miscellaneous 31st USCT, RG 94.

²¹¹ David Donald, Died of Diplomacy in David Donald, ed., Why the North Won the Civil War (New York, 1960), 83; Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis, 1952), 121.

CHAPTER V

MUNDANE SOLDIER'S PROBLEMS

Once the black New York regiments were mustered in, the enemy was not the only problem. Questions of health, military infractions, and salary issues constituted major difficulties.

Good health is always an important factor in maintaining a well trained and disciplined fighting force. The medical profession's knowledge of diseases and their causes in the mid-1800's was appalling. Except for small-pox military physicians knew nothing about the causation, transmission and control of infectious diseases. In the field their attempts at sanitation hygiene were ineffective because it was "based on physical and chemical concepts of cleanliness rather than on microbiological ones."²¹²

Inadequate health care affected black troops not only in the swampy Carolinas or malarial infested Louisiana but even at Rikers Island. Like white recruits in the beginning of the war, black men in poor

²¹² Paul E. Steiner, Disease in the Civil War: Natural Biological Warfare in 1861-1865 (Springfield, Illinois, 1968), 4, 5, 39.

physical condition were mustered in by lazy, incompetent or unscrupulous officers, and the health of some was ruined by the lack of tents and proper clothing at Rikers Island during the winter of 1863-64. Surgeon Thomas Cushing of the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. notified the medical director of the Department of the East that seventy-seven recruits were unfit for duty. Among the unfit was a soldier with lame feet of ten years standing who had his right big toe nearly ulcerated away. There were twelve hernia cases and nineteen of primary and/or secondary syphilis. Missing toes or fingers due to frostbite were frequent, in addition, four men were blind in the left eye, there were several cases of idiocy, two of varicose veins and one man with an atrophied left leg. Medical examinations of white recruits in early 1861 were so perfunctory that "one [surgeon] got through his task at the rate of ninety recruits an hour." Bell I. Wiley concluded that examinations were so poor that several women were enlisted as men.²¹³

The 20th Regiment left New York in March 1864 for Louisiana, where the climate was more lethal than

²¹³Cushing to M. Dougal or McDougal, February 2, 1864, Regiment Papers Filed with Muster Rolls, Letters 12/63 to 10/65, Record Group 94, National Archives; George W. Adams, Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War (New York, 1952), 12; Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis, 1952), 23.

Confederate shells or bullets. J. M. Addeman, Captain of the 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (colored), described Louisiana's semitropical climate as "a deadly foe...to an unacclimated person. The extreme heat produced a lethargy that was depressing in the extreme."²¹⁴

An examination of the monthly reports of sick and wounded for March and April 1864 shows that Addeman's description was accurate. Even though the regiment arrived in Louisiana in mid-March, the report for that month showed 155 cases in the hospital (148 were enlisted men). Five men died (one from epistaxis, three from inflammation of the lungs and one suicide); 104 were returned to duty while 46 remained in the hospital. A partial summary of the sick shows 47 cases of lung inflammation, 17 of acute diarrhea and fever apiece, 27 of acute and chronic bronchitis, 8 of chronic rheumatism and 7 for mumps and syphilis. April was the regiment's first full month in Louisiana, and the warm weather brought more patients to the hospital. A total of 335 went on sick call, 16 were wounded and 8 killed. There were 75 cases of acute diarrhea, 57 of mumps,

²¹⁴Cushing to M. Dougal or McDougal, February 2, 1864, Regiment Papers Filed with Muster Rolls, Letters 12/63 to 10/65, Record Group 94, National Archives; George W. Adams, Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War (New York, 1952), 12; Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis, 1952), 23.

25 of a cute and chronic rheumatism, 43 of pneumonia, 40 of acute and chronic bronchitis, 50 of whittow and 36 of recurrent and intermittent fever. Some of the sicknesses were due to the inhospitable climate, while others were due to poor preventive measures. The April report about some cases reads, "Caught fevers at Port Hudson clay soil-tents less than a foot apart overcrowdness-cause of diarrihea & dysentery."²¹⁵

Improper cooking of food and imbalanced diets put many soldiers into hospitals. Eugene A. Nash, who served in the 44th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry, recalled in 1911 that army food "would hardly pass inspection under the present pure Food Law." A recent study of the Civil War concluded that 'beans killed more than bullets.' In October 1864, Lt. Colonel A. E. Mather of the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. informed Vincent Colyer of the Union League Club that "the stoves given to us by the Union League have...enabled us to cook reations better than any other regiment here...."²¹⁶

Despite the issuance of the stoves, many soldiers continued to fall victim to insufficiently or improperly cooked food. On July 7, 1865, Colonel Bartram of the

²¹⁵Monthly Report for Sick and Wounded for the Month of March /and/ April 1864, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 20th USCT, Record Group 94.

²¹⁶Eugene A. Nash, A History of the Forty-Fourth Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War, 1861-1865 (Chicago, 1911), 16; Adams, Doctors in Blue, 16; Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented Oct. 13, 1864 (New York, 1864), 46-47

20th Regiment issued a circular ordering company commanders "daily [to] inspect the cook houses and see to their proper cooking of rations." Ordering that "beef...be boiled or made into soup with plenty of salt and pepper," he pointed out that "the present mode of cooking beef is producing sickness among the men." Bartram was probably referring to the fact that the cooks fried everything in bacon fat.²¹⁷

It is unknown how many soldiers became ill because of long marches or lack of proper food. Conceivably some became dehydrated or suffered fevers because of hastily prepared meals or lack of nourishing rations while on march. On the march soldiers mainly ate salt pork, beans, coffee and hardtack which had to be soaked in liquid to be edible.²¹⁸ Colonel William Silliman of the 16th Regiment U.S.C.T. complained that his regiment had not received its flour or bread ration for April 18 and 20, 1864. On April 19, one half of the ration was "stale bread two days old." "But for a scanty supply of hard bread remaining on hand from previous issues," he wrote, "the men of my command would necessarily have suffered from want of food." The May 1865 morning report of the 26th Regiment revealed that on May 18

²¹⁷Circular No. 15, 20th USCT Order Book, Record Group 94; Adams, Doctors in Blue, 16.

²¹⁸Adams, Doctors in Blue, 209; John J. Pullen, The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1957), 91-93.

Co. H received one day's rations of hard bread, pork and bacon as the company was enroute to Pocotaligo, South Carolina. On May 25 the company was near Grahamville, South Carolina, where it received two days' rations of hard bread and four days' rations of meat.²¹⁹

Black troops, like most white soldiers, came from working class backgrounds. Generally, people without access to running water bathe in rivers when the weather is warm, or at best sponge themselves off when the weather is inclement. Some men in the service were reluctant to wash either themselves or their clothes, and this caused problems with their superiors. Whites and blacks in the army were equally lax in personal cleanliness habits. In describing garrison life at Camp Hamilton in Virginia in 1861, Charles Cowtan recalled in 1882 that the 10th New York Vols. wore their uniforms "to an alarming degree of dirt and raggedness." Adams' investigation of Civil War medicine showed that men who were normally clean as civilians became filthy as recruits either from apathy or laziness.²²⁰

Colonel Silliman issued General Order No. 15 on April 22, 1864, which called for "dirty" men to be

²¹⁹William Silliman to James B. WLst, April 20, 1864; Morning Report, Co. H, 26th USCT (May 1865), Regimental Letter, Endorsement and Order Book, 26th USCT, RG 94.

²²⁰Charles Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers (National Zouaves,) in the War of the Rebellion (New York, 1882), 39; Adams, Doctors in Blue, 19.

"paraded in heavy marching order in front of Regimental headquarters immediately after dress parade every day." In order that the soldiers would have time to wash their underwear and put on clean clothes after bathing, Silliman excused the men from Saturday drill. Colonel William B. Guernsey ordered the 26th Regiment to bathe at least twice a week with "particular attention" given "to cleanliness of the feet and legs, arms, upper part of the body and head." Major Ira Winans of the 26th Regiment ordered soldiers to air their blankets, to keep their mess cups clean and not to deposit rubbish under their bunks. The major felt it necessary to remind them that in South Carolina health depended upon "cleanliness and personal care."²²¹

The military, although not aware of the germ theory which was just being developed, knew that unsanitary personal habits would either result in general lethargy, hospitalization or death. On March 25, 1865 all regiments, batteries and detachments in the Ninth Division were told to vaccinate their men for smallpox. In the early 1860's medical knowledge attributed typhus fever to improper acclimation, when actually it was caused by rickettsia transmitted by body lice. Nor was the

²²¹General Orders Nos. 15, 9, 35, Regt. Letter, Endorsement and Order Book, 26th USCT, RG 94; The 31st Regt. U.S.C.T. had men bathe twice a week. Regt. order No. 85, Sept., 11, 1865, 31st USCT Order Book Cos. A to K, Rg 94.

military aware that flies, mosquitoes and animals were carriers of germs.²²²

Notwithstanding precautions, the troops continued to fall sick and in some instances, to die from diseases. Ninety members of the 31st U.S.C.T. were in the hospital for Colored Troops (Army of the Potomac) on November 10, 1864. Fortress Monroe Hospital tended to eighty-three patients on May 31, 1865, and to seventy wounded on both June 30 and July 21, 1865. Soldiers were often discharged with debilitating disabilities caused by rheumatism from exposure to cold and from chronic diarrhea or malarial poisoning. A undated discharge sheet for the 31st Regiment indicated that 39 of the 57 discharged soldiers were disabled.²²³

The problem of diseases was due partly to ignorance about causes, inability to cure or prevent certain disabilities such as fevers and malaria, exposure to cold and excessive fatigue. Sometimes patients died from inadequate or poorly diagnosed treatment. On some occasions the military resorted to primitive if not barbaric treatment. The 1861 Medical Dictionary called for

²²²Gen. Order No. 5 (found in packet labelled orders from Headquarters 9th Army Corps Annapolis 1864), Regt. Papers--Issuance 26th USCT, RG 94; Richard Eddy, History of the Sixteenth Regiment New York State Volunteers (Philadelphia, 1864), 125-126; Steiner, Disease in the Civil War, 6.

²²³F.M. Hammond to Commanding Officer, November 10, 1864; E. M. Chillan? to Commanding Officer 31st Regiment, May 31, June 30, July 21, 1865, Regt. Papers-Miscellaneous 31st USCT April 28, 1863 to January 1866, RG 94.

boiling grease to be used to stop excessive bleeding of a damaged artery when no one knew how to tie it up.²²⁴

Officers and even surgeons suffered from the ravages of fevers and malaria. Pension applications from former commissioned officers abound with tales of chronic diarrhea or malaria attacks. Surgeon Thomas Cushing of the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. unhappily represented many afflicted officers. He received a twenty-day leave because of chronic diarrhea and suffered from malarial poisoning until his death in 1898.²²⁵

Sickness among officers was not as prevalent as it was among enlisted men. They had better shelter, better and more varied food, were not crowded together in tents and were less susceptible to contagious and epidemic maladies. In relation to black troops, one officer in every forty-two was killed or mortally wounded in combat, whereas only one black soldier in every sixty-six suffered that fate. However, only one officer in every seventy-seven died of disease as compared to every one in seven black soldiers. One in every seventeen white recruits

²²⁴Henry L. Scott, Military Dictionary: Comprising Technical Definitions; Information on Raising and Keeping Troops; Actual Service, Including Makeshifts and Improved Material; and Law, Government, Regulations, and Administration Relating to Land Forces (? , 1861), 411. Reprinted by Greenwood Press, 1968 For primitive medical practices see Adams, Doctors in Blue.

²²⁵Compiled Service Record, Surgeon Thomas Cushing, 20th USCT, RG 94 Pension File of Thomas Cushing, Soldier's Certificate #482280, RG 15.

died of disease. Provost Marshal General James B. Spry reported on March 17, 1866 that for every black who died of disease at least five others were seriously sick. In discharges for disability whites had a ratio of 75.99 per thousand, while blacks had 37.92 per thousand because their diseases were basically acute and mortal rather than chronic and enfeebling.²²⁶

Inadequate rations, long marches, excessive fatigue duty and improper medical care resulted in black troops suffering from more diseases than whites. Union white soldiers came down with malaria in 522 cases per thousand which resulted in 3 deaths per thousand. Blacks, in contrast, experienced 829 cases per thousand with 10 deaths per thousand. Although most black soldiers came from slavery, they were recruited from the upper South and assigned to the malaria infested Gulf area which proved deadly for them. Lack of vitamin C eventually led to scurvy which afflicted 13 whites out of every thousand, whereas blacks suffered at the rate of 88 per thousand. Blacks were laid low more than whites by typho-malaria, diarrhea-dysentery, consumption, disease of the nervous

²²⁶Provost Marshal General James B. Fry to Sec. of War Stanton, March 17, 1866, War of the Rebellion ser. 3, V, 666, 667, 670; Death by disease for blacks was 141.39 per thousand while the general volunteer rate was 59.22 per thousand. House Ex. Doc. No. 1, 39th cong., 1st sess., Vol. 4, No. 1, Part 1, (Washington, 1866), 76.

system, acute bronchitis, inflammation of the lungs, and digestive diseases. Whites suffered more proportionally only from recurrent fevers and venereal disease.²²⁷

Civil War medical records proved beyond a doubt that blacks did not possess peculiar anatomical structure alien to whites and that Mulattoes did not have poorer health or were less efficient than "pure Africans." The records also indicated that blacks would not "lose their powers of 'reproduction'...much sooner than the white man" nor become extinct sooner.²²⁸

European observers of the Civil War were shocked at the utter lack of respect white enlisted men had for their superior officers. Soldiers were reluctant to follow "stupid" orders or to say "sir" to an officer who was just Joe or Tom back home.²²⁹ Nevertheless, the Twentieth Regiment, United States Colored Infantry was noted in retrospect as well drilled and disciplined. Adjutant Dudley F. Phelps, speaking in 1886, remarked, "the regiment indeed was under such perfect discipline, that I believe it would have been impossible for the colonel [Nelson B. Bartram] to call on the men to do any work which

²²⁷Adams, Doctors in Blue, 240 as taken from Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865 (6 vols., Washington, 1875-1888), III, 13.

²²⁸J. H. Baxter to James B. Spry, March 17, 1866, War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, V, 771; House Ex. Doc. No. 1, 39th cong., 1st sess., Vol. 4, No. 1, Part 2, 95, 96.

²²⁹David Donald, Died of Democracy in David Donald, ed., Why the North Won the Civil War (New York, 1960), 79-83; John J. Pullen, The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War, 17.

they would have feared or failed to perform."²³⁰

The record does indicate that, as regiments go, the 20th had the potential to be well disciplined, but every regiment has its malcontents, complainers and deserters, and the 20th was no exception. Part of military discipline is proper dress and attention to uniforms and equipment. Lt. Colonel A. F. Mather issued General Order No. 24 from Camp Parapet, New Orleans on August 4, 1864.

The appearance of muskets at the morning inspection with a very few exceptions was bad. Many had evidently made no efforts to clean their pieces or brush their clothes. Hereafter all men who have rusty muskets at inspections will be severely punished. "K" company will be relieved from one tour of picket duty and from fatigue during the week commencing Aug. 7th 1864 on account of the good condition of its muskets and the neat appearance of the men.²³¹

On July 21, 1864 Colonel William B. Guernsey of the 26th issued General Order No. 35 from Fort Duane, South Carolina in which he told the recruits to wash their clothes. "A good soldier," he remarked, "will always have old pieces washed and put away for patches." Guernsey ordered the men to pay attention to "the proper putting" on of their uniforms because "slouchiness looks worse in a soldier than

²³⁰Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864 to Commemorate the Departure For the Seat of War of the Twentieth Regiment of United States Colored Troops Raised by the Club (New York, 1886), 37.

²³¹General Order No. 24, 20th USCT Order Book Cos A to K, Record Group 94.

in a woman ever." Major Ira Winans found it appalling that men wore good clothing while on fatigue duty or threw away perfectly good clothers because they were too lazy to wash it. He threatened to punish such men by forcing them to do "the Dirty work of the camps with no more clothing than just enough to cover their nakedness."²³²

In July 1864 the Inspector General's Office, Department of the South, inspected the 26th Regiment. The condition of arms was reported as dirty and the condition of clothes as poor. The report was submitted on August 23, and five days later Major General Rufus Saxton, Commanding District of Beaufort, called upon Colonel Silliman to explain the irregularities. He replied, "of the condition of the arms of my command at the time mentioned I have no knowledge not being then present with the regiment. We were then and are now unable to draw necessary clothing. The Q. M. [quartermaster] Depot not having it on hand." Clothing was difficult to obtain and when it was available, it often was the refuse of woolen mills.²³³

²³²General Orders Nos. 13, 35, 38, 26th USCT Regimental Letter, Endorsement and Order Book, RG 94.

²³³George E. Gourand to W. S. M. Burger, August 23, 1864, J. G. Forster to R. Saxton, August 23, 1864, Saxton to Silliman August 28, 1864, Silliman to Saxton, August 28, 1864, Regimental Papers, 26th USCT, Letters, Record Group 94; John M. Schofield to Col. Chester Harding, Jr., Adj. Gen. Missouri Volunteers, July 26, 1861, "our men are very much in need of clothing..." War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, III, 408.

There are probably several explanations for the regiment's violation of rules concerning proper care of clothing. Some of the soldiers were young and had no experience in washing clothes, since previously this was done by the women in their families. The recruits might not had been in a position to hire a laundress. Perhaps some of the noncommissioned officers were unconcerned or did not see the necessity of a clean camp or proper care of uniforms. Ultimately, the responsibility was that of the line officers who should have seen that the regulations were obeyed.

The military's penchant for cleanliness and good appearances is revealed in this letter to Colonel Silliman. Stuart M. Taylor, Captain and Assisand Adjutant General of the Second Separate Brigade at Beaufort, South Carolina, notified Silliman that Captain John Little's report for November 14, 1864 stated that 'the camps and batteries were in a good state of police, excepting the 26th USCT with few exceptions there was hardly a tent but what had under it old clothes, shoes, bottles or some other rubbish. The camp guard presented a very ragged appearance.' This was not a racial trait because according to Wiley most white troops possessed the same fault.²³⁴

²³⁴Stuart M. Taylor to William Silliman November 5, 1864, Regt. Papers 26th USCT, Letters, RG 94; Hobart L. Morris, Jr., One Year at War: The Diary of Pvt. John A. Schultz, Aug. 1, 1863-Aug. 1, 1864 (New York, 1968), 118; Wiley, Billy Yank, 341.

Gambling, swearing, theft and generally "offensive" behavior was frowned upon and not tolerated by the army. To the military gambling meant problems. Fights often resulted from cries of "cheat!" and lost wages. Colonel Silliman issued General Order No. 2 on February 18, 1864, prohibiting gambling among the officers and men. Officers were instructed to "arrest all persons violating this order and [to] take possessions of all money wagered, holding it subject to the disposal of the proper authorities." Gambling and swearing were prevalent among white troops. Private Issac Jackson of the 17th Ohio Battery wrote in his diary on March 15, 1863 at Milliken's Bend, "there is not a day passes but gambling, card playing, swearing and every other kind of vice is in full progress."²³⁵ The army enforced the antigambling orders, for example, as Sgt. John Humans of Company A and Sgt. William D. Williams of Company J, 20th U.S.C.T. were reduced to the ranks for drinking and gambling.²³⁶

Swearing and the use of obscenities were commonly used by recruits to the dismay of officers who wanted to build character and "gentlemanly" behavior. Lt. Colonel W. E. W. Ross of the 31st Regiment ordered noncommissioned

²³⁵Regt. Letter, Endorsement and Order Book 26th USCT, RG 94; Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953), 211-212; Joseph O. Jackson, ed., Some of the Boys...The Civil War Letters of Isaac Jackson, 1862-1865, with a Foreward by Bell I. Wiley (Carbondale, Illinois, 1960), 70.

²³⁶Special Order No. 3, 20th USCT Order Book, RG 94.

officers to turn in the names of men who insisted on using "horrid oaths" or to face reduction to the ranks. Ross viewed foul language as an evil practice "prejudicial to good orders" and something that would lead "to speedy and utter demoralization" of troop morale.²³⁷ Ross and others were judging blacks by white standards. To outsiders the use of language by blacks was considered appalling because they often used the most opprobrious epithets in their dealings with each other. Blacks often accepted with a grin coarse and lewd statements about each other that would have white men dueling or brawling. Dudley Phelps recalled "the only fighting word, the only insult that could never be wiped out except by blood was [to be called by another] a 'd--d Irish Nigger!'"²³⁸ This was true because the Irish represented to the urban black what the Southern poor whites represented to the slave--an object of utter contempt.

Theft of another soldier's property was considered as a serious offence and something swiftly punished. Major Ira Winans had this in mind when he issued General Order No. 50 at Beaufort on September 11, 1864:

Each of us have no place where...
we can safely keep...any little
valuables we may possess. Steal-
ing from a fellow soldier is one
of the worst crimes that prevail

²³⁷Regimental Order No. 8, 31st USCT Order Book Cos A to K, Record Group 94, Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank (Indianapolis, 1952) 248.

²³⁸Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864, 35.

in the army and unworthy [of] a soldier of a great nation. All are warned against such practices, because they are mean low lived and will meet with prompt punishment.²³⁹

Private Henry L. Jackson, Company I, 20th U.S.C.T., was courtmartialed for being absent without leave, disobeying orders and for theft. He lost a month's pay and was confined to the guard house for a week. For added punishment, he was ordered to stand "upon a barrel four hours each day, between the hours of 6 and 8 a.m. and 4 and 6 p.m., having on his breast a board with the word 'thief' inscribed therein in large letters." Not learning his lesson, Jackson was later convicted of stealing three canteens, boots, a knapsack, a drinking cup, a musket and of destroying his clothing, camp and garrison equipment. He served fourteen days in confinement at the post guard house and subsisted on bread and water.²⁴⁰ For plundering the contents of houses near Fortress Monroe, two whites were drummed out of the camp before the entire brigade with a rope around their necks and "large boards on their backs with the word 'thief' written upon them." Wiley considered this treatment of thieves to be standard.²⁴¹

The 31st Regiment experienced a rash of thefts, especially muskets. The men were warned that they would

²³⁹General Order No. 50, 26th Regt. Letter, Endorsement, and Order Book, RG 94.

²⁴⁰General Orders Nos. 16 and 25, 20th USCT Order Book Cos. A to K (see Co. I), RG 94.

²⁴¹Alfred Davenport, Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry (New York, 1879), 75. Wiley, Billy Yank, 202.

be severely treated regardless of how trifling the theft was. To curb stealing the regiment decided to punish those who knew the identity of thieves but would not inform on them.²⁴² It was not stated why there were thefts of muskets. The most logical explanation was that the recruits had either outdated or inferior weapons and conveniently helped themselves to more modern and efficient ones.

One of the more persistent thieves and problem makers was Moses Degroat, assigned to Company E of the 20th Regiment. On June 21, 1864 he was declared guilty of theft and confined to the post guard house for fourteen days on bread and water. On December 5 he was transferred to Company G of the same regiment. Degroat was arrested for sleeping on duty on January 19, 1865 at East Pascagoula, Mississippi. Less than two months later it was reported that Degroat and three others were stealing and selling their comrades' clothers. He was known as the "salesman" of the group. Degroat acknowledged selling a pair of trousers to a civilian for \$1.50 in order to buy bread of which there was a shortage. He was put into confinement on April 3, His gross misbehavior may have cost him a pension. Although he was discharged with his regiment in October 1865, his pension application filed

²⁴²Regimental Order No. 12, 31st USCT Order Book Cos. A to K, Record Group 94.

June 26, 1912 was rejected, but no reason was given, eventhough he had dropsy and was "an object for charity."²⁴³

During the war and even after the collapse of the Confederacy theft among the civilian population occurred. This was done, perhaps, less for profit than for a desire for food. White soldiers in the 124th Regiment New York State Volunteers were told by officers on April 4, 1865 to "borrow all the cattle, pigs, sheep and poultry they could find." On August 20, 1864, the headquarters of U. S. Forces, District of Beaufort, informed Lt. Colonel William B. Guernsey that black landowners have complained that soldiers of the 26th U.S.C.T. have "trespassed on their lands and taken corn, watermelons, etc, etc. away." Was it hunger or wanton greed that caused an unknown soldier of Co. A, 26th Regiment to steal and kill Isaac Garret's calf in Grayhill, South Carolina?²⁴⁴

On August 21, 1865 Colonel Bartram warned his troops who were stationed at Milliken's Bend that they were there "as protectors and not plunderers." Robbing

²⁴³Court martial of Moses Degroat, June 21, 1864, Regimental Papers--Issuance 20th USCT, RG 94; Morning Reports, Co. E, May 12, December 5, 1864, Co. C, January 19, April 3, 1865, 20th USCT, RG 94; Special Order No. 124 (transferring Moses Degroat), Order Book 20th USCT, RG 94; Court martial of Moses Degroat, October 29, 1864, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous 20th USCT, RG 94.

²⁴⁴Tarylor to commanding Officer 26th Regt, August 20, 1864, E. F. Wording to Gen. Saxton, March 3, 1864, Regimental Papers--Letters 26th USCT, Record Group 94. Charles H. Weygant, History of The One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Regiment NYSV (1877) 434.

the old and the poor, Bartram stated, "was a mean thing." He reminded them that the war was over "and no excuse can now be used for taking away produce of the country without...paying for the same." Unfortunately for Privates David Ferris and Jack Moore, they were courtmartialed seven days after Bartram's warning. For stealing potatoes from Noah Manlove, a private citizen, and for being absent without leave on July 28, the two suffered a month's loss of pay and were ordered to be employed on fatigue duty with a ball and chain attached to their left leg for fifteen days. Private George Keys lost \$10 from his pay and was placed on fatigue duty in charge of the regimental guard for a week for stealing watermelons from a black civilian.²⁴⁵

Sleeping on duty was a serious breach of military regulation, and guilty parties were unmercifully punished. To Colonel Silliman sleeping on post was "one of the most common offenses among the troops at this post (Beaufort) and the severest measures will be necessary to correct the evil."²⁴⁶ Jacob Coleman of the 31st U.S.C.T. slept while on picket duty on the morning of February 3, 1865.

²⁴⁵General Order No. 10, 20th USCT Company Books Cos A to K, Record Group 94; Proceedings of a field officers courtmartial convened at...Milliken's Bend... August 21, 1865 (David Ferris and Jack Moore), Regt. Papers--Issuance 20th USCT, RG 94; Proceedings of a field officer courtmartial convened...August 26, 1865 (George Keys), Ibid.

²⁴⁶Order of Colonel Silliman dated Sept. 28, 1864, Regt. Letter Endorsement and Order Book, 26th USCT, RG 94.

For committing this "heinous offence," Coleman had one-half of his head shaved. Wearing a barrel with an inscription stating that he had slept on post, he was drummed throughout the regimental camps in the division. Coleman lost all pay and emoluments due to him, was dishonorably discharged and served three years of hard labor at Norfolk. Brigadier General William Birney, who sentenced Coleman, commented, "it is hoped that this example will be a warning to every colored soldier not to commit the crime of sleeping on post--a crime which might betray the whole camp to the enemy."²⁴⁷

Mutinies were a problem to the military, because this meant that all discipline had broken down completely. The records indicate that no companies of the three regiments were involved in mutinies. Nevertheless, individuals in the 31st U.S.C.T. were court-martialed for failing to suppress other regimental mutinies or for engaging in mutinous conduct. Theodore Smith, Company A, was found guilty for failure to fall in with his company, although he was a sergeant knowing at the time (May 11, 1865) it was to aid in suppressing a mutiny in another regiment. When asked why he refused an order, he replied to the effect "that he did not come here [near City Point, Virginia] to fight men of his own color." Smith was sentenced to the loss of one month's pay. Private Henry Valentine, Company A, was

²⁴⁷Court martial of Pvt. Jacob Coleman Co. F 31st USCT, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 31st USCT, RG 94; Court-martial Jacob Coleman Co. F 31st USCT MM3125-00266, RG 153.

guilty of refusing to assist in suppressing the same mutiny, and he gave basically the same answer in his defence. Although two soldiers testified that Valentine obeyed the order after a discreet interval, he was given a dishonorable discharge and two years of hard labor with a 24 pound ball and a 6 foot long chain attached to his right leg.²⁴⁸ His punishment was worse because he was tried a week after Smith, and the officers were probably disgusted with such behavior.

Richard Mills of the 31st Regiment refused to surrender his weapon to his commanding officer. He lifted it against an officer near Whites Ranch, Texas, on or about July 10, 1865. Captain John R. Morris testified that Mills said, 'I whipped my master once, he whipped me afterwards, but he had to get help to do it. I am not afraid of any one white man, all I want is to get out of the army.' Mills received a dishonorable discharge, loss of all pay and allowances due him, and two years of hard labor. A 24 pound ball and a 6 foot chain were attached to his right leg. Private John F. Thompson of the 20th Regiment was guilty of riotous and mutinous conduct for firing his musket without authority or orders on a busy New Orleans street-

²⁴⁸Regimental Order No. 20, Courtmartial of Theodore Smith Co. A, 31st USCT, Regt Papers--Miscellaneous 31st USCT, RG 94; Courtmartial of Henry Valentine Co. F, 31st USCT MM3125, RG 153.

corner on or about May 29, 1865.²⁴⁹

The military abides by a strict time table, and men who exceeded their furloughs, or who absented themselves without leave, were harshly treated to impress upon others the need to obtain permission for being away from camp or assigned duties. Private William Pindell, Company A, 20th U.S.C.T., was guilty of being AWOL. In addition to a loss of one month's pay he was confined to the guard house for a month with a ball and chain attached to his leg and ordered to subsist on bread and water for two weeks. Private Martin Bowman, Company B, 20th Regiment was AWOL for three days. He forfeited \$10 in pay and had "to march in front of the guard quarters of the [regiment] with packed knapsack four hours each morning and four hours each afternoon for five successive days."²⁵⁰

Some recruits would not adjust to military life and spent most of their service time in and out of trouble. The morning reports for Company F of the 26th U.S.C.T. whows the following for Sgt. William Newark:²⁵¹

Sept. 1, 1864 Sgt. Wm. Newark in arrest for excessive drunkenness and inexcus-

²⁴⁹Court martial of Richard Mills, Co. I, 31st USCT, Aug. 1, 1865, Regt. Papers-Issuance 31st USCT, RG 94; Court martial Record of Pvt. Richard Mills, Co. I, 31st USCT MM3125, RG 153; Compiled Service Record, Pvt. John F. Thompson, Co. D, 20th USCT, RG 94.

²⁵⁰Special Order No. 72, dated February 28, 1865 (for Pindell) and General Order No. 4 (for Bowman), dated May 16, 1865, 20th USCT Order BOOK Cos. A to K, RG 94.

²⁵¹26th USCT Morning Reports (See Co. F, September 1864, July 1865), RG 94.

able absence from his quarters after "taps".

- Sept. 22, 1864 Sgt. Wm. Newark in close arrest for beastly drunkenness & breach of arrest
- Sept. 23, 1864 Sgt. Wm. Newark reduced to ranks for drunkenness per General order No. 51 - Sept 14, 1864.
- July 11, 1865 W. E. Newark placed in confinement for desertion & charges preferred /The descriptive book for his company did not list him as a deserter/

In some instances soldiers went AWOL and were either afraid or ashamed to come back. Private Alexander Pulaski, Company E, 31st U.S.C.T., was AWOL from May 17 to May 25, 1865. He went to find a washerwoman at City Point, Virginia, for an officer, but went on a drinking spree with civilian friends. Ashamed to come back until he was all right, his honesty cost him two months confinement at hard labor and the forfeiture of \$12 for four consecutive months.²⁵²

Were blacks brought up on courtmartial charges more often than whites? Whites generally were more contemptuous of their officers, but in many instances white officers did not understand or appreciate the social behavior of blacks. Some enlisted men resented officers who acted like overseers, and insubordination led to charges. Newberry Jackson's statement to a friend that "I have not yet bin punish" suggests that the army quickly reprimanded black "offenders." The descriptive books for the three black regiments reveal that 34%, 30% and 25% of the noncommissioned officers for the 20th, 26th and 31st

²⁵²Court martial Record of Pvt. Alexander Pulaski, Co. E, 31st USCT MM 3125, RG 153

Regiments respectively were reduced to the ranks for various offenses. It is not known how these figures compared to white regiments, however, they are suggestive that blacks were often "guilty" of not understanding the military penchant for non-coms to "act" like officers.²⁵³

In the popular mind desertion in the heat of combat is the most atrocious act that a soldier can commit. It was a major problem for both the Union and the Confederacy.²⁵⁴

During the Civil War there were widely held views that blacks were cowards, and even President Lincoln once shared this concern. The New York Herald editorialized on August 4, 1864 in reference to the so-called Battle of the Crater that "Niggers are not fit for soldiers. They cannot and will not fight."²⁵⁵

Black men did desert, but not in the same numbers as whites. There were 14,887 black deserters out of the approximately 180,000 who served. The numbers of white deserters were estimated from 200,000 to 278,044 out of the 1,556,678 to 2,489,836 who served in the Union army.²⁵⁶

²⁵³Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox (Garden City, New York, 1954), 233; Newberry Jackson to G. W. Dubinson, June 29, 1864, Compiled Service Records, RG 94: 20th, 26th, 31st Regt. Descriptive Books, RG 94.

²⁵⁴Ella Lonn, Desertion During the Civil War (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1966)

²⁵⁵New York Herald, August 4, 1864; Philip Van Doren Stern, ed., The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1940), 722.

Surprisingly, the Union League Club, which should have been aware of desertions in New York City, stated emphatically that no soldiers from the 20th, 26th and 31st Regiments went "over the hill." As late as 1883, Luther P. Marsh, speaking at the 20th anniversary of the Union League Club, reported that when the record closed on the three regiments "it was found that every man had been true and not one deserted (applause)."²⁵⁷ His statement and similar others are incredible, since officers like Nelson B. Bartram were frequent guests at Union League Club activities, and they could have set the record straight. Even more surprising is the assertion of several historians who have described black soldiers as thoroughly loyal men who eschewed desertion.²⁵⁸

The descriptive book lists the names of deserters and where they deserted. Although these records are not complete, they are the most informative available to researchers. The 20th, 26th and 31st U.S.C.T. had approximately 85 (6 1/2%), 49 (4%), and 211 (17 1/2%)

²⁵⁶War of the Rebellion, ser, 3, IV, 1270, V, 1030; House Ex. Doc. No. 1, 39th cong., 1st sess., No. 1, Vol. IV, Pt. I, 234-235.

²⁵⁷Union League Club of New York: Its Memories of the Past, The President's Address at the Last Meeting in the Old Club House on Union Square Thursday Evening, March 26, 1868 (New York, 1868), 11; Proceedings at the Twentieth Anniversary of the New York City Union League Club, February 6, 1883 (New York, 1883), 47; Henry W. Bellows, Historical Sketch of the Union League Club of New York: Its Origin, Organization, and Work 1863-1879 (New York, 1879), 54.

cases of desertion respectively.²⁵⁹ Since about eight percent of all black soldiers deserted, the 20th and 26th were below the average, while the 31st was twice as high.

Out of the 85 deserters in the 20th Regiment, 59 left the ranks in or near New Orleans. Six deserted in New York City, while three absconded at Port Hudson and six each from Carrollton and Jefferson City, Louisiana, including Private Thomas Jefferson of C Company.²⁶⁰ New Orleans' large black population, which could easily hide runaways, its beautiful and exotic looking women and its demoralizing rum were factors that explained the high desertion rate in that city.²⁶¹

Forty-nine cases of desertion were recorded against the 26th Regiment. Twenty-eight occurred in or near Annapolis, Maryland, in April 1864, shortly after the regiment had departed from New York. Eight absconded in New York City, and four in Beaufort, South Carolina. The other nine left in various parts of South Carolina. It is not clear why so many deserted in Annapolis. Possible explanations could be dissatisfaction over the bounty frauds, reluctance to go into

²⁵⁸Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, 233; Jack D. Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History (New York, 1974), 45; Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War, 213.

²⁵⁹Register of Deserters (by companies), Descriptive Books for the 20th, 26th and 31st USCT, RG 94.

²⁶⁰Register of Deserters, 20th USCT, RG 94.

²⁶¹Addeman, Reminiscences of two years with the Colored Troops, 28.

combat knowing that the enemy would show no mercy or possibly the wish of professional bounty jumpers to escape before reaching the regiment's destination in Virginia. Private Elias Thomas of H Company deserted on April 7, 1864. The regiment's descriptive book stated, "Joined co 3/24/64. Is no doubt a regular bounty jumper." The morning report for April 25 commented, Official information has been received of escape from confinement and desertion of Pvt. Elias Thomas who has been reported as 'Absent in confinement' during the last two weeks." Private George Waddington of G Company deserted at Annapolis on April 5, 1864. The notation in the descriptive book read, "Found out he had previously belonged to the First Michigan Colored Volunteers (later it became the 102nd U.S.C.T.) deserted from that Regt while it was in Michigan & enrolled in the 26th." In a twist of action, Charles Eastley of Company C, who gave his birthplace as Orange County, New York, "came as a deserter (from the Confederacy and was turned over to the 26th)." ²⁶²

Two hundred and eleven cases of desertion appear in the descriptive book for the 31st Regiment, including three unrelated recruits named William Johnson and Jacob Baker, an eighteen year old laborer who deserted to the

²⁶² 26th USCT Descriptive Book, Cos. A to K, RG 94; 26 USCT Morning Report (April 1864), RG 94.

rebels on August 1, 1864. Forty-five desertions occurred in Connecticut; forty-four near Petersburg, Virginia; forty after the war ended but before the men were mustered out of service; thirty-one in the field in Virginia; twenty-seven in Texas; thirteen at Camp Casey, Virginia; seven en route from New York to join the regiment; six at Camp Lincoln, Virginia; four in Alexandria, Virginia, and only two in New York City.²⁶³

There are a number of explanations for the high desertion rate in the 31st U.S.C.T. Some men in the 20th Regiment were inadvertently left off the muster roll at Rikers Island and were then reassigned to the 31st Regiment. Separation from friends caused dissatisfaction. The regiment did not have a chaplain until January 20, 1865, therefore the men did not have a black commissioned officer with whom they could discuss personal problems or anyone to provide them with spiritual guidance. Twelve percent of the recruits were substitutes and over 150 were draftees. Perhaps these two groups were bitter about their fate. Another explanation for the high desertion rate was the absence of a large officer class, especially after the devastating so-called Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864, in which many of the officers

²⁶³Compilation of Register of Deserters for the companies, Descriptive Book, Cos. A to K, 31st USCT, RG 94. For the three different William Johnsons see Co. G and Co. B for Jacob Baker.

were wounded. On August 25, 1864 the United States Mustering and Disbursement Office at Hart Island, New York, mustered two companies of 94 and 98 men into the regiment but no officers, since none were present.²⁶⁴

Very few deserters were executed during the Civil War. For various political reasons, the Union was reluctant to shoot deserters. In 1806 Congress had authorized the death penalty for desertion upon conviction by a courtmartial, but in 1862 Congress amended the law making execution possible only if the President of the United States gave his approval. In 1863 the law was changed by a provision granting the commanding general in the field the authority to concur with the courtmartial's recommendation.²⁶⁵ Provost Marshal General James B. Fry believed that enactment of the death penalty would have drastically reduced bounty jumping and desertion. "The time elapsing, too, between arrest and trial," Fry reported, "[gave] the reckless and often skillful deserter opportunity to escape."²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864, 19; See M. DoLau to Capt. H. F. Brownson, August 25, 1864, Regt. Papers-- Letters, 31st USCT, RG 94; H. Clay Wood to Col. A. Cady, Nov. 29, 1864 Parker to E. I. Merrill, Nov. 29, 1864, H. Clay Wood to Commanding Officer 31st USCT, Dec. 16, 1864, January 10, 1865, Ibid.; For a compilation of substitutes by companies see Descriptive Book, 31st USCT, RG 94.

²⁶⁵The Public Statutes at Large of the United States... 1789 to March 3, 1845 (Boston, 1856), 11, (see 9th cong., sess., 1, Ch. 20, April 10, 1806, article 20), 362; The Statutes at Large... from December 5, 1859 to March 3, 1863, XII (see 37th cong., sess., 2, Ch. 201, July 17, 1862), 598 and (37th cong., sees., 2, Ch. 75, March 3, 1863), 735.

Punishments for deserters varied, depending on the circumstances, the soldier's prior record, and the manner of return. Voluntary reappearance was considered less serious than recapture. Pvt. Charles Walters, Company K, 20th U.S.C.T. was confined to hard labor for one year and forfeiture of \$15 per month for one year. Sgt. Stephen A. Johnson of Company D, was reduced to the ranks for deserting his guardpost and was sentenced to forfeit \$10 monthly for six months. "The Court is thus lenient believing the accused will eventually make a good soldier, and that the service will be best served by keeping him with his command instead of a long term imprisonment."²⁶⁷

Private William H. Portland, Company C, 31st U.S.C.T., deserted near Petersburg, Virginia, on April 15, 1864, and was captured on September 3, 1864. He was sentenced to have his head shaved and a barrel put over his head with the inscription "I deserted my regt. and am sentenced to the Dry Tortugas for 3 yrs." Pvt. George Washington of the same company deserted near Petersburg on August 25, 1864 and later returned to duty. Although he was not courtmartialled, he still was denied one month's pay.²⁶⁸

George Johnson, whose real name was George Atkins, Company B, 20th Regiment, was convicted for falling asleep

²⁶⁶War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, V, 1030.

²⁶⁷General Order No. 28, June 17, 1865, 20th USCT Order Book Cos. A to K, RG 94; Special Order No. 11, Ibid.

²⁶⁸31st USCT Descriptive Book Cos. A to K (see Co. C), RG 94.

while on guard on a ferry boat at Jefferson City, Louisiana. He was charged with conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline because he refused to go with a corporal while he was under arrest. Allegedly he said, "I will not go until I get ready. I don't care a god damned for the captain or any other god damned black son of bitch." Johnson deserted four days later (June 18, 1864) and was arrested on or about July 8, 1864. He was returned to duty on November 20 by order of General Sherman. On May 17, 1865, Johnson, who was with his wife at Carrollton, deserted. On October 19 he was turned over to the police with a warning that unless firmly handcuffed and watched he would escape.²⁶⁹

Johnson was a devious man. In a statement given from prison on January 14, 1865 he declared that he received a \$100 bounty when he enlisted in Albany. After six weeks in the service, Johnson deserted. He was arrested in Albany on December 27, 1864 but "denied ever having been a soldier."²⁷⁰

Whites and blacks deserted for different reasons. Ella Lonn reported that lack of pay, sympathy for the South, lack of shoes, inadequacy of supplies, and hardships of combat encouraged whites to desert. Although

²⁶⁹Rouse to E. L. Wage, May 17, 1865, Rouse to Jackson, Oct. 19, 1865, Compiled Service Record, Pvt. George Johnson, Co. B, 20th USCT, RG 94; Wiley considered such language to be common, Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank, 198-199

²⁷⁰Johnson's Compiled Service Record.

blacks shared some of the same problems, they had the additional burden of hostility from Union white soldiers, indifferent officers, vengeful Confederates, excessive fatigue assignments and unequal pay to "convince" them to desert. The fact that ultimately so few absconded is a testimony to their courage and devotion to the Union.²⁷¹

Black soldiers did picket and garrison duty, protected railroads, and fought the enemy like white men, but they were paid at the rate of laborers instead of that of fighting men. Few were able to make ends meet with the \$10 monthly salary minus \$3 for clothing, and none were willing to emulate their comrades of the 54th Massachusetts Colored Regiment who refused the lesser salary for eighteen months to prove that they were entitled to equal pay.²⁷²

Sometimes men fought in battles, received wounds, recuperated in field hospitals, returned to their units and saw action again, all in a period of months without receiving a cent. Pay was slow in coming because the United States Treasury lacked money. The government could either pay soldiers regularly or lack money to pay for medicine, food, clothing and ammunition. It decided to pay suppliers and

²⁷¹Lonon, Desertion During the Civil War, 127-142; Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (New York 1966), 289.

²⁷²The Militia Act of July 17, 1862, Section 15 gave blacks \$10 monthly salary, U.S. Statutes at Large, XII, 599 was cited by Cornish, The Sable Arm, 185 (see also pp. 183-184); Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War, 200-202.

then the men whenever it could. Thus, some regiments went seven and eight months without pay.²⁷³

Major Amos P. Wells complained to the Assistant Adjutant General, Major George B. Drake, that the majority of the enlisted men had been in the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. for eleven months and had not received any pay. The officers of the regiment had not been paid in over six months. Wells' concern was poignant: "Many of these men have families at home that are suffering from want of the money that would be sent them if the Regt. was paid. Some of the officers have no means to purchase the necessary provisions or the uniforms that they are required by regulations to wear." After the Confederacy had collapsed, payments were still sent out irregularly. Colonel Bartram complained on August 18, 1865 that the 20th Regiment had nearly six months pay due to it.²⁷⁴

Failure to receive regular paychecks was a serious problem for soldiers. Perhaps some deserted after hostilities ceased because they believed that their responsibilities to the government ended with the defeat of the Confederacy, and they saw no need to submit their families to a continuation of payless months. Others resorted to

²⁷³H. W. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, February 15, 1865, War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, 46, Pt. 2, 561-562.

²⁷⁴Amos P. Wells to George B. Drake, November 9, 1864, 20th USCT Regimental Descriptive, Consolidated Morning Report, Letter, Indorsement & Order Book, RG 94; Nelson B. Bartram to Wickham Hoffman, August 18, 1865, Ibid.,

theft to have the wherewithal to buy food, while still others lived off the land.

Captain Cyrus G. Dyer, Company H, 26th Regiment U.S.C.T., requested that "an account...be opened with the commissary until such time as the Regt. is paid" because officers "are without sufficient funds for another week's subsistence." An endorsement on the back of Dyer's letter signed by Lt. Colonel Guernsey noted that the 26th had been without pay for over six months and "most of the officers are entirely out of money."²⁷⁵

The unequal pay to black soldiers was interpreted by Congressman William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania as encouragement to the South to mistreat black soldiers on the battlefield, since the North did not consider its "colored" recruits as equals. Delegates to the National Convention of Colored Men that met in Syracuse, New York, October 4-7, 1864 passed a resolution condemning unequal pay for black soldiers.²⁷⁶

Congress moved slowly in righting the wrong. On June 15, 1864, it passed an act that granted blacks the same pay and allowances as whites if they had enlisted.

²⁷⁵C. G. Dyer to Stuart M. Taylor January 8, 1865, regimental Papers--Letters 26th USCT, RG 94.

²⁷⁶Remarks of Hon. William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania in Support of the Bill Equalizing the Pay, Rations, Clothing, and Arming of Our Soldiers Delivered in the House of Representatives, April 30, 1864 (Washington, 1864), 8; Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men Held in the City of Syracuse, N. Y. October 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1864 (Syracuse, 1864), 33.

prior to January 1, 1864 and were free on or before April 19, 1861. Bounties were withheld except in such amounts as the president might order but not to exceed \$100.²⁷⁷ That was a poor solution, because it had no impact on those who enlisted after January 1, 1864, and the majority of blacks in uniform could not prove that they had been free prior to April 19, 1861. Finally, in an act approved by Congress on march 3, 1865, the nation granted blacks the same pay as whites. Nevertheless, the war ended before they received their arrears in salary.²⁷⁸

Like white soldiers, the men of the United States Colored Troops experienced deprivations in the field, payless months, inadequate food, and debilitating diseases. Fighting for a salary considerably less than what many of them could have earned as civilians as well as exposing themselves to the wrath of Southern slaveholders, if captured, attests to the black soldiers' devotion and fidelity to the nation.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷Circular No. 60 issued August 1, 1864, War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, IV, 564-565.

²⁷⁸Ibid., ser. 3, V, 659; Cornish, The Sable Arm, 189-195.

²⁷⁹Cornish, The Sable Arm, 195.

CHAPTER VI

DRILLS, DUTIES, BATTLES AND DISCHARGE

To youngsters playing cowboys and Indians or who fancy themselves as brave soldiers killing single-handedly hundreds of enemy combatants, war is glamorous and exciting. Nevertheless, the average recruit viewed military life as largely tedious with time spent in cleaning weapons, washing clothes, making and breaking camp, shining boots and drilling. Drills were a bane for most soldiers. Bell I. Wiley described them as "a dull, dreary chore" which the average Yank hated. Yet Bruce Catton and Benjamin Quarles have asserted that blacks did not share the white recruits's aversion to drilling. Catton wrote, "they picked up the drill quickly, learning it more easily than the white recruits did." Quarles noted that most officers in black regiments were amazed at how quickly the men mastered the manual of arms. He attributed this to the Negro's ear which "for time was perfect."²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰Bell Irving Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis, 1952), 54; Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox (Garden City, New York, 1954), 232; Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953), 212.

Drills were designed to instill in men a proper sense of obedience, for a well drilled regiment was one that was expected to do well under adverse conditions and to have pride in its performance. At first blacks probably took well to drill because it was exciting, but as time went by they, too, found drill boring. Catton and Quarles have both exaggerated the differences, for the record indicates that some blacks had difficulty in mastering drill. On at least one occasion the 20th Regiment was criticized for a lackadaisical drill. Colonel Bartram in Circular No. 5, dated April 10, 1864, at Port Hudson berated his subordinates for displaying an almost "total lack of interest in their commands." He threaten to arrest those who continued to be absent without proper excuse from morning drills. The following month, Bartram ordered an awkward or punishment drill for those who could not master the technique of marching. Careless marchers were ordered to drill from 9-11 a.m. and from 3-4 p.m. until improvements could be seen. On August 23, 1864 Lt. Colonel Mather issued Circular No. 17 informing the troops that the company drills ending August 30 would be limited "to loadings & firing manual of arms and drill for skirmishes except half hour each afternoon which will be devoted to instructions in guard duty. The attention of the officers is called to indifference and ignorance displayed by sentinels on duty, many of whom do not seem to

know the position of the soldier."²⁸¹

Nine months later Bartram requested that the guard duty be relieved daily instead of weekly, because "under the present system the guard get slovenly in their appearance and careless in their performance of their duty." (General Sherman ruled that the change could only come about if Captain Brady, who handled the guard duty, approved of it).²⁸²

Lt. Colonel Mather was irked by the large number of unshined boots, unpolished buttons and brass. He also criticized the movement of men during roll calls or dress parade, as well as their constant spitting while in line. Since some men either lacked coordination or resented drill, "awkward drills" were held as late as August 1865 for "all slovenly and lazy and stupid men." Harsh as these criticisms were, they did not compare to some of the denunciations of white units serving on garrison duty in remote areas. A January 1865 inspection of the 35th Missouri Regiment stationed at Helena, Arkansas, revealed that the officers and men "move like drones...are not instructed in any kind of drill...arms

²⁸¹Circular No. 5 dated April 10, 1864, Circular No. 8 dated May 4, 1864, Circular No. 17 dated August 23, 1864, 20th USCT Order Book, Record Group 94.

²⁸²Bartram to Major Wickham Hoffman, May 23, 1856; Sherman's endorsement on back-May 23, 1865, Regt. Papers 20th USCT, RG 94.

and accountments...very dirty...clothing dirty and in many cases ragged...hair...very long."²⁸³

Although some troops resented drilling and some officers were reluctant to assert their authority, the 20th Regiment had the potential of an excellent regiment. Captain Fred H. Man of the 84th U.S.C.T. and A.A.J.G., Southern Division, Louisiana, inspected it on February 20, 1865. There were 32 officers and 782 men present, 46 were on special and extra duty, while 75 were sick with 22 absent without leave. Colonel Man reported on the regiment as follows:

Military Bearing	Cos. A to K	Fair	Morning Reports-Inc.
Military Appearance	"	"	Book & Records- complete
Discipline	"	"	Police Quarters- good
System Instruction	"	"	Police Camp-good
Drill	"	"	Indifferent Personal Cleanliness-fair
Guard & Picket	"	"	Well
Officer Efficient	"	"	Yes

Man's remarks were informative. "Owing to the Regiment having been on the march for some time past and to the presence of undrilled recruits in the ranks, the Regiment does not make as good an appearance as it could after a time. The enlisted men appear to be of a good class and

²⁸³General Order No. 19 dated July 4, 1864, General Order No. 9 dated August 21, 1865, 20th USCT Order Books, RG 94; Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank, 220, 221.

the officers seem to be efficient. It can be made an excellent Regiment. Arms need repairs."²⁸⁴

In some instances negative inspection reports were not a true reflection of existing conditions. An August 1864 inspection of the 26th Regiment revealed that recitations of army regulations and tactics had been neglected; the company books and records were incomplete and that deficiencies in arms and accountrements existed. Major Ira Winans, who was the regimental commander, responded on September 16 that he had been in charge of the regiment for only the first three days of August and "was ordered to take command of the few men of the five companies present in camp just as the line was formed and was not with the inspecting officer after the companies moved from the ground where the inspections was held." Winans explained the poor recitations with the fact that few officers were available due to sickness or leave. The company books, he noted, were incomplete because officers failed to heed orders, and thus the regimental books which depended upon information provided for in the company books were also incomplete. The major asserted that it was unfair to criticize the arms and accountrements, "as but a portion of the regiment was that day under arms, many being on fatigue [and]

²⁸⁴Inspection Report of Captain Fred H. Man, February 20, 1865, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous 20th USCT, RG 94.

I did not notice such deficiencies of arms." He also explained that the nonprocurement of coal for the regimental armory in July and August accounted for the lack of repairs.²⁸⁵

Although black regiments went on patrols and saw action, about 100 of the 166 "colored" regiments were assigned to post or garrison duty. Excessive assignment to fatigue duty was noted by Carter G. Woodson to be discriminatory and the cause of many becoming "restive, sullen and even insubordinate."²⁸⁶

The 20th Regiment was stationed in the Department of the Gulf, where some of its companies engaged in fatigue duty and grave digging. Lt. Colonel Mather in a letter to Captain Frederic Speec, Assistant Adjutant General in the Southern Division of Louisiana, requested that H Company be relieved from duty at Camp Chalmette, because it had been on fatigue duty for nearly four months and needed to return "in order that it may be placed on an equality with the companies of this regiment in drill and discipline...." Mather's letter is

²⁸⁵ Report of George E. Gourand to Captain W. L. M. Burger September 7, 1864; endorsement on back by Major General J. G. Foster September 10, Colonel William Silliman September 15, and Ira Winans September 16, 1864, Regimental Papers-Letters 26th USCT, RG 94.

²⁸⁶ William F. Fox, Regimental Losses in the Civil War, 1861-1865 (Albany, 1889), 53; Carter G. Woodson, The Negro in Our History (Washington, 1928), 375; Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Civil War, 1861-1865 (New York, 1966), 246-247.

significant because earlier Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas issued orders No. 21 removing black troops from excessive fatigue duty in order "To prepare them for the higher duties of conflict with the enemy." Mather's letter indicated that it was not being enforced in the field.²⁸⁷ Colonel Bartram wrote to Captain Oliver Matthews, Assistant Adjutant General, that G Company had been digging graves near Chalmette for nearly two months. "This is one of my best companies," he complained, "and I request that it be ordered to join the Reg't." A few days later he added that if a company was to be assigned permanently to the task he would prefer that G Company remain "as there is an officer in charge of it, who, despite [the] demoralizing tendency of the duty, will exert himself to the utmost to keep his company in as good shape as possible."²⁸⁸

The 20th Regiment was selected for special police duty in New Orleans. In 1886 Dudley F. Phelps recalled that during the winter of 1865, just before the siege of Mobile, there was no canvas to shelter the troops, and a regiment was needed for police duty. "Gen. [E.R.S.] Canby," remarked Phelps, "wanted a trustworthy regiment and he selected us for the avowed reason that he considered our regiment the best disciplined and the most trustworthy."

²⁸⁷Mather to Speed, October 4, 1864, Regimental Papers-Letters 20th USCT, RG 94; Orders No 21, dated June 14, 1864, War of the Rebellion, ser. 3, IV, 431.

²⁸⁸Bartram to Oliver Matthews, July 27, 30, 1864, Regimental papers-Letters 20th USCT, RG 94.

The record shows that the regiment was ordered back to the Crescent City. On February 13, 1865 Lt. Col. and Assistant Adjutant General C. T. Christensen wrote from the city to Major General Gordon Granger, Commanding District of West Florida and South Alabama,"... that the portion of the Twentieth U. S. Colored Infantry now serving in your command be returned to this city...and ordered to report to the commanding general defenses of New Orleans." Four days later Captain Speed wrote to the commanding officer at Carrollton, Louisiana, "send Twentieth U. S. Colored Infantry to this city to relieve the Seventy-seventh Illinois Volunteers."²⁸⁹

The Twentieth was engaged in essential but routine work. In late May 1865 a company of the regiment was assigned to relieve three companies of the 77th U. S. Colored Infantry at the Corps d' Afrique Hospital in New Orleans.²⁹⁰ In August 1865 Major General George H. Thomas in Nashville wrote to Major General Stoneman

²⁸⁹Banquet Given by the Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864 to Commemorate the Departure for the Seat of War of the Twentieth Regiment of United States Colored Troops Raised by the Club (New York, 1886), 36; War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, 49, Pt. 1, 708; ser. 1, 48, Pt. 1, 882.

²⁹⁰War of the Rebellion, Special Orders No. 172 dated May 29, 1865, ser. 1, 48, Pt. 2, 653.

in Knoxville;

The military railroads will soon be given up to their respective companies. You may, therefore, withdraw all the railroad guards and concentrate the regiments at the most convenient points for keeping a check on the conduct of the People. The quartermaster's department have the fifteenth [U.S. Colored] and Twentieth [U.S. Colored] here [Nashville] guarding public property. They had better remain, as they know what is expected of them and are becoming reliable.²⁹¹

In September 1865, a portion of the regiment was assigned as a mounted force to protect freedmen in the back country near Milliken's Bend from former members of Quantrill's raiders.²⁹²

The 20th Regiment did not fight in any major battles, for the Mississippi Valley came under Union control in 1863, and by March 1864, when the regiment arrived in New Orleans, much of the major fighting had shifted to the East. From March to December 1864 the regiment was assigned to defend New Orleans, where it put in six months of garrison duty. During January and February of 1865, the regiment was in West Florida and South Alabama, and then returned to the Crescent City to help defend it until June 1865. From there it went to District of La Fourche, Department of the Gulf, where it

²⁹¹Ibid., ser. 1, 49, Pt. 2, 1105.

²⁹²Bartram to Hoffman, September 15, 1865, Regimental Papers--Miscellaneous 20th USCT, RG 94.

served until discharged in October 1865.²⁹³

Although the 20th Regiment did not see any major action, it was well disciplined unit, eager to fight. While en route to New Orleans from New York, Captain Louber of the Ericsson told Colonel Bartram that he had been transporting soldiers since 1861, but he had never seen a better behaved regiment aboard his ship. 2nd Lt. John Habberton commented in 1886 that "when the first alarm that that regiment ever heard brought out of the hospital every sick man there [who] went for his musket and fell into the ranks and marched."²⁹⁴

The 26th Regiment left New York on March 15, 1864 for Annapolis and then proceeded on April 6 for Hilton Head. It served in the District of Beaufort from April to October 1864, and in the Department of the South, First Separate and Second Separate Brigade, until its discharge.²⁹⁵ While in South Carolina the 26th was drilled in both infantry and heavy artillery tactics. The men were quick learners for in May 1864 the regiment was in charge of the forts and batteries at Beaufort. It was noted that the "armaments of these works are well cared

²⁹³Frederick H, Dyer, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (3 vols., New York, 1959), III, 1727.

²⁹⁴Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864, Bartram's comments on p. 31 and Habberton's on p. 48.

²⁹⁵Dyer, A Compendium, III, 1727-1728.

for and ready for defensive purposes." An inspection in August showed that although "the heavy artillerists at Beaufort [were] well drilled in the manual of the piece [they were] ignorant of magazine duties [and]... unacquainted with the nomenclature of the piece...." Company D of the 26th "garrisoning Battery Burnside, on the second line of intrenchments," was singled out for being "particularly well drilled in the manual of the piece."²⁹⁶

The 26th was involved in several battles resulting in severe losses. At John's Island, South Carolina, the regiment lost 97 killed and wounded, including Lt. James Spry, who was taken prisoner. In the Battle of Gregory's Farm near the Charleston and Savannah Railroad on December 9, 1864, Colonel Silliman was wounded and died ten days later. The news of Lt. Spry's death and burial was brought by three prisoners of war from the 3rd South Carolina Calvary, who were captured on December 26 by B. Company.²⁹⁷ The regiment fought in the Battle of Honey Hill on November 30, 1864, as well as, assisted in the attack on Petersburg. Writing in 1867, William Wells Brown noted that when all the officers of Company A were Killed or wounded; Sgt. Peter

²⁹⁶C. R. Brayton to W. L. M. Burger May 29, 1864, Brayton to J. G. Foster August 8, 1864, War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, 35, Pt. 2, 106, 227.

²⁹⁷William B. Guernsey to Lt. William Berryman June 23, 1865, Regt. Papers--Letters 26th USCT, RG 94.

Hawkins "took command, and held it for fourteen days." An eyewitness noted that Hawkins 'appointed men for guard and picket duty, made out his regular morning report, issued rations, drilled his men, took them out on dress parade, or on fatigue duty.' All of this, Brown noted, was done without any murmuring from the men. Brown believed that Hawkins' actions proved him competent to perform the duties of a lieutenant or captain.²⁹⁸ While it is not known if this story is true in all respects, it does seem to show that there were men of intelligence in the regiments, who, if given the opportunity, could lead and control others.

Like other regiments the 26th engaged in routine patrol duty, such as protecting Captain W. W. Dennis, United States Coast surveyor, while he and others were surveying the rivers and their banks near Beaufort.²⁹⁹ On Christmas Eve, 1864, a small group of soldiers initiated a sneak attack on some rebels attending a party near Devahoe's Neck in South Carolina. Wading through waist high water, the raiding party successfully took many prisoners, but prolonged exposure to the severe cold cost many of the black soldiers their lives.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸William Wells Brown, The Negro in the American Rebellion: His Heroism and His Fidelity (Boston, 1867), 272.

²⁹⁹Guernsey to Ira Winans April 18, 1865, Regt. Papers--Letters 26th USCT, RG 94.

³⁰⁰Deposition of Docton Thomas July 27, 1894, Pension Record of William Fox, Mother's Certificate #402712, RG 15.

The 31st Regiment left New York on April 25, 1864 to report to General Ambrose E. Burnside in Alexandria. A month later all remaining companies of the regiment in New York reported to Washington, where it became part of the Ninth Army Corps of the Army of the Potomac until December 1864 and then part of the all black Twenty-fifth Corps, Department of Texas, until November 1865. The 31st was engaged in the Battle of Cold Harbor, June 2-12, 1864, and the battles before Petersburg, Virginia, June 15-19, 1864. It was involved in the siege operations against Petersburg and Richmond from June 1864 to April 1865, and saw action in the Appomattox Campaign from March 28 to April 9, 1865.³⁰¹

Like other regiments, the men of the 31st had to be prepared to break camp and move quickly to an assignment. Shortly after arriving in Annapolis in early April 1864 they received an order to put 40 rounds of ammunition into their cartridge boxes with 100 more per man to load. The unit was instructed to be ready to move on one hour's notice and to be ready to cook five days' rations. Overcoats, blankets, change of underclothes and an extra pair of shoes were to be taken with space

³⁰¹Dyer, *A Compendium*, III, 1728-1729; C. W. Foster to William Hays May 24, 1864, Regt. Papers--Letters 1/12/63-5/19/66 31st USCT, RG 94; C. W. Foster to William Hays April 25, 1864, Regt. Papers--Issuance 11/20/63-3/19/66 31st USCT, RG 94.

reserved in their knapsacks for adding cooked rations on their arrival. ³⁰²

The 31st had its share of fatigue and garrison duty, but its most memorable, if not regarding, effort was the Petersburg Mine Explosion on July 30, 1864. Petersburg represented the threshold to Richmond, the Confederate capital. Looking to take Petersburg by blowing up the fortifications guarding the city, the Ninth Army Corps developed a novel plan. Lt. Col. Henry Pleasants and his miner regiment, the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteers, were to construct a tunnel beneath the Rebel fort. A mine was then to be exploded and the enemy lines breached. Several days prior to the explosion the black troops of the 4th Division (19th, 23rd, 27th, 28th, 39th, 30th, 31st, 39th and 43rd U. S. Colored Troops) under command of Brigadier General Edward Ferrero drilled to master the duties assigned to them as the assault team into the man-made crater. They were to proceed to take Cemetery Hill and clear a path to Petersburg. On the eve of the impending attack General George G. Meade opposed the use of black troops as the assault team, because he feared that in case of failure critics would charge him with using blacks as cannon fodder. Although Burnside argued that his white troops

³⁰²Gen. Order No. 8 dated April 19, 1864, Regt. Order and Guard Report Book 31st USCT, RG 94.

were fatigued after having "been exposed for forty days to a ceaseless fire and had acquired the habit of sheltering themselves from the enemy's missiles," General Grant sided with Meade. It was only later that he admitted the mission would have been successful had blacks led the attack.³⁰³

Burnside selected the leading unit by lot and "luck gave him [James H.] Ledlie's division and thereby assigned the initial action to the poorest division and the poorest division commander."³⁰⁴ Black soldiers and their officers were disappointed at their not being permitted to lead the charge. An unidentified officer of the 31st wrote to Vincent Colyer of the Union League on August 2 that the men wanted to do well and "to gain the respect of the Army of the Potomac. You know their former prejudices." Henry Goddard Thomas, Colonel of the Second Brigade, 4th Division (of which the 31st was a part) was to have led the original attack. His troops were eager to be on display. Prior to the attack they sang to bolster their spirits: 'We-e looks li-ike me-en a-a marchin' on, we looks li-ike men- en-war!' This was sung every night before the explosion but never again after the defeat.³⁰⁵

³⁰³Augustus Woodbury, Major General Ambrose E. Burnside and the Ninth Army Corps (Providence, 1867), 430, 431; War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, 40, Pt. 1, 243; Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, 38th Cong., 2 sess., I, 5,8.

The explosion originally set to go off at 3:30 a.m. was delayed for 45 minutes as the fuse had to be relit, and when it went off it caused mass confusion for the Confederates, and even shocked the Union troops. It created a crater 150 to 180 feet long, 60 feet wide and 20 to 25 feet deep. The unprepared white troops from the First Division were unable to cope with the confusion, noise and dust. Instead of going through to get to the ridge behind the Confederate lines, they milled about and failed to exploit the situation. The enemy recovered about thirty minutes after the explosion and began to take the offensive.

Black troops went into the crater around 7:30 a.m. and captured several hundred prisoners, but as they attacked the crest in the rear they met a countercharge and were driven back into the depth of the crater. Like the white units already there, blacks had to cower against the banks of the crater to avoid hostile fire. The Confederates were able to dominate the situation, and both whites and blacks sought to flee from the scene of carnage. There were over 4,000 Union casualties, with the black

³⁰⁴James G. Scott and Edward A. Wyatt, Petersburg's Story: A History (Petersburg, Virginia, 1960), 196; Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant (2 vols., New York, 1886), II, 311, 313.

³⁰⁵Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864 (New York, 1864), 49; Henry Goddard Thomas, "The Colored Troops at Petersburg," The Century Magazine, XXXIV, 5 (September, 1887), 777-778.

regiments losing 14 officers and 198 enlisted men; 41 officers and 667 men were wounded, and twenty officers and 402 men were captured or missing. Lt. Colonel William E. W. Ross of the 31st lost a leg. The morning report for Company F of the 31st for July 31, 1864, stated, "This company went into action before Petersburg July 30, 1864 with sixty-one men and lost twenty-six." (seven killed in action, nine wounded and ten missing.) The 31st Regiment lost one officer killed in action along with twenty-six enlisted men. Six officers and thirty-six men of the unit were wounded and two officers and sixty-four men were captured or missing. Captain Richard K. Woodruff of Company C died on August 11 from wounds received at Petersburg.³⁰⁶

Within a few days of the fiasco, New York papers began to assess blame strictly from a partisan viewpoint. The Tribune held Ledlie's division responsible for the failure. "The enormous losses of the colored regiments," it reported, "show...that they fought bravely." The Tribune considered black soldiers brave and asked, "How many white regiments would have...[gone] into action with the certainty that if taken prisoners they would be enslaved or murdered."³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶The War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, 40, Pt. 1, 248, 261; New York Times, August 2, 1864; Charles E. McCartney, Grant and His Generals (New York, 1953), 258-261; Morning Reports (Co. F) 31st USCT, RG 94; Descriptive Book (Co. C) 31st USCT, RG 94.

³⁰⁷New York Tribune, August 2, 3, 1864.

The Albany Evening Journal viewed the repulse as a failure of both whites and blacks but expected the army to recover. "The copperhead fraternity, "it intoned, "will take heart from this mischance, and predict ultimate failure with greater impudence than ever."³⁰⁸ The New York Herald considered it folly to have sent raw black regiments into battle. "Why," it exclaimed, "with such a splendid force in hand, was the repulse of a nigger division permitted to terminate the contest, when [Meade] knew that there was not a large force in his front, and that a great part of Lee's army was [elsewhere]?" According to the Herald the defeat was attributed to the incompetence of Meade and Burnside and "also [to] the President and his whole cabinet, with its nigger worshipping policy [because] niggers cannot and will not fight. All the sensation stories in the nigger press to the contrary are mere moonshine. Yet the Herald published a dispatch from James C. Fitzpatrick, who remarked that Union officers were told by Southerners during a truce that they were surprised at the skills displayed by blacks.³⁰⁹

The New York Times did not initially evaluate the black soldiers' involvement in the failure but reserved remarks until January 8, 1865. At that time it characterized them as good only for sudden dashes "but not good

³⁰⁸Evening Journal (Albany), August 3, 1864.

³⁰⁹New York Herald, August 3, 4, 1864.

in a great disaster...not having the moral stamina to see long the horrible effects on the human body which shell or round produce." Considering blacks to be weaker than the more "civilized" whites and best fitted for noncombatant roles, the Times was unwilling to accept the view that success would have resulted if blacks had led the assault. It believed only "a mild species of negrophilism is tolerable."³¹⁰

Participants in the attack were more consistent in their assessment of the valor of the "colored" troops. William H. Powell, who was Judge Advocate of Ledlie's division and his aide-to-camp, recalled in 1887 that if the black troops had led the assault as planned, they would have been at Cemetery Hill behind the enemy before a musket would have been used against them. Henry Goddard Thomas believed that the delay in sending in blacks resulted in the 31st Regiment being "mowed down like grass, with no hope of anyone reaching the crest." Even though the unit was shattered without its officers, it had to be ordered back to safety. Thomas commented, "these black men commanded the admiration and respect of every beholder on that day."³¹¹

³¹⁰New York Times, January 8, 1865.

³¹¹William H. Powell, "The Tragedy of the Crater," The Century Magazine, XXXIV, 5 (September, 1887), 771; Thomas, "The Colored Troops at Petersburg," 779, 781.

It was clear to observers that nonwhites were treated with vengeance. George S. Bernard of the 12th Virginia Infantry (Mahone's Brigade) recalled in 1892 that a black soldier prostrated himself and begged for his life. He did not kill him but others were not as generous, for Bernard witnessed many brutal slayings as many rebels "seemed infuriated at the idea of having to fight negroes." "Within...ten minutes," he commented, "the whole floor of the trench was strewn with the dead bodies of negroes, in some places in such numbers that it was difficult to make one's way along the trench without stepping on them."³¹²

George L. Kilmer of the 14th New York Heavy Artillery remembered that some white Union troops "bayoneted blacks...in order to preserve [themselves] from the confederate vengeance. Men boasted in my presence that blacks had thus been disposed of...." Brevet Brigadier General Stephen M. Weld stated that "a negro soldier by my side was shot dead, the enemy calling out: 'shoot the nigger but don't kill the white man.'"³¹³

³¹²The Battle of the Crater edited and compiled by George S. Bernard (12th Virginia Infantry, Mahone's Brigade), Address Delivered Before A. P. Hill Camp of Confederate Veterans, of Petersburg, Va., Given on June 24, 1892 (n.p., 1892), 8, 9, 12.

³¹³George L. Kilmer, "The Dash Into the Crater," The Century Magazine, XXXIV, 5 (September, 1887), 776; Stephen M. Weld, "The Petersburg Mine," Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts (Boston, 1906), V, No. 10, 211 (Read before the Society March 27, 1882).

Not all blacks in the Battle of the Crater were wantonly murdered, as some were taken prisoners. Sumner U. Shearman, a white man, was captured and later exchanged for a Confederate prisoner. He stated in 1898 that white officers and black soldiers were forced to march in a line of "four officers, four negroes, four officers, four negroes..." through the city of Petersburg. This was meant to humiliate the officers as it did. One woman with hatred in her voice shouted out, 'that is the way to treat the yankees; mix them up with the [damn] niggers, they are so fond of them mix them up.' Later the officers were separated from the enlisted men and taken to an island in the Appomattox River.³¹⁴

A different view of the black performance in the assault was held by Edmund J. Cleveland of Company K, 9th New Jersey Volunteers, who was not involved directly in the battle but was in the vicinity. His diary notation for July 31 reads:

From members of the 10th N. H. [New Hampshire] I have learned the most distressing news. They say that the negroes made a disgraceful skedaddle from the captured works when the rebels counter attacked.

³¹⁴Sumner U. Shearman, Battle of the Crater and Experiences of Prison Life, Fifth Series, No. 8, in Personal Narratives of Events in the War of the Rebellion Being Papers Read Before the Rhode Island Historical Society (Providence, 1898), 16-17, 18.

Cleveland noted on August 1 that the "disgraceful skedaddle" of the black soldiers "was due to the cowardice of their officers. "The darkies had to be driven back by a skirmish line at the point of the bayonet."³¹⁵ Cleveland was not an eyewitness and his comments were unfounded. Stephen M. Weld, among others, noted that he had never seen such bravery as exhibited by the officers of the black regiments. He blamed the failure on officers like Ledlie who had retired to the bomb shelter to sustain himself on whiskey. Weld describe the hapless officer as "a drunkard and an arrogant coward" who had been under the influence of liquor in every fight that he had been in. "It was an absolute crime," Weld stated, "to let such a man head so important an undertaking."³¹⁶

A Meade appointed court of inquiry investigated the failure of the attack for seventeen days. Burnside and other explained that the black troops with less than two weeks drill performed well in the attack, despite receiving some of "the hottest fire that any troops had been subjected during the day." They believed that the attack would have been successful if blacks had led the assault as originally planned.³¹⁷ The court of inquiry

³¹⁵Edmund J. Cleveland, Jr., ed., The Siege of Petersburg, Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society, LX, 3, (July, 1948), 177, 178.

³¹⁶Weld, The Petersburg Mine, 210, 212.

³¹⁷Testimony of Burnside, Ferrero and Thomas, War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, XL, Pt. 1, 73, 74, 92, 104, 106, 598-599.

ruled that Burnside was in error for not using proper charging tactics and for not having contingent plans; Ledlie was criticized for his lack of leadership; whereas, Ferrero was found negligent for not being ready to attack and for being in the bomb shelter. Col. Z. R. Bliss, commander of the First Brigade, Second Division, Ninth Corps was blamed for staying behind with the only regiment that did not advance and being far from the vicinity of the battle and thus unable to decide on tactics. Brigadier General O. B. Willcox, United States Volunteers, was reprimanded for not initiating enough effort to take Cemetery Hill. On December 15, 1864, Benjamin F. Wade, Radical Republican from Ohio, submitted the report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War in which Meade--who was considered by Wade to be incompetent, conservative and indecisive--was blamed for the fiasco for not supporting the original plan to send blacks in as the assault team.³¹⁸

Despite the setback the morale of the black troops remained high even after the enemy attempted to humiliate them. Confederates who had taken money off the recently paid black dead, wounded or captured taunted the Union forces a few days after the explosion by waving greenbacks

³¹⁸Ibid., 128-129; Hans L. Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade: Radical Republican From Ohio (New York, 1963), 242.

and shouting 'send them in on another charge when they get their money.'³¹⁹ An unidentified officer in the 31st U.S.C.T. reported shortly after the fiasco that "we were unsuccessful, yet I am confident that the valor and fighting qualities of our men are equal to any in the United States army." "We will yet show it," he vowed.³²⁰

Near the end of the national campaign the 31st showed its bravery as it participated in the capture of Petersburg. Colonel William Woodward, a brigade commander in the 25th Corps, described the unit before Petersburg in early April 1865 as cool despite exposure "to the enemy's fire of solid shot." According to him the black troops behaved well, even "during a period of severe marching, and reduction of rations, amounting to almost destitution."³²¹ General Ferrero commented in December 1864, "the colored troops had done a faithful service, and would doubtless have accomplished more had [they] been permitted. But the old army officers did not in all cases take kindly to them."³²²

³¹⁹John J. Pullen, The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1957), 217.

³²⁰Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864 (New York, 1864), 50.

³²¹War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, XLVI, Pt. 1, 1241-1243.

³²²Woodbury, Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, 471.

The surrender at Appomattox did not result in immediate discharges. Guerrillas had to be neutralized, depots protected, bondsmen liberated from reluctant slaveholders and cities occupied. But before the regiments became involved in these activities Lincoln was assassinated. His death was a shock to many and one that deeply affected blacks. Company K of the 26th Regiment observed April 26 in his memory and four days later the regiment suspended all non-emergency operations and labor. Guns were fired from Fort Duane, South Carolina at dawn and at thirty minute intervals between sunrise and sunset, a single gun was fired. Officers wore a badge of mourning on the left arm as well as on their swords; the regimental colors were put into mourning for six months. Later in the year the 31st Regiment gave \$506 to Henry H. Garnet towards the building of the proposed controversial colored people's college in memory of the martyred Commander-in-Chief.³²³

Once the war ended the black troops had more time to make acquaintances with the former slave population. Some men, like Corporal Hiram Vandervort, found their

³²³Morning Report (Co. K) for April 1865, 31st USCT, RG 94; Guernsey to Winans April 30, 1865, Regt. Papers-Letters 26th USCT, RG 94; Weekly Anglo-African, November 18, 1865. Frederick Douglass opposed this monument to Lincoln because white money enable blacks to build it. To him a black college implied inferiority and second class status. The Liberator, Sept. 29, 1865.

future wives in the South, while others began to impart to the freedmen the rudiments of education and religious instruction. Charles Gilbert, a 25 year old substitute, wrote to the Weekly Anglo-African from Camp Hancock, South Carolina on July 7, 1865:

Our regiment [26th USCT] is placed in different parts of South Carolina. Our duty is to let the colored people know that they are free citizens of the United States, and to protect them as such, and to prevent their former owners from driving them off the plantations, and cheating them out of their share of the crop.... These former slaveholders grieve and fret a great deal about having to pay the freedmen for their labor, but they have to do it. Through the instrumentality of Corp. Tyler, we have had some grand meetings; one was a grand jubilee. The people came from miles around, and listened to some freedom songs and speeches, such as our people never heard before. We have organized a debating society.... We are all anxious to get home, now the war is over....³²⁴

In Louisiana, Chaplain George W. Le Vere of the 20th Regiment wrote to the Weekly Anglo-African while en route to Milliken's Bend, "I have found as good and as kind a people here as I have found anywhere, but the bad are very bad." Le Vere requested that letters be

³²⁴ Corporal Hiram Vandervort, Co. H, 20th USCT was married in New Orleans on May 11, 1865, Pension File of H. Vandervort, Widow's Certificate #438789, RG 15; Weekly Anglo-African, Aug. 12, 1865 Compiled Service Record, Sgt. Charles Gilbert, B Co., 26th USCT, RG 94.

sent to keep up the mens' morale. Two weeks later, the chaplain gave a dismal description of the destroyed land around Milliken's Bend. The men had not had any fresh meat since their arrival, because the rebels took their slaves and livestock to Texas. The freedmen were described as industrious, self-sufficient and very bright, but in need of formal education. Le Vere added that the nearest church was twenty-five miles away in Vicksburg so he hoped to preach "at least once each Sabbath." He described the beginning of dissension because one-year men were being discharged before those who signed up for three years. It is possible that some of the dissatisfied three-year men deserted at that point. Le Vere concluded that the regiment was keeping abreast of news of New York by the distribution of copies of the Weekly Anglo-African.³²⁵

During the occupation of Louisiana in the summer of 1865 the 20th Regiment became involved in settling disputes between freedmen and plantation owners. Colonel Bartram informed Brigadier General G. L. Andrews, Chief of Staff, on August 18 that many of the plantations near Milliken's Bend were abandoned because "of the cutting of the canal at Lake Providence." Nevertheless,

³²⁵Weekly Anglo-African, August 26, November 4, 1865 (the letters were written on August 10 and 30, 1865).

the few plantations under cultivation were expected to yield fine cotton crops. "I hear some complaints," Bartram reported, "in the regard to the breaking of contracts by freedmen. I would suggest that an officer be appointed at once to look after the business and interests of this [Freedmen's] Bureau." For this task he recommended Captain G. A. Foster of B Company.³²⁶

Eventhough black troops fought valiantly to help preserve the Union, in the minds of many Northern whites they had committed an unpardonable sin--the killing of white men albeit they were traitors. When the war ended some white Union soldiers vented their hostility against blacks by attacking defenseless soldiers. Colonel Bartram complained to Major Wickham Hoffman that three of his men were severely beaten by members of the 13th Army Corps and the New Orleans police. This attack did not occur in the heat of argument but as amusement for Negrophobes. Southern civilians, too, attacked black soldiers. Major General George H. Thomas notified President Andrew Johnson that there was no fear of a black insurrection because blacks were well disciplined. Whites were bullies because "it is exceedingly repugnant to the Southerners

³²⁶Bartram to Andrews August 18, 1865, Regt Papers-Letters 20th USCT, RG 94.

to have negro soldiers in their midst, and some are so foolish as to vent their anger upon the negro because he is a soldier."³²⁷

During its sojourn in New Orleans as part of the occupation force members of the 20th became victims of the city's twin evils, rum and prostitution. Bartram considered the "colored" prostitutes as "a source of constant discord among soldiers, white and black [because] they swarm about...during the parades and drills...distracting the attention of the men...." If he had his way, Bartram would had locked the "ladies" up. George W. Avery, Surgeon of the First New Orleans Volunteers, offered the unsolicited opinion that perhaps the 20th could correct the evil by following the self discipline of the First U. S. Infantry. Bartram was furious that Avery spoke out on a subject that was not within realm of his competency. The colonel felt it was unfair of Avery to compare the 20th with only one year of experience to "one of the oldest military organization in the country officered by men who have grown old in their country's service."³²⁸

³²⁷Ibid., Bartram to Hoffman May 30, 1865; War of the Rebellion, ser. 1, XLIX, Pt. 2, 1112.

³²⁸Bartram to Wickham Hoffman (no date) 1865; Avery to Hoffman May 30, 1865 (Bartram's endorsement on back dated May 31, 1865), Regt. Papers--Letters 20th USCT, RG 94.

In a quasi-peacetime situation where both local and military police operate side by side, questions of jurisdiction involving soldiers were bound to arise. The New Orleans Chief of Police notified Colonel and Acting Mayor Samuel M. Quincy that on May 28, 1865 a brawl ensued between white sailors from the USS Portsmouth and members of the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. The military police of the black regiment arrested and locked up a white sailor. Another incident involved the city's police arresting some brawling white and black soldiers. A squad of ten or fifteen soldiers from the 20th arrived on the scene, and in accordance with the instructions of a black sergeant fired into the crowd, killing a citizen. White officers of the regiment ordered the men back to their quarters. The police chief complained that "soldiers belonging to this regiment, [20th] have frequently interfered with the police by attempting to rescue prisoners who were in charge of the latter." All throughout the South resentment was shown against blacks as occupation forces.³²⁹

³²⁹Chief of Police (Ald Karnmark?) to Acting Mayor Colonel S. M. Quincy, May 29, 1865, Regt. Papers-- Letters 20th USCT, RG 94 Quincy was a colonel in the 73rd USCI and was appointed acting mayor by order of Major General Banks, Special Orders No. 119, dated May 5, 1865 as reported in the New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 23, 1865; John W. Blassingame, Black New Orleans, 1860-1880 (Chicago, 1973), 174-175; Otis A. Singletary, Negro Militia and Reconstruction (Austin, 1957), 114-128.

Corporal Hiram Vandervort of the 20th Regiment was arrested on August 11, 1865 by orders of General William T. Sherman on the charge that he had rescued a prisoner who was in police custody. Investigation revealed that Vandervort had arrested a civilian who was engaged in an interracial fight. The citizen claimed to be a detective, but this was later proven untrue. A policeman gave the chief of police a false report which implicated the corporal. Bartram asked Major Hoffman to investigate because Sherman refused to release the corporal, even though the regiment was scheduled to leave his district. Vandervort, according to Bartram, was "one of the most reliable noncom officers in [the 20th] regiment, and [was] a man of infinitely more character and education than four fifths of the policemen of New Orleans." On September 20 Vandervort wrote to Sherman and expressed his ignorance about matters of his arrest and asked for a release. Sherman relented and freed Vandervort. There is no evidence of a trial or other action by either the regiment or by authorities of the Eastern District of Louisiana.³³⁰

By the fall of 1865 the military saw no need of keeping the men of the 20th, 26th and 31st U. S.

³³⁰Bartram to Hoffman Sept. 27, 1865, Regt. Papers-Letters 20th USCT, RG 94; Compiled Service Record, Corp. H. Vandervort Co. H, 20th USCT, RG 94.

Colored Troops in uniform. On September 9 the 26th was mustered out at Hilton Head and proceeded to New York. Three days later the 20th left Milliken's Bend to be mustered out in New Orleans and then sailed for New York City for final discharge and payment. The 31st was also mustered out in New Orleans after serving in Texas. It was disbanded on November 7 and arrived in Hartford, Connecticut on the 24th for final payment and discharge.³³¹

Very few black soldiers from the three regiments remained in the South, because they had to go to New York or Connecticut for their final pay. The record indicates, however, that a number of officers of the 20th Regiment were mustered out and discharged in New Orleans for the purposes of remaining in the South. It is not known how long they remained there, however, David Pillsworth applied for a pension increase in 1887 from his residence in Brooklyn and John Habberton spoke in New York in 1886.³³²

³³¹Special Order No. 47 dated Aug. 9, 1865, Regt. Papers-Issuance 26th USCT, RG 94; Special Order No. 56 dated Sept. 12, 1865, Regt Papers--Miscellaneous, 20th USCT, RG 94; J. N. Butler to Commander Depot Camp, Hartford, Nov. 23, 1865, Regt. Papers--Letters 31st USCT, RG 94.

³³²A. H. McDonald to Major Alfred Freedbury Oct. 14, 1865, Regt. Papers--Letters, 20th USCT, RG 94; Pillsworth to M. V. Tierney May 24, 1887, in David J. Pillsworth File in 20th Regiment USCT folder, New-York Historical Society; for Habberton's comments see Banquet Given by Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864. Remaining in the South were 1st Lt. Benjamin Armbruster, William Van Orun, Bruno Trombly, William Cooper, John Habberton, and J. K. Gardner. 2nd Lt. Charles A. Jenkins, and A. W. Charles. Captains Henry H. Rouse, David J. Pillsworth and William Moore. All the commissioned officers of Co. H remained.

When the black regiments left New York they were hailed by the Republican community and wished luck and Godspeed by many prominent members of Manhattan. Although the Union League Club raised \$98 to cover expenses for a reception for the returning 20th Regiment, white New Yorkers had little enthusiasm for the veterans. A survey of the Times, Tribune, Herald and other white papers of the City indicated no press coverage of the regiments' discharge.³³³ The Albany News described how 200 black residents of the capital met with returnees from the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers and the 26th Regiment United States Colored Troops. The 54th were tendered a reception in Boston with Governor John Andrews in attendance. The News asked, "but what shall we say for this copperhead state in which we live? And this its capital city?"³³⁴

The cruel war that pitted brother against brother and master against slave was finally over. The long marches, the days of deprivation, the anguished cry of the wounded, the utter horror of the dead was at

³³³Union League Club of New York Report of Vincent Colyer on the Reception and Care of the Soldiers Returning From the War, Presented September 14, 1865 (New York 1865), 53.

³³⁴Albany News, October 12, 1865 as cited in Weekly Anglo-African, November 4, 1865. The Albany reception was arranged by the Female Lundy Society, Singing Association (A.M.E. church), Lovejoy Society (female), Union Mite (Baptist church), Female Lincoln Union Aid Society Board Association and Sewing Circle (A.M.E. church), B.B.B. Club, American Equal Rights League and the Jephthah Lodge No. 17 A.Y.M. A banquet for the returning soldiers was held on September 19.

last ended. 611 men of the three black regiments did not return. Their blood mingled with the dust and the mud, their bodies nurturing the Southern soil. For them their dreams were forever shattered. And many were missing. What of George Hazard who was with the 31st Regiment at the explosion of the Petersburg mine? What was told his sister who advertised for information about his whereabouts five months after the Confederacy had surrendered? What could be told Mary Dana about war and death when ads for information about her son Alfred who was last heard from on May 17, 1865 at Petersburg went unanswered for three months and then stopped? Did he suddenly appear at her doorside or did a stranger inform her of his mangled and buried body in Old Virginy? Did anyone know John K. Jackson? He served in the 26th U.S.C.T. His wife was looking for him.³³⁵

As for the living, exploitation continued to plague them, although Congress decided in March 1865 to recognize all enlistees as freedmen at the date of enlistment and granted them full state bounties equal to

³³⁵The ad of E. Hill of Argyle, Washington County, New York for information about George Hazard appeared in the Weekly Anglo-African, September 3, 1865; Alfred Dana served in Co. 1, 31st USCT. Ads for his whereabouts appeared in Ibid., August 19, 26, September 3, 9, 16, October 7, 21, 1865; Ads for information about John K. Jackson appeared in Ibid., August 12, 19, 26, September 3, 9, 16, and November 4, 1865.

those of whites.³³⁶ As bounty money and pension grants became available, the unscrupulous individuals who had cheated the recruits previously came back to fleece new victims. The Weekly Anglo-African informed soldiers who had not received their bounty to apply for it at the U. S. Army Agency at 64 Bleeker Street in New York City. George Le Vere, the former chaplain of the 20th Regiment, warned veterans that devious men claiming to be bounty agents would "help" them get through the bureaucratic mess of obtaining a pension, bounty or back pay for a fee which often amounted to on-half of the claim. He advised them to go to the office of the Sanitary Commission at 35 Chambers Street in Manhattan, where they could file their claims free of charge.³³⁷

Some officers had difficulty in obtaining their final pay due to their failure to settle all accounts prior to their discharge. Colonel Bartram had his pay held up because, according to Assistant Adjutant General C. W. Foster, he owed John Rugard of New Orleans \$125 for wood taken by the 20th Regiment. The colonel was finally discharged but did not receive his final pay at that

³³⁶An Act Approved March 3, 1865 provided for \$100 bounty if enlisted prior to October 14, 1863. If enlisted in old regiment after October 24, 1863 but prior to April 1, 1864--\$300. If enlisted in new regiment after December 24, 1863 but prior to April 1, 1864--\$300. If enlisted between April 1, 1864 and July 17, 1864-\$100, War of the Rebellion, Ser. 3, V, 659-660.

³³⁷Weekly Anglo-African, November 18, 1865.

time, and it is not known how the matter was settled.³³⁸

Failure to settle debts affected several officers of the 26th Regiment. On September 20, 1865, C. W. Thomas, Major and Chief Quartermaster, Department of South Carolina at Hilton Head informed Brevet Lt. Colonel W. L. M. Burger, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters Department of the South that the regiment was issued tents in August because prior to discharge they were without shelter. The tents were not returned but were left standing and consequently many were lost or stolen before the remainder were gathered up. On October 3 W. A. Nichols, Assistant Adjutant General in Washington, ordered Brevet Lt. Colonel R. J. Dodge, Chief Mustering officer in New York City, to withhold discharges and final payments of the regimental commander, quartermaster and the commanding officers of the companies until the government was reimbursed.³³⁹ Three weeks later Assistant Adjutant General Thomas M. Vincent notified Dodge to stop payments to quartermaster Joseph L. Tull,

³³⁸C. W. Foster to R. J. Dodge November 13, 1865; Thomas Leslie to Dodge November 14, 1865; Foster to Dodge November 15, 1865, Compiled Service Record, Nelson B. Bartram Colonel 20th USCT, RG 94.

³³⁹C. W. Thomas to W. L. M. Burger September 20, 1865, W. A. Nichols to R. J. Dodge October 3, 1865, Regt. Papers--Letters 26th USCT, RG 94.

Lt. Ellery L. Miller and Captain Aaron C. McDonald. Tull and Miller were accused of losing between them \$2,014.72 worth of equipment.³⁴⁰

On October 25 Vincent ordered Dodge to pay Colonel Guernsey, Captain McDonald, Lieutenant Miller and to grant them honorable discharges but to withhold pay and discharge from Lieutenant Tull, the acting regimental quartermaster. Nevertheless, on the same day Vincent sent a letter of modification to Dodge, granting Tull his discharge and pay.³⁴¹

In 1861 very few individuals were willing to accept the notion of arming blacks to assist in suppressing the rebellion, but as the events of war progressed and the inevitability of slavery's demise became necessary, blacks were put into uniform to help crush the Confederacy. Many whites who earlier doubted the wisdom of arming blacks became their biggest boosters

³⁴⁰ Ibid., Thomas M. Vincent to R. J. Dodge October 24, 1865; Statement showing the number of tents and their original cost abandoned by Lieuts. J. L. Tull and E. L. Miller.... (no date) 1865, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous, RG 94. Tull was accused of abandoning 2 hospital tents, 2 hospital flier, 2 sets poles, 36 large set pins, 75 common tents, 75 set poles and 1,000 pins. Miller was charged with losing 2 wall tents, 2 sets poles, 2 wall tents fliers, 24 wall tents pins, 125 common tents, 125 sets poles and 1,800 pins. The equipment was valued at \$8,677.41 when new. After figuring out the depreciation value the government reached the \$2,014.72 figure.

³⁴¹ Vincent to Dodge October 25, 1865; Vincent to Dodge October 25, 1865 (letter of modification), Compiled Service Record 2nd Lt. Joseph L. Tull, Co. F, 26th USCT, RG 94.

after watching the "colored" troops prove their loyalty on the battlefield. The war was over, but the nation had to bind the wounds of four years and commence the slow healing process. Not only did the war destroy slavery but it raised the question of racial equality. Concerned observers in New York and elsewhere waited to see if the black man's sacrifice at Olustee, Milliken's bend, and Honey Hill would be rewarded with increased rights in the North.

CHAPTER VII

RACE RELATIONS IN NEW YORK STATE: 1865-1870

The Civil War initially was fought by the Union, while the Confederacy took up arms to protect its institution of slavery. In the latter phase of the conflict, emancipation became the great moral issue, although it arose from military necessity. C. Van Woodward has concluded that equality became the third war aim of the radicals.³⁴² Nevertheless, many radicals were advocates of white supremacy, a fact which made it difficult for them "to revolutionize the southern social order without first improving the status of northern Negroes."³⁴³

What impact did the war have on black-white relationships in New York State? On January 8, 1865 General Benjamin F. Butler addressed the Negro troops of the Army of the James and told them that they had

³⁴²C. Vann Woodward, The Burden of Southern History (Baton Rouge, 1960), 74-78. See also James McPherson, The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton, 1964), 221.

³⁴³McPherson, The Struggle for Equality, 222. See V. Jacque Voegeli, Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War (Chicago, 1967), 178; C. Vann Woodward, American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue (Boston, 1971), 164-166.

proven themselves in battles. "With the bayonet," he commented, "you have unlocked the iron-barred gates of prejudice, opening new fields of freedom, liberty, and equality of rights to yourself and your race forever." Speaking at the New York State Soldiers' Depot on May 20, Governor Reuben E. Fenton declared that "the soldiers have made the Declaration of Independence a living embodiment of the truth that all men are endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, without regard to the color of their complexion." Fifteen years later Henry W. Bellows of the Union League Club stated that military service made the black man a citizen and "put him on a level with the whites."³⁴⁴ Such comments were grandiose but inaccurate. As C. Vann Woodward has noted, "equality was a far more revolutionary aim than freedom...." A similar view was expressed ninety-five years earlier by the American Colonization Society, which concluded that "the end of the war will be but the beginning of the negro question."³⁴⁵ The Civil War showed that blacks were loyal to the Union; now they wanted to know if the North could "conquer its race bias as to eliminate

³⁴⁴New York Times, January 12, 1865; New York Tribune, May 22, 1865; Union League Proceedings at the Dinner of the Early Members of the Union League Club of the City of New York Tuesday May 20, 1880 (New York, 1880), 20.

³⁴⁵Woodward, Burden of Southern History, 79; Forty-Eight Annual Report of the American Colonization Society with Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and of the Board of Directors, January 17, 1865 (Washington, 1865), 8-9.

segregation," in educational institutions, the job market and in the right of suffrage.³⁴⁶

Institutional racism was very much alive in New York. There were some hints that perhaps reasoning and good will were chipping away at the ingrained prejudice, but this was illusory. In 1864, after the widow of Sgt. William Anderson of Company F, 26th U.S.C.T., was removed from the white section of the 8th Avenue Railroad by a police officer, the Union League Club, the Police Commissioner, Thomas C. Acton, and the Merchants Relief Association combined their efforts effectively to remove racial restrictions on the line in New York City.³⁴⁷ This success proved to be a partial one as some whites continued to use their private carriages or avoided riding on those trains that had black passengers. Racial hostility did not decline because of this partial victory.

A letter to the editor of the Weekly Anglo-African in August 1865 signed by H. H. G. (probably Henry Highland Garnet) warned that "the demon of prejudice has just begun to show his horns...." "A war of race," he stated, "is quite probable...[for] we have reached the point from which the most that is to be done must be achieved by ourselves."³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶Leslie H. Fischel, Jr., "Northern Prejudice and Negro Suffrage, 1865-1870," The Journal of Negro History, XXXIX, 1, (January 1954), 8.

³⁴⁷New York Times, June 30, 1865.

³⁴⁸The Weekly Anglo-African, August 26, 1865.

The death of President Lincoln in April 1865 quickly showed black New Yorkers that aversion for them was not alleviated by the sacrifice of their kinfolk on the battlefield. When Lincoln's body was brought to Manhattan for public viewing, a debate developed whether blacks should participate in the scheduled April 25 procession. The Common Council of the city refused to permit them to march on the grounds that they had filed their application too late. The War Department notified General Dix, commanding Department of the East, on April 24 "that no discrimination respecting color should be exercised in admitting persons to the funeral procession...." Before the War Department's intervention was known some New Yorkers supported the black population's demand to be part of the procession, and Police Commissioner Acton informed blacks that he would provide police protection if they wanted to march. The Tribune argued that opponents of black marchers would gladly step back and let Negroes run off to fight battles in their defense. It urged them not to be saddened by the exclusion because they did not need "banners, mottoes, regalia, etc. to convince anybody that they grieve for the loss of our good president...." The Methodist Episcopal organ The Christian Advocate and Journal denounced the Common Council's refusal to let blacks march and blamed on

Irish Catholic Papist control.³⁴⁹

Blacks were finally permitted to march, but they were at the end of the procession. Police protection was not needed as wealthy New Yorkers cheered them on in much the same way the 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. received their ovations a year earlier.³⁵⁰ An unknown black woman street sweeper summed up the sentiment of her people for Lincoln when she shouted on the corner of West Broadway and Canal Street, 'he died for me! he died for me! God bless him!'³⁵¹

Lincoln, the martyred president, the Emancipator, was remembered. On September 23, 1867, New York City blacks celebrated the 4th anniversary of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Colored Loyal Leaguers march down 7th Avenue to 14th Street and crosstown to the Washington Monument and then to Fulton Street and Broadway. From there they proceeded to Leffert's Park where they were joined by many former members of the black regiments raised in the city.³⁵²

³⁴⁹For contents of the War Dept's. Telegram to Dix see New York Times, April 25, 1865; New York Tribune, April 24, 28, 1865; The Christian Advocate and Journal (New York), April 27, 1865.

³⁵⁰Evening Post (New York), April 26, 1865; New York Times, April 26, 1865; New York Tribune, April 26, 1865; The World, April 26, 1865.

³⁵¹New York Tribune, April 25, 1865.

³⁵²New York Times, September 24, 1867.

The Union League Club did more than any other group in New York City to grant equality to blacks. The Club was not only active in integrating the street railroads but also maintained its support for the armed forces by providing them with a temporary home at the New York Soldiers Depot. Established by the state legislature in 1863, it was continued in 1865 to provide for the sick, disabled or furloughed soldiers of the state. In late February 1865 Vincent Colyer, a Union Leaguer, was appointed Superintendent of the Depot, but was relieved on September 5, by Governor Fenton in an economy move. Colyer permitted no prejudice while superintendent, although his predecessors made black soldiers eat in the kitchen and sleep in either the kitchen, bathroom or the basement. He served the two races at the same table unless a "colored" soldier preferred to eat alone. Whites who did not care for the new eating arrangements were told to go somewhere else. Colyer stated that no one complained, although the help was not used to the practice. His liberal policy did not attract many black soldiers, who preferred to stay with families or friends.³⁵³

³⁵³Union League Club of New York Report of Vincent Colyer on the Reception and Care of the Soldiers Returning from the War, Presented September 14, 1865 (New York, 1865), 3, 5, 13.

Dudley Cornish wrote in 1956 that "the Negro soldier proved that the slave could become a man." Yet in New York black men were still not granted the right of suffrage on equal terms with whites. The Civil War had no immediate impact on removing the \$250 property value restriction on black voters--a burden that dated back to the 1821 state constitution. Voting on equal terms with whites was not allowed in the Empire State until 1870, when the 15th Amendment to the Federal Constitution eliminated the property test. Henry Highland Garnet set the tone when he gave an address in the Hall of the House of Representatives on February 12, 1865. "If slavery has been destroyed merely from necessity," the former slave stated, "let every class be enfranchised at the dictation of justice." Speaking in Boston in April 1865, at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Frederick Douglass declared that the denial of suffrage prevented blacks from forming "an intelligent judgement respecting public men and public measures." He added that, since they were considered inferior to whites, some blacks had begun to "put a low estimate upon [them] selves, and to feel that" [they had] "no possibilities like other men."³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army 1861-1865 (New York, 1966 originally published in 1956), 291; A Memorial Discourse; by Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, Washington City on Sabbath, February 12, 1865 (Philadelphia, 1865), 87; Philip S. Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass (4 vols., New York, 1955), IV, 159.

In New York voices began to speak out, but the time was not yet ripe for a serious debate of the issue. The Albany Evening Journal considered the franchise "not a privilege...but an inherent right which belongs equally to all...." John Van Buren, speaking in Albany in 1865, called for an end of the property qualification for blacks, but nothing concrete was accomplished. The prominent Republican jurist David D. Field, who earlier had been active in the antislavery movement, was opposed to reform. Speaking before a mass rally of New Yorkers on February 22, 1866, he set forth the view of many: 'The elective franchise is not a natural right, but a political trust.... Because the blacks have fought for the country, that does not necessarily give them the right to govern it.'³⁵⁵

By the Act of March 2, 1867, Congress enfranchised 700,000 black voters in the former Confederate states at a time when "colored men" could not vote in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas, and in Ohio only if they were 51% white.³⁵⁶ New York was not alone in its stubborn resis-

³⁵⁵Albany Evening Journal, February 15, 1867; New York Tribune, October 7, 1865; Howard K. Beale, The Critical Years: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction (New York, 1930), 177.

³⁵⁶Address of the Colored Men's Border State Convention, August 5 & 6, 1868 in Baltimore, Maryland. For racist responses to granting the vote to blacks see Forrest G. Wood The Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction (Berkeley, 1970), 80-102

tance to change. Pennsylvania's blacks met in February 1865 to argue that as 12,000 of their number has served the state in the war and shed blood, they should be granted the franchise. On October 2, 1865, the voters of Connecticut overwhelmingly refused to grant the suffrage to a few thousand Afro-Americans. On December 28 Georgetown voters decided over 700 to one to restrict the franchise to whites only. Undoubtedly many accepted Francis Lieber's views. The noted political scientist, who had taught at South Carolina College and Columbia University and was a member of the Union League Club of New York, by comparing skull types concluded that whites were intellectually superior to darker skinned peoples and that blacks needed years of training before they could vote wisely. The Union League Club concurred with him in believing that freedmen had to prove themselves "fit" for the suffrage, a view partly based on the observation that uneducated immigrants voted unwisely.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷Proceedings of the State Equal Rights' Convention of the Colored People of Pennsylvania held in the City of Harrisburg, February 8th, 9th and 10th 1865 (n.p., 1865), 4, 51; for the Connecticut vote see New York Herald, October 4, 1865; for the Georgetown vote see New York Times, December 30, 1865; James C. Mohr, The Radical Republicans and Reform in New York During Reconstruction (Ithica, 1973), 231; Frank Freidel, Francis Lieber Nineteenth Century Liberal (Baton Rouge, 1947); Paul Renard Migliore, "The Business Community and the Civil War" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1975), p. 351.

By 1867 the question of equal suffrage had become more heated. New York's Constitutional Convention began on June 4. There were 97 Republicans out of the 160 delegates. When the convention went into recess on September 24 until November 12--the duration of the election campaign--it refused to make equal suffrage an issue in the canvass. The Democratic World attacked the Republican dominated convention for failing to submit "a resolution endorsing the principles of negro suffrage." Arguing that Northern Republicans were hypocritical in granting the franchise to the freedmen but not to their kin in the north, the paper charged the party of Lincoln with refusing to present the issue to the voters because of the realization that it would be defeated, "a confession that the party is forcing on the south a measure too odious to be tolerated at home." The Democrats won the election, and thereby effectively ended any hopes for equal manhood suffrage.³⁵⁸

The Republican party in the Empire State was barely a majority party at the polls. Although blacks amounted to 1.3% of the state's population in 1860,³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸DeAlva Stanwood Alexander, A Political History of the State of New York (4 vols., New York, 1909), III, 184, 185, 187-188; The World, September 26, 27, 1867.

³⁵⁹Leo Hirsch, Jr., "New York and the Negro From 1783 to 1865, Part II, "The Free Negro in New York," Journal of Negro History, XVI, 4, (October 1931), 415.

there were approximately 10,000 black males who were ineligible to vote because of the property requirement. Governor Fenton's majority in 1864 was about 8,000, and in 1866, a "Radical year," it was only 14,000. It was assumed that most newly enfranchised blacks would vote the Republican ticket.³⁶⁰ In 1869 more voters addressed themselves to the suffrage question than to the proposed new state constitution. Although many Republican politicians wanted the franchise extended to blacks, they were concerned about the creation of a white backlash and for that reason soft pedalled the suffrage issue.³⁶¹

In 1870 the 15th Amendment finally eliminated the property test for blacks, and on April 22 the New York State Assembly voted 28 to 3 to remove all disabilities from black males twenty-one years old and older.³⁶² The blemish that had marred the state for nearly fifty years was finally wiped away. Yet, as blacks well knew, the right of suffrage did not necessarily guarantee social equality.

Favorable conditions for integrated schools did

³⁶⁰Mohr, The Radical Republicans, 208-209.

³⁶¹Phyllis Francis Field, "Republican and Black suffrage in New York State: The Grass Roots Response," in Robert P. Swierenga, ed., Beyond the Civil War Synthesis: Political Essays of the Civil War Era (Westport, Connecticut, 1975), 151, 158.

³⁶²New York Times, April 22, 1870.

not materialize after the war. On the contrary, the school systems in Manhattan and Brooklyn not only were rigidly segregated, but the colored primary schools in New York City eventually came under white administrative control. The number of "colored" primary, grammar, normal, evening and corporate schools in Manhattan varied from eleven in 1860 to seventeen in 1866 to fourteen in 1871 as expansion and consolidation altered the number. Attendance was generally as many black and white youngsters left school to replace men who had vacated the docks and warehouses for the army. Nine hundred and forty-four was the average attendance for the colored primary schools in 1861 out of 2,426 students, as compared to 769 out of 2,235 in 1864 and 785 out of 2,083 students in 1870.³⁶³

It is probable that whites did not want integrated schools because of fears that blacks would bring down the level of "quality" education. A "survey" by The World "indicated" that black pupils "possess[ed] more than average ability for 'short' tasks but [were] not generally capable of long continued steady exertion." The Superintendent's Report to the New York City Board

³⁶³Nineteen Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City...of New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1860, 6; Twentieth Annual Report...for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1864, 110; Twenty-fifth Annual Report...for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1866, 4; Twentieth Annual Report...for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1870, 89; Thirtieth Annual Report...for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1871, 7.

of Education for 1864 revealed that in the black schools "the average degree of scholarship is only fair, the attendance being very irregular, and the general qualifications of the teachers not of the highest grade." Superintendent Randall recommended that white principals and white teachers be sent into the schools to improve the attendance and the scholarship.³⁶⁴ In his report for 1865, he stated "the scholarship of this class (black) of schools has very considerably deteriorated during the past year; forty percent only of the whole number of classes having passed a satisfactory examination." Yet the report indicated that not all white students were performing at high levels, nor were all white teachers considered to be either efficient or competent.³⁶⁵

In the summer of 1865, Commissioner Adams, a school officer, stated at a ceremony marking the granting of diplomas for Colored School No. 2 in Manhattan, that he did not think the School Board would vote to implement Randall's suggestion. Skeptical, the Anglo-African warned parents that the

³⁶⁴Twenty-third Annual Report of the Board of Education of...New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1864, 16; The World, March 16, 1867.

³⁶⁵Twenty-fourth Annual Report...for the Year Ending December 31, 1865, 9.

Board of Education might use the excuse of poor attendance to replace the black teachers and principals. Urging parents to send their children to school lest black men and women lose their positions and influence over youth, it commented, "shall we, by our own act, do just what our enemies have done--continue our race in ignorance?"³⁶⁶

The fears were justified as the Board of Education continued to reshape and reform the colored schools. In 1866 Superintendent Randall reported that the colored schools were under the supervision of a Board of Education committee "to whom the appointment and removal of teachers, and the general care and management of the schools have been committed." It was clear that he had no intention of integrating the schools, because he promised to build more black schools "as rapidly as may be required by the increased attendance of colored pupils."³⁶⁷

Brooklyn's attitude about segregation was similar to that of Manhattan. In June 1866 Edward T. West held a hearing before the Brooklyn Board of Education, because he enrolled his children in School No. 19 in the district where he resided. The Times reported, "They

³⁶⁶Weekly Anglo-African, August 12, 1865

³⁶⁷Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City...of New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1866, 20.

were denied admittance because of color, although their appearance is in every way respectable." Social practice, not legal codes, kept black children out of the schools. By a vote of 23 to 14 the Board adopted a resolution that stated:

Inasmuch as the Board has heretofore made a distinction between the white and colored children in the public schools, and made provisions for having them separate and apart from each other that they respectfully decline to make any other arrangements at the present time.

It was remarkable that the Board insisted on having separate schools in 1866, when there were only 886 black children in the Brooklyn school system of 56,413 students.³⁶⁸

The Superintendent of Education in Buffalo commented in 1870 that the newly enfranchised voters had a responsibility for educating their children, since a good voter must be educated. Urging that "every advantage should be granted them [blacks] for the education of their youth, and nothing should be withheld which will elevate and improve their social condition," he concluded his report by stating, "I feel justified in recommending a liberal appropriation [for the colored school] for the coming year." Nevertheless, it would

³⁶⁸New York Times, June 6, 1866; Twelfth Annual Report of the Supt. of Schools of...Brooklyn...for the Year Ending Jan. 31, 1867 (Brooklyn, 1867), 5.

have been cheaper to incorporate the fewer than 100 black students into the general school system.³⁶⁹

Recognizing that integration was impossible, blacks at a Poughkeepsie convention in 1870 voted to 'build an academy, seminary, or high school' in the vicinity.³⁷⁰

Prior to the Civil War nonwhite workers were denied access to good positions and often had to compete with immigrants for the low paying menial jobs that were left over. War participation did little to improve employment opportunities for blacks. There is little evidence that abolitionists or Union Leaguers spoke out against the inequities in the job market or even provided employment for blacks. Some labor leaders urged workers to stick together so employers could not use the color issue to exploit them.³⁷¹

In March 1869, the Times reported on the front page under the title, "The Dusky Race," that most blacks held menial positions such as coachmen, waiters, barbers, longshoremen, washers and ironers. They found it difficult to find good jobs because "many members of the Trades Unions refuse to work on a building if colored men be employed." On October 28, Man-

³⁶⁹Thirty-third Annual Report of the Superintendent of The City of Buffalo for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1870 (Buffalo, 1871), 97, 98.

³⁷⁰New York Times, September 24, 1870

³⁷¹Summer Eliot Matison, "Labor and the Negro During Reconstruction," The Journal of Negro History, XXXIII, 4 (October 1948), 426-468.

hattan blacks formed the New York City Labor Council to find jobs for themselves on equal levels with whites. They passed a resolution that noted 'that the exclusion of colored persons in this city from the right to labor in almost every department of industry, is a strong evidence of the power which the spirit of slavery and caste still holds over the minds of our white fellow citizens...!' In August, sixty odd black delegates to a Utica convention demanded equal civil and employment rights because of their "part in the recent Rebellion, without which, millions more of dollars and thousands more precious lives would have been [lost]." On August 24, 1870, the New York State Colored Labor Convention convened at Saratoga. The president, the Reverend William F. Butler of New York City, cited as the convention's objective, "new fields of labor for the colored people" because "many good mechanics were working in the saloons of New-York because they were excluded from working at their trades."³⁷²

There were those benevolent whites who believed that colonization was the answer to prejudice and racism. At a public meeting in the West Prebysterian Church on West 42nd Street on February 10, 1871, the Reverend

³⁷²New York Times, March 2, October 29, 1869, August 25, 1870; New York Tribune, August 20, 1869. See also "the Church and the Negro," Christian Advocate and Journal (New York), March 22, 1866.

H. D. Ganse (white) suggested that blacks go to Africa as missionaries because they would find equality there. The Reverend Dr. Joel Parker said that \$147.35 would pay for a emigrant's expenses to Africa and sustenance for six months. The Reverend Dr. Hastings, pastor of the church, stated that 500 had applied to leave between January 1 and the 26 and that there were 1,000 waiting for means of transportaion.³⁷³

Most people, however, who thought about emigrating usually changed their minds before departing for Africa. An examination of the American Colonization Society reports for the years 1865 to 1872 showed that the majority of the emigrants to Liberia came from the former slaveholding states. New York State sent seven settlers, and those in 1865. Among them was Henry W. Johnson, a lawyer from Canandaigua. He wrote from Monrovia on August 10, 1865 that he liked Liberia because the people there 'have the manly bearing of high minded and intelligent freemen! Black Men of America! What a shame that you do not come here and aid the young Republic!'³⁷⁴ Black New Yorkers who had heard all the arguments in favor of migration wanted to stay in America in order that the American promise of equal opportunity

³⁷³New York Times, -April 17, 1871. For Afro-American mission work in Africa see William Seraile, "Black American Missionaries in Africa, 1821-1925." The Social Studies, LXIII, 5, (October 1972), 198-202.

³⁷⁴Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society with the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and of the Board of Directors January 16, 1866 (Washington, 1866), 12-13.

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become their personal reality.

Prejudice is based on ignorance. Afro-Americans were detested because in America black was the badge of slavery and implied inferiority. On July 4, 1865 a party of Afro-Canadians came to Rochester to attend the theater. Since they were well mannered, elegantly dressed and visibly cultured, the usher assumed that they were Cubans and gave them the best seats. Other patrons complained about the presence of "niggers" but once the usher informed them that they were Cubans, the complaining patrons went over and met the party, exchanging pleasantries and calling cards. Yet, as the Rochester Express commented, "any humble colored American who should have had the money enough to spare for the evening, would have been put out."³⁷⁵

Immediately after the war ended the Baptists and Methodists in New York made some attempts to improve their relationship with blacks, and, in the case of the Methodists, to bring about a merger between the Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Churches.³⁷⁶ In the fall of 1865 the New York Baptist Missionary Convention met in Palmyra. The Board of

³⁷⁵Rochester Express (no date) as cited in Weekly Anglo African, August 19, 1865.

³⁷⁶Ena L. Farley, "Methodists and Baptists on the Issue of Black Equality in New York 1865 to 1868," Journal of Negro History, LXI, 4, (October 1976), 374-392.

Managers Report stressed that the defeat of the Confederacy removed "the plague spot of slavery from our National escutcheon, and prepared the way for a conformity between our practice and our professions of freedom."³⁷⁷ Nevertheless, a year later, at its Troy meeting, the Baptist Missionary Convention emphasized a need to do more mission work in the fifteen county seats where there were no Baptists and in the over twenty large villages where few Baptists resided. Nothing was said about working with the black population, but the convention noted that the large immigrant population was overlooked and that omission might be dangerous for the "coming generations."³⁷⁸

Ena L. Farley has stated that in New York State in 1865 the various Baptist associations at first took a keen interest in educating the freedman, then, however, their interest shifted to the demand for political equality. Yet, most Baptists were opposed to granting blacks the Lord's Supper or appointing them as ministers or deacons.³⁷⁹

In Early 1865 the Methodist Episcopal Church at the New York East Conference unanimously approved

³⁷⁷Fifty-Eight Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York Presented at the Annual Meeting held with the Baptist Church in Palmyra October 11th and 12th 1865 (Utica 1865), 12.

³⁷⁸Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Convention of...New York...with the First Baptist Church of...Troy, October 10th and 11th 1866 (Utica, 1866), 28.

of the Committee on Slavery's report calling for universal emancipation, "education and admission of full citizenship of colored men." Much lip service was given to merging white and black Methodists, but despite support for it from both races it never materialized. In the spring of 1865 the New England Conference adopted a proposal to "avoid the danger of recognizing the distinction of color among the members of a common church and ministry." It admitted that the church was weakened because of the persistence of separate colored conferences and because of the delay in sending black missionaries to the South.³⁸⁰

The merger of white and black Methodists was impossible when many whites supported the views of the Reverend Daniel Curry, editor of the Christian Advocate. In a January 1866 editorial, "The Freedmen," Curry described blacks as secondary and inferior "parasites" who possessed weak characters, were non-self-reliant and lacked self respect.³⁸¹ In March the editorial, "The Church and the Negro" appeared in the Christian Advocate. It admitted that the church had neglected its duty to blacks. "As in-

³⁷⁹Ena L. Farley, "Methodists and Baptists on the Issue of Black Equality in New York," 374-376.

³⁸⁰Ibid., 384-392; Christian Advocate and Journal, April 20, 27, 1865.

³⁸¹Ibid., see "The Freedmen," January 11, 1866 and "The Freedmen Again," January 18, 1866.

dividuals our people [Methodists] have not, either by acts or words, separated themselves from the multitude by whom the blacks are defrauded of the commonest rights of human beings." Blacks could not learn a trade, attend white schools or churches, "and we Methodists," The Christian Advocate implored, "consent that it shall be so; perhaps actively help to make it so." But the editorial showed signs of insincerity by commenting that whites would probably be more willing to extend social equality if more blacks were educated and had social graces.³⁸²

The Methodists did attempt to attract blacks to the church, albeit on segregated terms. On July 1, 1864 the Broome Street (colored) Sunday School was organized at 121 Broome Street in Manhattan, and the church followed on January 14, 1868 with 32 members and with 67 in Sunday School attendance.³⁸³

By the end of 1868 the Baptists and Methodists, the two most numerous church bodies in New York "had abandoned their concern for their black co-religionists...."

³⁸²Ibid., see "The Church and the Negro," March 22, 1866. In 1869 the Times reported that blacks could not move out of their wretched neighborhoods even if they had the money because most would not rent to them. Hotels, dining rooms, liquor stores and ice cream parlors did not want their business. New York Times, March 2, 1869. See also The World, March 16, 1867, pp. 1-2

³⁸³Report of the New York City Sunday School and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year Ending March 1, 1869 (New York, 1869), 24.

The Baptists devoted their energies to converting the European immigrants and building churches in upstate New York, "while the white Methodists concentrated on creating an educated ministry." For both churches the issue of temperance quickly overshadowed their earlier concerns for blacks in the Empire State.³⁸⁴

The question of racial equality was one clouded by pseudoscientific views of "natural superiority" and "innate inferiority."³⁸⁵ The contribution of black soldiers in the Civil War did little to bring about racial justice. The gains that blacks obtained, excluding the franchise, were limited mainly to those "safe ones" that created the fewest social or economic problems. Concessions were granted to individual blacks but as a group the race had little to be proud of; of course, Afro-Americans took pride in having John S. Rock accredited to practice before the United States Supreme Court but that did little to make the race acceptable to the majority population. Frederick Douglass, in 1883, put the question of racial equality in proper perspective: "As the war for the Union recedes into the misty shadows of the past, and the Negro is no longer needed to assault forts and stop rebel bullets, he is...of less importance."³⁸⁶ By 1870 New York blacks

³⁸⁴Farley, "Methodists and Baptists on the Issue of Black Equality in New York," 392. For a general account of the failure of Protestants to attack racial inequities see David M. Reimers, White Protestantism and the Negro (New York, 1965), 51-83.

could see very few practical gains from their kin-
folks; sacrifices in the Southland.

³⁸⁵Wood, The Black Scare, passim.

³⁸⁶Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, IV, 355. as quoted in McPherson, The Struggle For Equality, 431.

CHAPTER VIII

PENSION RECORDS

The non-participant often views war as an exciting adventure, a glorious God-sanctioned opportunity to engage in the defense of one's country. Very few men visualize themselves as victims of bullets and shells; yet war takes its toll indiscriminately. For some death came quickly; for others it took its time, long after the fighting was over. For the maimed, the chronically ill and the mentally damaged, war service provided little comfort. Cheering civilians who welcomed the end of the Civil War soon forgot the names of battlefields where victory was achieved and where soldiers were maimed and killed. For these veterans only the pension check was a reminder that the government remembered their contribution, and for some even that small pittance was hard to obtain.

The Grand Army of the Republic, which did much to obtain bounty equalization and pensions for veterans by reminding political parties, especially the Republican, that former soldiers "knew" how to vote, emerged from the "womb of Illinois politics" in the 1866 senatorial race between Lyman Trumbull, the senior senator,

and General John Alexander Logan. During the 1870's the Republican party began to "cultivate the veterans' consciousness as a special class", and by 1888 an effective alliance was made between former soldiers and the party of Lincoln.³⁸⁷

Although veterans who were recipients of eight, twelve, fifteen or twenty-four dollars monthly pensions were receiving only pennies a day, the collective amount distributed by the Treasury Department was staggering. "At the height of their influence...former soldiers," wrote Mary R. Dearing, "were able to command benefits which cost the federal government more than one-fifth of its total revenue." Charles Francis Adams complained in 1911 that \$15,000,000 was granted to Civil War pensioners in 1866, but nearly \$160,000,000 was "given" to veterans and their dependents in 1910.³⁸⁸ Racism, however, made it hard for many black veterans to benefit from the political influence of the Grand Army of the Republic, since Southerners generally opposed integrated membership as well as separate Negro posts within their departments.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷Mary R. Dearing, Veterans in Politics: The Story of the GAR (Baton Rouge, 1952), vii, 81-83, 112.

³⁸⁸Ibid., vii; Charles F. Adams, "Pensions--Worse and More of Them," The World's Work, XXIII (December, 1911), 189.

³⁸⁹Dearing, Veterans in Politics, 412-413, 418.

As voters, veterans were able to influence legislators and even presidents. Grover Cleveland, however, held steadfast against the concept of liberal pensions, a stand which in part cost him reelection in 1888. In his first inaugural address, he called, for the close scrutiny of the federal budget. For this reason, he vetoed a bill in February 1887 that would have granted \$12 to all veterans suffering with disabilities or to their widows or orphans after the soldier's death, "proof that the disability or death resulted from service being waived."³⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the Act of June 7, 1888 made it possible for widows to receive pensions dated to the death of the pensioner regardless when filed. This led to bogus pensioners, and although both whites and blacks were guilty of falsifying claims, William B. Hale commented in 1910 that many blacks swore that they "attended the wedding of Sambo and Dinah on the 'bach po'ch ob de big house jes' 'fore de wah!'"³⁹¹

Benjamin Harrison was willing to use the Treasury surplus to satisfy pension claims. During a six year period as a member of the House Military Committee, he introduced 101 special pension and relief bills. In

³⁹⁰Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to Richard Milhous Nixon 1969 (Washington, 1969), 151; William B. Hale, "The Pension Carnival," The World's Work, XXI, (November, 1910), 13733; Dearing, Veterans in Politics, 329.

³⁹¹Hale, "The Pension Carnival," 13734.

his inaugural address he deemed the Treasury surplus "a serious evil." He called for a change in the pension laws that would provide veterans with "more adequate and discriminating relief" because "we owe everything to their valor and sacrifice."³⁹² Shortly after Harrison's inauguration in March 1889, James Tanner served as Commissioner of Pension until he was forced to resign in September for accepting numerous doubtful claims. Shortly before the end of Cleveland's first administration, Tanner had vowed, 'I will drive a six-mule team through the Treasury, and God help the surplus.' Congress, with Tanner's blessings, added 530,000 new pensioners when it passed the Dependents Pensions Act of 1890 that recognized pension applications from virtually all ninety-day veterans who were disabled and unable to earn a living by manual labor. "The disability need not be of service origin," but could not be the result of vicious habits (veneral disease). Practically all honorably discharged veterans were eligible. Widows were granted \$8 and children \$2. There was no need to prove that the soldier's death was war related. Widows had to be married before the passage of the act and have no means of support except daily labor.³⁹³

³⁹²Harry J. Sievers, Benjamin Harrison: Hoosier Statesman (2 vols., New York, 1959), II, 210; Inaugural Addresses, 159, 160.

³⁹³Tanner to T. Sherman, January 5, 1889. W. T. Sherman Papers, Library of Congress as quoted in H. Wayne Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896 (Syracuse, 1969). 331; Hale, "The Pension Carni-

Cleveland's victory in 1892 led to pension reform as he attacked the 'wild and reckless pension expenditure.'" In June 1893 a Board of Revisions dropped thousands from the pension roll at a savings of nearly seventeen million dollars. Showing that his administration meant business, 68 1/2% of pension claims in 1894 were rejected.³⁹⁴ William McKinley, who called for "proper and liberal provisions" for veterans, took the opposite approach. Not merely a man of words, he rejected in 1898 only 48% of the pension applications.³⁹⁵

The G.A.R.'s influence began to decline by 1900 as many veterans, satisfied with the Act of June 27, 1890, withdrew from the organization as dues paying members. Rival veterans groups, such as the Loyal Legion, cut into the ranks of the G.A.R. By 1900, sectionalism had lost much of its appeal, and "it was no longer easy for Republicans to appeal to veterans on the single issue of pension liberality."³⁹⁶

Admidst all of the legislative battles and debates, men and officers of New York's black regiments applied for pensions. A survey of the pension records

³⁹⁴Hale, "The Pension Carnival," 13738; Inaugural Addresses, 165; Journal of the Thirty-Fourth National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic Aug. 29th & 30th, 1900, Chicago, Illinois (Philadelphia, 1901), 55, 57.

³⁹⁵Inaugural Addresses, 171; Thirty-Fourth National Encampment; 56.

³⁹⁶Dearing, Veterans in Politics, 445-447, 496.

of ten commissioned officers and twenty-two enlisted men, some of them former slaves, noncommissioned officers, draftees and substitutes, suggests that those who had been poor and illiterate prior to the Civil War generally remained indigent and uneducated afterwards. Officers, on the contrary, generally benefited from their war experience and were able to acquire some education and rise on the social scale.³⁹⁷

Regardless, of whether the pension claims came from enlisted men or officers, both had difficulties in obtaining either the original pension or pension increases. Some of the men, undoubtedly, obtained pensions during the liberal years of the Harrison's administration but had difficulty in obtaining increases in later years. In some cases pensions were only authorized after the veterans had obtained assistance from Congressmen, lawyers or the Grand Army of the Republic. The majority of the claims examined were from men who generally lived for at least twenty-five years after the Civil War had ended. This procedure was followed

³⁹⁷Five of the twenty-two enlisted men were former slaves. Six remained illiterate until they died. William Fox, Co. E, 26th USCT learned how to read in the service. "Boatman," "laborer," "waiter," "barber" and "teamster" were the professions cited by those applicants who chose to give their occupations in their pension applications. 1st Lt. Parley H. Eaton, Companies A and K, 20th USCT worked as a telegraph operator, physician and civil servant after the war. 1st Lt. Buel A. Man, Co. B, 26th USCT became a lawyer. Capt. Austin Alvord, Co. H, 26th USCT, a former school principal, became a prominent Michigan physician in 1875. In contrast, Col. Henry C. Ward was living in a Philadelphia almshouse in 1896.

to discover as many details as possible about the veteran's family life, mobility, and occupation. Some of these ex-soldiers lived until the 1930's, and their pension files are rich in social history.

Some veterans did not receive pensions because they could not prove that they had served in the army. Milton Bradford claimed military service from April 1862 to September 1865. The former slave filed for a pension on September 26, 1906 from Cameron, Texas. Bradford believed that he had served in Company A of the 31st Indiana Regiment; however, investigation revealed that he did not serve in either that regiment or the 31st U. S.C.T. Bradford's hiring of an attorney in 1919 proved futile in his pension quest.³⁹⁸

Some veterans were unable to prove that they had served for at least ninety days in order to take advantage of the liberal Dependents Pension Act of 1890. George De Groat of Company A, 20th U.S.C.T. served only seventy-six days. Despite letters from Representatives Thomas W. Bradley and Hamilton Fish, Jr., neither De Groat nor his widow obtained pensions.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸Pvt. Milton Bradford Co. A, 31st USCT (?) Soldier's Application #1352708, Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, National Archives. War Dept. to Bureau of Pension, October 11, 1906; Bradford to Commissioner of Pensions, June 20, 1919; Commissioner Saltzgaber to Bradford, July 19, 1919.

Henry De Groat (no relationship), of Company A, 20th U.S.C.T., served from December 17, 1863 to March 6, 1864. In 1905 he requested a pension based on an eye disease contracted while in training. The War Department's records showed that he was discharged on March 6, 1864 with chronic ulcers on the left leg and owed the government \$35.95 for issued clothing. Although he was illiterate the 78-year old veteran was resourceful. He "wrote" to Theodore Roosevelt on June 2 and 24, 1908, asking the Chief Executive to look into the matter of his pension. De Groat contacted President William H. Taft and informed him that the Pension Bureau would not give him a pension for his eye disease. As late as 1914 De Groat was unable to obtain a pension because his eye disease was not considered to be service related, and he had served less than ninety days.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹Pvt. George De Groat Co. A, 20th USCT, Soldier's Application #1328753, RG 15. T. W. Bradley to J. L. Davenport, March 26, 1911; Davenport to Bradley, March 24, 1911; Winfield Scott to Hamilton Fish, Jr., July 27, 1927; E. W. Morgan to Hamilton Fish, Jr., May 24, 1930.

⁴⁰⁰Pvt. Henry De Groat Co. A, 20th USCT, Soldier's Application #1342473, RG 15. See Certificate of Disability for Discharge (probably March 6, 1864, endorsement on back dated March 6, 1864; Captain James S. Goold wrote that De Groat owed \$35.95 for clothing); De Groat to Theodore Roosevelt, June 2, 24, 1908; Bureau of Pensions to De Groat, June 9, 1908; De Groat to William H. Taft, July 27, 1909; Mrs. L. Logan to Pension Officer, August 3, 1914; Commissioner Saltzgabor to Henry De Groat c/o Mrs. L. Logan, September 25, 1914.

Some blacks had difficulty in obtaining an old age pension because they lacked proof of age. Pvt. George Brown, Company A, 26th U.S.C.T., could not prove that he was 62 and therefore eligible for benefits under the Act of February 6, 1907. He notified the Pension Bureau in the summer of 1908 that he had no record of his birth, since the family Bible was either lost or had been destroyed in a fire. However, he wrote that years ago his parents had told him that he was born on June 14, 1845.⁴⁰¹ The Commissioner of Pensions, J. L. Davenport, decided on August 13, 1908 to accept Brown's statements as valid. His ruling evidently was influenced by New York Congressman Thomas W. Bradley's July 29 letter in which he revealed that he had served in the war with Lt. Col. William Silliman, Brown's comander. Bradley stated, "a 'coon' can be any age from appearance, but I beg to submit that this colored man is northern born. He is a negro of good habits and respected in his community [Sparkill, New York] where he has long been a hard-working laborer [boatman]." Bradley added that blacks kept very poor records, and "this poor fellow has done all that he can do and has done fairly well."

⁴⁰¹Pvt. Geroge Brown, Co. A, 26th USCT, Widow's Certificate #879399, RG 1t. Affidavit of George Brown, June 8, July 28, 1908.

Brown died on June 3, 1919 at age 74 of a cerebral hemorrhage. He was then receiving \$38 monthly from the government. His widow, Adele Brown, obtained a widow's pension of \$25 monthly from June 25, 1919 to the time of her death on January 17, 1920.⁴⁰²

Perhaps the biggest obstacle confronting pension applicants was the problem of convincing the Pension Bureau that chronic diarrhea, fevers and rheumatism were service related. Private Charles A. Denning was an unassigned recruit to the 31st U.S.C.T., who served from december 18, 1863 to May 10, 1865. The former slave, who was born in 1837, became a resident of Madison, Wisconsin, after his discharge. Filing for an invalid pension in 1888, he claimed he suttered from rheumatism contracted in New York Harbor in June 1863 and lung fever contracted at Auburn on January 20, 1863. He also stated that a paralysis appeared on his left side in March 1877 due to rheumatism. The surgeons who examined him in 1888 granted him a 2/18 rating for rheumatism, 6/18 rating for paralysis, 0 rating for lung fever and a 6/18 rating for heart disease. His application was approved for a \$12 pension on July 17, 1890 under the Act of June 27, 1890. Evidently his application was

⁴⁰²Ibid., Thomas W. Bradley to J. L. Davenport, July 29, 1908; Affidavit of George Brown, July 30, 1908; J. L. Davenport to Major Clements, August 13, 1908. See Brown's death notice, June 3, 1919.

received favorable attention under the liberal Harrison's administration, since his request for a pension increase in 1897 was rejected because there was no evidence of lung trouble at the time of his discharge, nor any evidence or medical records showing the existence of origin inservice of reumatism and paralysis. Presumably he was allowed to keep his pension because he was past sixty. Denning died of Pneumonia on March 31, 1903 at the age of sixty-six. His two children received a \$2 pension until the age of sixteen, and Millie, his widow, was the recipient of a \$30 pension at the time of her death on January 26, 1921.⁴⁰³

Surgeon Thomas Cushing, assistant surgeon in the 28th New York Volunteers from November 2, 1862 to March 12, 1863, and surgeon in the 20th U.S.C.T., who probably verified the service related disabilities of others, found it difficult to convince the Bureau of Pensions of his own service-related affliction. On March 18, 1887 his affidavit stated that he had had a malarial attack at Camp Parapet, Louisiana about June 15, 1864. He had also been suffering from diarrhea but had treated himself in the service and was not claiming

⁴⁰³Pvt. Charles A. Denning, 31st USCT (unassigned), Widow's Certificate #562904, RG 15. Affidavits of Charles A. Denning, May 8, 1888, April 12, 1890; Surgeon's Certificate, July 18, 1888; Affidavit of Dr. D. A. Mitchell, March 30, 1888; Mrs. Harry Allison (Denning's daughter) to Bureau of Pensions February 20, 1921, informing it of Millie Denning's death.

compensation for that affliction. A methodical person, Cushing kept records of all his malarial attacks, noting the date and frequency of the seizures. His entry for 1877 read: "Autumn 1877 sick for month, treated by Dr. J. McKennan of Albion, N. Y." The frequent and debilitating attacks forced him to give up his medical practice in 1877.⁴⁰⁴

The Bureau of Pensions surgeons who examined Cushing on September 24, 1887 reported 'no evidence of the existence of chronic diarrhea or malaria.' Chronic was the key word, because the military records indicated that Cushing had been admitted to a hospital while in Louisiana, but that had been a one time occasion. Doctor D. D. Loop of South East, Pennsylvania, notified the Bureau of Pensions on May 3, 1888 that he had treated Cushing in 1864 or 1865 for an enlarged spleen and liver following a malarial attack. Dr. Thomas H. S. Pennington recalled that as a hospital steward during the war he had provided Cushing with malarial medication. David Dewey of Barre Center, New York, Cushing's hometown, a hospital attendant for the 20th Regiment, was also aware of Cushing's malarial attacks.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴Surgeon Thomas Cushing 20th USCT, Soldier's Certificate #482280, Affidavit of Thomas Cushing, March 18, 1887.

⁴⁰⁵Ibid., Surgeon's Certificate September 24, 1887; Adjutant General's Office, War Department to Commissioner of Pensions August 25, 1887; Statement of Dr. D. D. Loop, May 3, 1888; Dr. Thomas H. S. Pennington's affidavit, March 21, 1887; Affidavit of David Dewey, March 30, 1887.

After having been reexamined by military surgeons on March 19, 1890 and obtaining a 12/18 rating for malarial poisoning, Cushing received a \$6.25 pension retroactive to March 19, 1887, and a \$18.75 pension effective March 19, 1890. Despite his worsening malarial condition and resultant partial deafness due to large intakes of quine, he did not succeed in obtaining an increase. Before his death in 1898, due to increased deafness he became unable to keep up with normal conversational talk.⁴⁰⁶

Suspected syphilis or disabilities caused by "vicious habits" virtually guaranteed a pension rejection. Sgt. John Humans, Company A, 20th U.S.C.T. served from November 25, 1863 to October 7, 1865. Citing disability from mumps resulting from a diseased right testicle, rheumatism and chills, Humans applied for a pension on February 2, 1888. On September 18 the Poughkeepsie hotel waiter and barber reported that his diseased testicle resulted from exposure to cold. He also claimed that in June 1864 he contracted diarrhea from "the terrible bad water we were obliged to drink." Military records revealed that he had been treated for

⁴⁰⁶Ibid., Cushing to Commissioner of Pensions, May 30, 1889; Surgeon's Certificate March 19, 1890; Affidavit of Dr. D. H. Brenman, August 26, 1890; Surgeon's Certificate, April 15, 1891; Affidavit of George H. and Charles Paine, December 28, 1891.

syphilis on January 5, 1865 and was admitted to the hospital with syphilis on January 13.⁴⁰⁷

On March 17, 1890, the Department of the Interior ordered the Pension Bureau to reexamine Humans to determine "to what extent syphilis is a factor in his present condition." Specifically, it wanted to know if Humans' testicle problem was due to mumps or syphilis. He was examined on April 9 in Poughkeepsie by military doctors who believed that he was entitled to a 4/18 rating for rheumatism, 4/18 rating for the diseased testicle and a 6/18 rating for a diseased liver and spleen. On November 18, 1891 he was granted a 8/18 rating for disability caused by rheumatism, 4/18 rating for diseased testicle, 4/18 rating for liver disease and a 2/18 rating for disease of the spleen. Finally, on May 4, 1892, after four years of effort, he was awarded a \$6 monthly pension for rheumatism and malarial poisoning.⁴⁰⁸

Five years later the veteran died at age 54 without any property. As his widow Amanda had neither assets in her own name nor anyone to support her, she was granted a \$12 pension from March 6, 1897 until the time of her death on April 7, 1900.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷Sgt. John Humans, Co. A, 20th USCT, Widow's Certificate #456744, RG 15. Affidavit of John Humans, September 18, 1888; Surgeon's Certificate May 2, 1888.

⁴⁰⁸Ibid., Department of Interior to Bureau of Pensions, March 17, 1890; Surgeon's Certificate, April 9, 1890, November 18, 1891.

A similar problem with suspected syphilis nearly undermined the pension application of 1st Lieutenant Parley H. Eaton of Companies A and K, 20th U.S.C.T. The Scots born Eaton worked as a telegraph operator, physician and government civil servant in Washington, D. C., after being discharged. Like countless other soldiers Eaton had to prove that his disability was not caused by "vicious habits" so easily picked up in the brothels of New Orleans or other southern cities. The War Department notified the Commissioner of Pensions that Eaton had been honorably discharged with secondary syphilis, syphilitic iritis, syphilitic rheumatism, syphilitic roseola, and sore throat.⁴¹⁰

Eaton formerly applied for a pension on February 12, 1907. The Acting Commissioner of Pensions notified him that in similar cases in 1906 and 1907 it was held "that where a soldier was discharged by reason of having become disqualified for service, physically, through his own fault, such discharge does not constitute an honorable termination of service for pensionable

⁴⁰⁹Ibid., See death notice of John Humans, March 5, 1897; Affidavits of Jacob Robinson, October 19, 1897, William H. Garnett, June 4, 1897.

⁴¹⁰1st Lt. Parley H. Eaton, Companies A & K, 20th USCT, Widow's Certificate #699018, RG 15. War Department to Commissioner of Pensions March 23, 1905; Eaton's invalid pension application, February 12, 1907.

purposes." Eaton responded two days later:

The rheumatism from which I suffered was in or near the ankle and was the only thing evidently which our old surgeon (Thomas Cushing) could think of on which to base a certificate (I wanted to go home since the regiment was no longer on active duty). This same rheumatism had shown itself in like manner long before I could have suffered from the results of vicious habits whenever exposed to inclement weather. I can only say from my boyhood recollections that I suffered from some blood taint long before I could know what it was to have sexual congress....⁴¹¹

Based on his adequate response, the Bureau of Pensions granted him a \$12 monthly pension effective February 13, 1907. Eaton died on February 12, 1910 and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Annie Eaton, his widow, obtained a \$12 pension from February 16, 1910, and died at age ninety on December 8, 1937, at Cape Charles, Virginia. Annie, who had been receiving a \$40 pension prior to her death, was laid to rest next to her husband.⁴¹²

Some former soldiers were guilty of deserting their wives. If the spouse could prove that she had been abandoned the Bureau of Pension arranged that one-half of her husband's pension was forwarded to her. Private Sidney N. Babcock, Company A, 26th USCT, who served from January 4, 1864, to November 28, 1865, found

⁴¹¹Ibid., Bureau of Pension to Eaton, April 10, 1907; Eaton to Commissioner of Pensions, April 12, 1907.

⁴¹²Ibid., See Annie Eaton's widow's application #1332060 and death notice.

that wife desertion was costly. He was originally awarded a \$6 pension in 1892 but was dropped during Cleveland's second administration (October 12, 1895). In 1898 he was restored to the pension rolls. Nettle Babcock, who married Sidney in Cleveland on January 5, 1876, declared on May 1, 1902 that he had deserted her about ten years earlier, and that he had failed to provide for her support. Numerous affidavits supported her claims that Sidney was a wife beater. In 1903 she was awarded one-half of his pension which amounted to five dollars. Upon his death on February 13, 1911, her pension increased to \$12 and eventually to \$40 in 1928. She died on October 6, 1928.⁴¹³

Circumstances sometimes prevented veterans from obtaining pensions. A man might have enlisted under an alias and no longer remembered what name he had used, or he could not find anyone who knew that he suffered from chronic diarrhea or rheumatism in the service, or the military had no records of such afflictions. It is regrettable that men of such ilk were denied pensions. It is even more pathetic that undeserving soldiers obtained

⁴¹³Pvt. Sidney N. Babcock, Co. A, 26th USCT, Widow's Certificate #722858. H. Clay Evans to Babcock, Sept. 6, 1898; Babcock to H. Clay Evans, Sept. 15, 1898; Babcock to S. E. Payne Sept. 15, 1898; Charles A. Orr to Evans, Nov. 29, 1898; Affidavit of Nettle Babcock, May 3, Aug. 11, 1902; Affidavit of John H. & Lina Mason, Aug. 11, 1902; Affidavit of Nettie Babcock, Jan. 27, 1903; Affidavit of Abina Warfield, Jan. 28, 1903; E. F. Ware to Nettie and Sidney Babcock, March 9, 1903; Chief of Finance Division to Bureau of Pension, March 14, 1928.

them. Private Jacob Henry McKinney (alias Jacob Henry) was such a person. He served in Company A, 20th U.S.C.T., was found guilty of being absent without leave, lost half of his pay, and spent time in confinement at Ship's Island. In 1903 half of his pension was awarded to his wife because of desertion. However, he was dropped from the rolls on July 21, 1904, because the Bureau of Pensions did not know where he was residing. Consequently Margaret McKinney lost her share of the pension. His name was restored to the rolls in 1906, but by then Margaret had died.⁴¹⁴

In 1911 a new problem developed concerning Jacob McKinney. Had he been honorably discharged and should he be allowed to keep his pension and remain in the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers? Eventually the question was resolved in his behalf.⁴¹⁵ In 1915 Ellen McKinney, age eighty, swore in a declaration that she had married Jacob on April 2, 1902 at Port Jervis and that he had deserted her. Presenting proof of marriage and desertion, she was awarded half of his pension under

⁴¹⁴pvt. Jacob Henry McKinney, Company A, 20th USCT, Soldier's Certificate #767764, RG 15. Deposition of Jacob Henry Nov. 18, 1901, October 13, 1902; Commissioner of Pensions to Margaret A. McKinney, December 22, 1903; Testimony of Margaret A. McKinney, March 4, 1903; Commissioner of Pensions to Auditor, Interior Dept., Treasury Dept., June 12, 1906.

⁴¹⁵Ibid., Commissioner of Pensions to J. S. Fassett, December 27, 1910; Bureau of Pensions Memorandum, Sept. 21, 1911; Commissioner of Pensions to A. J. Clark, Sept. 11, 1911; A. J. Clark to J. L. Davenport, October 13, 1911.

the Act of March 3, 1899. Unhappily for her, once Jacob was discharged from an old soldier's home on June 29, 1915, she lost her claim to her half. The Act of March 3, 1899 stipulated that a wife could not have a pension after a soldier was discharged from a state home unless they had "lived together continuously..." or if they were married prior to or during his military service.⁴¹⁶ Ellen could not claim either.

Jacob, however, did not benefit for long from that technicality. On October 14, 1915 the Bureau of Pension notified him that his name was being dropped from the rolls, because he had been dishonorably discharged due to desertion on or about June 25, 1865. Caught on the same day that he deserted, he was given a dishonorable discharge on January 17, 1866, retro active to October 7, 1865, the date his regiment was mustered out.⁴¹⁷ Jacob who had by his own acts been dropped previously from the pension rolls was unable to regain a pension. In 1920 he hired Moses D. Westbrook of Port Jervis to obtain some money but that effort proved fruitless.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., Saltzgaber to Commandant N.Y. State Soldiers and Sailors Home, Sept. 23, 1915; Broef for dropping Ellen's pension, October 4, 1915; The Statutes at Large of the United States of America from December 1897 to March 1899, vol. XXX (Washington, 1899), 1379-1380.

⁴¹⁷ Saltzgaber to Jacob Henry McKinney, October 14, December 16, 1915.

This survey of pension applications offers tentative conclusions. The average pension received at time of death was \$32.55. Only three individuals were receiving \$100 pensions, whereas two were managing on \$6 and \$12 allowances. Two veterans were last awarded checks of \$21.50 and \$30 each; others received pensions of \$5, \$10, \$15, \$18.75, \$25, \$50 and \$72 at the time of death. Over half of the men were recipients of literally pennies a day and all, perhaps, agreed with J. J. Alexander comment: "The pittance, no matter how large very illy repays soldiers for the exposure and hardships, to which they were subjected, while in line of duty, in the war 1861-5."⁴¹⁹

Of the thirty-two files examined, twenty-three applicants received pensions, while four were rejected, and Colonel Nelson B. Bartram did not apply for a pension. His widow and the widows of four men who died while their applications were being processed were granted pensions. Ten veterans received a pension without any bureaucratic delays, whereas six obtained an original pension but were not granted an increase. Four veterans were awarded in-

⁴¹⁸Saltzgaber to J. H. McKinney, April 9, 1920; Saltzgaber to Edmund Platt, May 10, 1920; Moses D. Westbrook to Commissioner of Pensions, March 25, 1920.

⁴¹⁹Pvt. Crosby B. Richard, Co. H, 26th USCT, Soldier's Certificate #362909, RG 15. J. J. Alexander to V. Warner, September 3, 1907.

creases for both disability and old age.

The evidence does not suggest that blacks were discriminated against in their pension applications, but rather that many were victimized by their illiteracy. Whites who could not read experienced the same problems as blacks in obtaining pensions or increases. Membership in the Grand Army of the Republic often helped marginal applicants to obtain redress from the Bureau of Pensions, and in this area racism prevented some blacks from benefiting from that organization's lobbying pressures. Ultimately, whether or not blacks or whites obtained pensions depended upon a number of factors, chief of which was conclusive proof of service related disabilities. Inability to obtain pensions undoubtedly caused bitterness among rejected applicants, and even those who obtained small monthly checks, amounting to pennies a day, perhaps, wondered if their sacrifices had been in vain.

CONCLUSION

What conclusion can be drawn from this study of the New York black regiments? In the first place the contribution of black soldiers in the Union army to the preservation of the Union proved that they would fight. W. E. Woodward's 1928 assertion that "the American negroes are the only people in the history of the world...that ever became free without any effort on their own," is without foundation in light of the sacrifices of black regiments.⁴²⁰

The black troops that represented New York State came from numerous states as well as foreign countries. Some obviously volunteered to obtain large bounties, but the fact that many, though swindled out of their money, nevertheless remained devoted to the nation attests to their loyalty. Those blacks who deserted were not really cowards, but were reacting to the more than usual discomforts of army life. Most whites deserted because of lack of pay, inadequacy of

⁴²⁰W. E. Woodward, Meet General Grant (New York, 1928), 237 as quoted in James McPherson, ed., The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the Civil War (New York, 1965), viii.

supplies, lack of shoes and hardships of combat. These issues affected blacks similarly, but the record indicates that most blacks absconded in large cities, or after the war was over but before they were discharged. Significantly, hostile treatment when captured, including death, racism within the military, poor equipment and inadequate health care were additional factors that caused blacks to desert. The relatively low number of black deserters is a testament to their devotion to the United States.

Although final military reports to the Secretary of War indicated that blacks were not biologically inferior to whites, prejudiced observers continued to maintain well into the twentieth century that blacks were not genetically fit for combat but were better suited for fatigue duty.⁴²¹

The black population in New York State faced real and constant daily examples of racism. Perhaps the involvement of Afro-Americans in the army helped to erode some of the racial barriers in the state but not to the point where substantial progress was achieved. Military contact with blacks caused some whites to reassess their earlier biased views, but the military con-

⁴²¹For the World War I period see Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America (New York, 1963), 366-369. For the World War II period see Lucille B. Milner, "Jim Crow in the Army," New Republic, CX (March 13, 1944), 339-342 as cited in Gilbert Osofsky, The Burden of Race: A Documentary History of Negro-White Relations in America (New York, 1967), 414-420.

tribution of blacks did not lead to noticeable diminution of institutional racism. The Union League Club was instrumental in helping to bring about some change in attitude. Its insistence on raising the three regiments in the face of so much opposition is a credit to the organization. Undoubtedly, its action encouraged officers to seek commissions in the "colored regiments." Perhaps the Union League's complete faith in the loyalty and fighting ability of blacks influenced other New Yorkers.

Allan Nevins wrote that an "important moral sequel of the Civil War...was the enlargement and liberalization of attitudes towards the Negro, both North and South."⁴²² Immediately after the war ended, Southern blacks made gains more quickly than their northern brothers. Slavery was destroyed by the advances of Union forces, and eventually Congress provided the freedmen with not only the franchise, but with the opportunity to participate in government as elected officials. Northern blacks were for the most part denied the right of suffrage until 1870 and did not sit in the chambers of Congress as legislators until after 1900. Northern Republicans were divided over the question of race. Some accepted the doctrine of white supremacy and did little

⁴²²Allan Nevins, War for the Union (5 vols., New York, 1971), IV, 397.

to alleviate racism in the United States. Others were like Ben Wade who recognized their intense distaste for blacks but who did not allow their private sentiments to interfere with their "public concern for bringing about equality."⁴²³

Like segregationists in the 1960's, bigoted New Yorkers permitted their fellow black citizens to enjoy those aspects of integration that were the least challenging to white supremacy. In 1864 the street railroads in Manhattan abolished racially segregated seating after a legal challenge from the Union League, Police Commissioner Acton and the Merchant's Relief Association. Yet how many New Yorkers were affected by that elimination of discrimination? Those who did not own private carriages avoided sitting next to blacks or ignored them in much the same way Mississippians and Georgians ignored blacks who entered the recently integrated restaurants and lunch counters in the 1950's and 1960's.

"Power concedes nothing without a demand," Frederick Douglass has informed us. Yet the record does not indicate that black New Yorkers resorted to violent rhetoric or action in the late 1860's as they sought to eliminate discrimination in the school system, employment

⁴²³Hans L. Trefousse, Benjamin Franklin Wade: Radical Republican from Ohio (New York, 1963), 311-313.

and public accommodations. Although the Civil War showed them that violence could be useful, blacks in New York shunned that approach and continued to fight racism with the weapons of petitions, resolutions and support from sympathetic whites.

The Reverend Dr. D. W. B. Derrick, a black crew member of the frigate, "Minnesota" during the fight with the rebel ram, "Merrimac" commented in 1886, "I consider all the rights that are enjoyed by us [blacks] as a people in this country must be attributed to...the Union League Club of New York...."⁴²⁴ The Union League Club did much to eliminate the barriers of racism, but it could have done more. The organization did not speak out against segregated schools or other forms of institutional racism. In the various Union League banquets held in the 1870's and 1880's, members proudly toasted their involvement in raising the regiments and eliminating segregated seating on the street cars, yet they seldom mentioned the elimination of the property test for black voters or the segregation of the state's public schools. Composed of wealthy business and civic minded gentlemen,

⁴²⁴Banquet Given by the Members of the Union League Club of 1863 and 1864 to Commemorate the Departure for the seat of War of the Twentieth Regiment of the United States Colored Troops Raised by the Club (New York, 1886), 62.

the Union League Club did little to upgrade the employment picture for New York City's black population. As an organization, the Club mainly supported reforms for blacks in the aftermath of the Draft Riots as a reaction "to the outrages committed by Irishmen." In the late 1860's the club became more devoted to "leisure and social intercourse. It did not "pursue local reforms for blacks once class and ethnic tensions subsided in [New York] City after the war."⁴²⁵ This was unfortunate because race relations in New York would have benefited from an aggressive Union League in much the same manner that the organization's vigorous policy led to the enlistment of blacks into the army.

Black and white soldiers were exposed to the same problem of inferior weapons, inadequate clothing, poor health care, salary arrears, and battlefield hardships. Blacks, however, had to contend with the additional problem of racism. Both races found it difficult to obtain pensions or increases and many who obtained them were literally getting pennies a day.

The Civil War showed that if given the opportunity, blacks would fight. Although some were deserters

⁴²⁵Paul Renard Migliore, "The Business of Union: The New York Business Community and the Civil War" (Ph.D dissertation, Columbia University, 1975), pp. 454, 455, 462.

and troublemakers, the majority did their duty with a minimum amount of complaint. As a vital cog in the Union's war machinery, the black regiments not only helped to free the slaves but forced America to accept the reality that blacks, too, were citizens worthy of the benefits of the Constitution.

APPENDIX I

Birthplace of Recruits, 20th Regiment U.S.C.T.

State or Country	Number of Recruits
New York	712
New Jersey	98
Virginia	95
Canada	71
Maryland	68
Pennsylvania	65
West Indies	27
Washington, D. C.	23
North Carolina	19
Delaware	16
Massachusetts	15
South Carolina	14
Connecticut	13
Tennessee	12
Kentucky	11
Ohio	10
Alabama	7
South America	6
Georgia	4
Missouri	4
Indiana	3
Rhode Island	3
Mississippi	3
Illinois	2
Michigan	2
Louisiana	2
Africa	1
Maine	1
Vermont	1
Nassau	1
England	1
Sandwich Island	1
Mexico	1
Unknown or illegible	13
Total Number	1,325

SOURCE: Compilation of recruits by companies, Descriptive Book, 20th Regiment USCT, companies A to K, Record Group 94, National Archives.

APPENDIX II

Birthplace of Recruits, 26th Regiment U.S.C.T.

State or Country	Number of Recruits
New York	666
Maryland	94
Virginia	87
Pennsylvania	84
New Jersey	51
Canada	42
Kentucky	25
Washington, D. C.	20
Delaware	17
North Carolina	16
West Indies	15
Ohio	13
Connecticut	11
Tennessee	8
Georgia	7
Massachusetts	7
Mississippi	6
South Carolina	5
Alabama	4
Cape Verde Islands	4
Louisiana	4
Rhode Island	4
Portugal	3
Spain	3
Missouri	3
Chile	2
Vermont	2
East Indies	1
Illinois	1
Michigan	1
India	1
Arkansas	1
Mexico	1
France	1
Africa	1
Central America	1
California	1
Unknown or illegible	17
Total Number	1,230

SOURCE: Compilation of recruits by companies, Descriptive Book, 26th Regiment USCT, companies A to K, Record Group 94, National Archives.

APPENDIX III

Birthplace of Recruits, 31st Regiment U.S.C.T.

State or Country	Number of Recruits
Virginia	250
New York	219
Kentucky	78
Canada	76
Maryland	74
Connecticut	70
Pennsylvania	66
North Carolina	36
West Indies	32
Tennessee	29
New Jersey	25
Washington, D. C.	21
Delaware	19
Alabama	18
Mississippi	16
Louisiana	13
Ohio	13
Georgia	12
South Carolina	12
Massachusetts	11
Rhode Island	8
Indiana	5
Africa	4
South America	4
Mexico	3
Michigan	3
Illinois	3
Missouri	3
Portugal	2
China	2
Arkansas	2
England	1
East Indies	1
Spain	1
France (St. Helena)	1
Fort Jackson (Louisiana)	1
Florida	1
Unknow or illegible	56
Total Number	1,211

SOURCE: Compilation of recruits by companies, Descriptive Book, 31st Regiment USCT, companies A to K, Record Group 94, National Archives.

APPENDIX IV

Stated Occupations of Recruits, 20th Regiment U.S.C.T.

Occupations	Number of Recruits
Laborer	616
Farmer	340
Sailor-Seaman	66
Waiter	56
Boatman	30
Barber	28
Cook	22
Hostler	20
Teamster	15
Butcher	10
Steward	7
Blacksmith	6
Coachman	6
Carpenter	5
Shoemaker	5
Tanner	3
Cooper	3
Mason	3
Carman	2
Printer	2
Gardner	2
Butler	2
Porter	2
Mechanic	2
Miller	2
Servant	2
Clerk	1
Stonecutter	1
Ropemaker	1
Engineer	1
Bookkeeper	1
Whitewasher	1
Painter	1
Merchant	1
Machinist	1
Stevadore	1
Fisherman	1
Fireman	1
Stableman	1
Cabinet maker	1
Driver	1
Sweeper	1
Oysterman	1
Wood sawyer	1
Floor cleaner	1
Tobacconist	1
Tenant	1

(Cont.)

APPENDIX IV

Stated Occupations of Recruits, 20th Regiment U.S.C.T. (Cont.)

Occupations	Number of Recruits
Chairmaker	1
Baker	1
Unknown or illegible	45
Total Number	1,325

SOURCE: Compiled from Descriptive Book, 20th Regt. U.S.C.T.,
Record Group 94, National Archives.

APPENDIX VI

Stated Occupations of Recruits, 26th Regiment U.S.C.T.

Occupations	Number of Recruits
Laborer	564
Farmer	296
Sailor-Seaman	60
Barber	42
Waiter	37
Cook	31
Boatman	22
Hostler	15
Teamster	14
Blacksmith	12
Coachman	10
Driver	8
Steward	7
Porter	6
Carpenter	6
Servant	5
Carman	4
Mason	4
Lumberman	3
Shoemaker	3
Cooper	3
Baker	3
Brickmaker	3
Doctor	2
Oysterman	2
Miller	2
Clerk	2
Plasterer	1
Papermaker	1
Caterer	1
Smith	1
Wagonmaker	1
Bricklayer	1
Engineer	1
Basketmaker	1
Chairmaker	1
Tobacconist	1
Carpet shaker	1
Coachmaker	1
Marble Cutter	1
Longshoremen	1
Tailor	1
Hatter	1
Spokemaker	1
Stonemason	1

(Cont.)

APPENDIX VIII

Stated Occupations of Recruits, 26th Regiment U.S.C.T. (Cont.)

Occupations	Number of Recruits
Cabinet Maker	1
Chair Carver	1
Polisher	1
Mechanic	1
Woodcutter	1
Moulder	1
Editor	1
Whitewasher	1
Painter	1
Saloonkeeper	1
Unknown or illegible	25
Total Number	1,230

SOURCE: Compiled from Descriptive Book, 26th Regiment U.S.C.T., Record Group 94, National Archives.

APPENDIX VI

Stated Occupations of Recruits, 31st Regiment U.S.C.T.

Occupations	Number of Recruits
Laborer	490
Farmer	275
Sailor-Seaman	73
Waiter	58
Cook	40
Boatman	25
Barber	20
Hostler	16
Blacksmith	12
Teamster	11
Shoemaker	8
Coachman	6
Painter	6
Carpenter	5
Clerk	4
Carman	4
Butcher	4
Mechanic	4
Porter	4
Engineer	3
Whitewasher	3
Baker	3
Tailor	3
Mason	3
Cooper	3
Servant	3
Miller	2
Doctor	2
Barkeep	2
Lumberman	2
Steward	2
Caterer	2
Waterman	2
Horseman	2
Minister	1
Joiner	1
Cigar maker	1
Groom	1
Oysterman	1
Musician	1
Fireman	1
Driver	1
Gunsmith	1

(Cont.)

APPENDIX VI

Stated Occupations of Recruits, 31st Regiment U.S.C.T. (Cont.)

Occupations	Number of Recruits
Truckman	1
Cartman	1
Jobber	1
Merchant	1
Stonecutter	1
Sawyer	1
Hackman	1
Photographer	1
Mariner	1
Gasmaker	1
Bootmaker	1
Drayman	1
Sailmaker	1
Tobacconist	1
Tanner	1
Bricklayer	1
Brickmaker	1
Unknown or illegible	76
Total Number	1,211

SOURCE: Compiled from Descriptive Book, 31st Regiment U.S.C.T., Record Group 94, National Archives.

APPENDIX VII

Roster, Officers, 20th Regiment U.S.C.T.*

Name	Rank	Age	Date of Enlistment into the 20th
Bartram, Nelson B.	Colonel	28	January 20, 1864
Mather, A. E.	Lt. Col.	--	-----
Wells, Amos P.	Major	29	January 15, 1864
Cushing, Thomas	Major/Surg.	42	December 24, 1863
Golderman, Casper	Q.M./1st Lt.	30	December 16, 1863
Le Vere George W.	Chaplain	43	January 25, 1864
Stephens, David	Asst. Surg.	28	January 21, 1864
Goold, James S.	Captain	22	December 31, 1863
Foster, George	"	27	December 31, 1863
Rouse, Henry H.	"	26	January 21, 1864
Barnaby, John E.	"	27	January 28, 1864
Wage, Edwin L.	"	27	January 22, 1864
Putnam, Samuel P.	"	22	January 20, 1864
Moore, William	"	26	February 4, 1864
Hull, Albert B.	"	21	January 20, 1864
Curry, Elijah S.	"	29	January 29, 1864
Stiles, Delos F.	"	37	January 27, 1864
Dow, Frank E.	1st Lt.	29	March 20, 1864
**Johnson, J. D.	"	--	-----
Martin, Norman R.	"	20	December 15, 1863
Pillsworth, David	"	22	December 15, 1863
Cooper, Martin	"	26	December 15, 1863
Greeley, Wallace	"	26	January 30, 1864
Sumner, Nelson R.	"	25	February 2, 1864
Blakeman, John P.	1st Lt./Adjt.	25	February 3, 1864
Gerrish, William	1st Lt.	21	February 9, 1864
**Phelps, Dudley F.	1st Lt./Adjt.	--	-----
**Mather, Elias C.	1st Lt.	--	-----
Thomas, John J.	2nd Lt.	22	December 17, 1863
Strong, Byron F.	"	22	December 18, 1863
Van Ornum, William	"	23	December 18, 1863
Briggs, Charles A.	"	23	December 15, 1863
Smith, Mortimer F.	"	21	January 25, 1864
Gardner, Isaac G.	"	29	January 23, 1864
Ambuster, Benjamin	"	19	January 25, 1864
Eaton, Parley	"	22	January 22, 1864
Habberton, John	"	22	January 27, 1864
Trombly, Bruno	"	26	January 22, 1864
**Charles, A. W.	"	--	-----
**Jenkins, Charles H.	"	--	August 14, 1864
**McCluskey, William	"	--	-----

(Cont.)

APPENDIX VIII

Roster, Officers, 20th Regiment U.S.C.T.* (Cont.)

Name	Rank	Age	Date of Enlistment into the 20th
**Chambers, Alex W.	"	--	-----
**Bassler, S. Stein	"	--	-----
**Carter, George F.	"	--	-----
**Schraut, Augustus	"	--	-----
**Parker, Thomas	"	--	-----

* No date, probably March or April 1864 because Captain Stiles committed suicide in May.

**Joined the regiment later.

SOURCE: Roster of Officers of the 20th Mustered into the United States Service, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous, 20th USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives. Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864, 54; David J. Pillsworth File in 20th Regt. USCT Folder, New York Historical Society.

APPENDIX VIII

Officers, 26th Regiment U.S.C.T., June 30, 1865

Name	Rank	Date of Commission	Original Entry Date	into Service Grade
*William Silliman	Col.	-----	-----	-----
Wm. B. Guernsey	Col.	May 30, 1865	Oct. 31, 1861	Capt. Vols.
Ira Winans	Major	Feb. 17, 1864	May 27, 1861	Pvt.
Charles Mattison	Adjt.	Mar. 7, 1864	Aug. 30, 1862	Pvt.
Buel A. Man	Q.M.	Jan. 6, 1865	Aug. 5, 1861	Pvt.
*James Uglow	Surg.	-----	-----	-----
Jon L. Whittaker	Asst. Surg.	Jan. 25, 1864	Feb. 2, 1864	Asst. Surg.
D. D. Taulman	" "	Apr. 29, 1864	May 18, 1864	Asst. Surg.
*Edward C. Fox	" "	-----	-----	-----
B. F. Randolph	Chaplain	Mar. 22, 1864	Mar. 27, 1864	Chaplain
*Edwin P. Dye	Capt.	-----	-----	-----
A. B. Whitney	"	-----	-----	-----
Cyrus G. Dyer	"	Jan. 20, 1864	Apr. 17, 1861	1st Lt./Q.M.
Wm. W. Tracy	"	Jan. 29, 1864	May 26, 1862	Pvt.
H. L. Salsbury	"	Jan 25, 1864	Aug. 26, 1862	Pvt.
George England	"	Feb. 12, 1864	Aug. 12, 1861	1st Lt.
Wm. A. Graham	"	Feb. 12, 1864	Mar. 3, 1862	Pvt.
*Austin Alvord	"	Jan. 1864	Mar. 15, 1862	-----
Wm. Davenport	"	May 11, 1864	Apr. 24, 1861	Pvt.
E. W. Pettit	"	May 11, 1864	June 19, 1864	Pvt.
A. C. McDonald	"	Oct. 26, 1864	Aug. 5, 1862	Pvt.
C. W. Robbins	"	Jan. 6, 1865	Aug. 5, 1862	Pvt.
Sylvester Soper	"	Feb. 1, 1864	Oct. 8, 1861	Capt. Vols.
*James Spry	1st Lt.	-----	-----	-----
James Sprague	"	Jan. 27, 1864	Aug. 5, 1862	Pvt.
Harry Sergeant	"	Jan. 27, 1864	Jan. 21, 1862	Pvt.
F. K. Orvis	"	Jan. 28, 1864	Feb. 18, 1864	1st Lt.
*Rufus Johnson	"	-----	-----	-----
*Eugene L. Barnes	"	-----	-----	-----
Robert Aiton	"	Feb. 22, 1864	May 3, 1862	Pvt.
James B. Chase	"	Apr. 26, 1864	May 18, 1864	1st Lt.
E. L. Miller	"	May 11, 1864	June 21, 1862	Pvt.
A. P. Van Sanford	"	Jan. 6, 1865	Dec. 7, 1861	Pvt.
J. H. Swertfager	"	May 30, 1865	Sept 15, 1861	Pvt.
John Reed	"	May 30, 1865	Aug. 10, 1861	Pvt.
A. Gardiner	"	May 30, 1865	Sept 3, 1861	Pvt.
J. H. Watrous	2nd Lt.	Jan. 7, 1864	July 26, 1861	Pvt.
A. H. Hart	"	Jan. 7, 1864	Sept 3, 1862	Pvt.
Joseph L. Tull	"	Nov. 5, 1864	Nov. 5, 1864	2nd Lt.
Joseph B. Mason	"	Feb. 7, 1865	Jan. 19, 1864	Pvt.
A. W. Jerome	"	Feb. 7, 1865	Sept 2, 1863	Pvt.
*A. A. Van Guilder	"	-----	-----	-----

*Served the regiment prior to June 30, 1865.

SOURCE: Roster of the 26th United States Colored Troops (June 30, 1865), Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous, 26th USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives. Union League Club Report of the Committee on Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864, 54.

APPENDIX IX

Officers, 31st Regiment U.S.C.T., October 1, 1865

Name	Rank	Date of Commission	Original Entry Date	into Regt. Grade
Henry C. Ward	Col.	Oct. 29, 1864	Nov. 6, 1864	Col.
Albert Jones	Lt. Col.	Apr. 12, 1865	Apr. 12, 1865	Lt. Col.
*Wm. E. W. Ross	Lt. Col.	-----	-----	-----
Thomas Wright	Major	Sept 27, 1864	Mar. 3, 1864	Capt.
*Wm. S. Tremain	Surg.	-----	-----	-----
Perry Barritt	Surg.	Sept 12, 1864	Oct. 28, 1864	Surg.
Wm. Martin	Asst. Surg.	Apr. 27, 1865	May 9, 1865	Asst. Surg.
Clark Cauhill	" "	June 11, 1865	July 2, 1865	" "
*Frank White	" "	-----	-----	-----
Augustus Alvord	Chaplain	Jan. 20, 1865	Feb. 9, 1865	Chaplain
R. A. Barnes	Adjt.	Jan. 27, 1865	Apr. 17, 1864	2nd Lt.
D. L. Wilson	Q. M.	Apr. 7, 1864	Apr. 14, 1864	1st Lt./Q.M
A. N. Goldwood	Capt.	May 5, 1864	May 29, 1864	Capt.
John R. Morris	"	Aug. 30, 1864	Sept 29, 1864	Capt.
Henry L. Bliss	"	Nov. 28, 1864	Apr. 1, 1864	1st Lt.
*Charles Robinson	"	-----	-----	-----
*Adgate L. Loomis	"	-----	-----	-----
*Charles L. Finney	"	-----	-----	-----
*Pembroke V. Wise	"	-----	-----	-----
*Richard K Woodruff	"	-----	-----	-----
*S. J. Shoop	"	-----	-----	-----
Charles F. Ulrick	"	Nov. 28, 1864	Mar. 14, 1864	1st Lt.
George Greenman	"	Jan. 27, 1865	Jan. 31, 1865	1st Lt.
Richard C. Barritt	"	Mar. 8, 1865	Apr. 15, 1864	1st Lt.
James H. Cathcart	"	Mar. 23, 1865	Sept 18, 1864	1st Lt.
Henry A. Downing	"	May 22, 1865	Feb 1, 1864	2nd Lt.
Wm. C. Williams	"	June 1, 1865	Mar. 15, 1864	2nd Lt.
Henry H. Wilson	1st Lt.	May 3, 1864	May 14, 1864	1st Lt.
Ira S. Smith	"	Nov. 23, 1864	Mar. 17, 1864	2nd Lt.
*Edwin Leach	"	-----	-----	-----
John F. Sanford	"	Nov. 28, 1864	Mar. 22, 1864	2nd Lt.
Henry A. Bingham	"	June 27, 1865	Mar. 16, 1864	"
Albert Latham	"	June 27, 1865	Apr. 20, 1864	"
*Elias B. Yordy	"	-----	-----	-----
Clay W. Evans	"	Mar. 4, 1865	Dec. 4, 1864	"
Dudley C. Bixby	"	May 22, 1865	Aug. 28, 1864	"
Thomas W. Gardner	"	May 22, 1865	Dec. 10, 1864	"
Wm. H. Sloan	"	June 1, 1865	Feb. 18, 1865	"
*James B. Mason	"	-----	-----	-----
John H. Peohine	2nd Lt.	Nov. 30, 1864	Dec. 4, 1864	2nd Lt.
Solomon C. Tenney	"	May 27, 1865	July 4, 1865	"
Emery D. Rogers	"	Aug. 17, 1865	Aug. 17, 1865	"

(Cont.)

APPENDIX IX

Officers, 31st Regiment U.S.C.T., October 1, 1865 (Cont.)

Name	Rank	Date of Commission	Original Entry Date	into Regt. Grade
*Henry L. Lawton	"	-----	-----	-----
*John E. Wheelock	"	-----	-----	-----
*Wm. H. Ayers	"	-----	-----	-----
*E. Burgoyne	"	-----	-----	-----
*John S. Appleton	"	-----	-----	-----
*Frank E. Woodruff	"	-----	-----	-----

*Served the regiment prior to October 1, 1865.

SOURCE: Roster of Commissioned Officers, 31st U.S.C.T. for October 1st 1865, Regt. Papers--Miscellaneous 31st USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives. Union League Club Report of the Committee of Volunteering Presented October 13, 1864, 55.

APPENDIX X

Casualties, Recruits, Officers, 20th U.S.C.T.

	Officers	Enlisted Men
Killed in action	--	--
Died of wounds	--	1
Died of disease	1	263
Drowned	--	1
Suicide	1	3
Sunstroke	--	1
Accident	--	--
Murdered	--	--
Causes not stated	--	14
Totals	2	283

SOURCE: Frederick Phisterer, Comp., New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1865 (3rd ed., 6 vols., Albany, 1912), V, 4135.

APPENDIX XI

Casualties, Recruits, Officers, 26th U.S.C.T.

	Officers	Enlisted Men
Killed in action	--	21
Died of wounds	2	7
Died of disease	2	102
Drowned	1	4
Suicide	--	--
Sunstroke	--	2
Accident	--	--
Murdered	--	1
Causes not stated	--	3
Totals	5	140

SOURCE: Frederick Phisterer, Comp., New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1865 (3rd ed., 6 vols., Albany, 1912), V, 4137.

APPENDIX XIII

Casualties, Recruits, Officers, 31st U.S.C.T.

	Officers	Enlisted Men
Killed in action	2	35
Died of Wounds	1	19
Died of disease	1	100
Drowned	--	3
Suicide	--	--
Sunstroke	--	1
Accident	--	3
Murdered	--	1
Causes not stated	--	15
Totals	4	177*

*According to Phisterer five died at the hands of the enemy.

SOURCE: Frederick Phisterer, Comp., New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1865 (3rd ed., 6 vols., Albany, 1912), V, 4139.

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