

CIVIL WAR

Southern
Sections
Add-On

Length: ~0.6 miles Starting Point: Section 3 (1.5 miles from Welcome Center) Exertion Level: Moderate

There are three types of stops on this walking tour:



HONOR
HONOR stops mark the gravesites of specific individuals.



REMEMBER
REMEMBER stops commemorate events, ideas or groups of people.



EXPLORE
EXPLORE stops invite you to discover what this history means to you.



- 1
- 2

Section 3

Freedman’s Village

Section 3

Corner of Clayton
and Jessup Drives



Tip: Shorten your walk by taking the [tram](#) to John J. Pershing’s gravesite in Section 34 or Memorial Amphitheater. Tickets may be purchased inside the Welcome Center at the box office and outside in the tram circle at the marked podium. They may also be purchased online at www.arlingtontours.com.



We love hearing about your visit! Share your pictures, questions, and favorite parts of the tour on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

@ArlingtonNatl #ANCEducation #CivilWarANC



INTRODUCTION



1864 illustration of Freedman's Village. The picture originally appeared in Harper's Weekly. (LOC)



Although most of Arlington National Cemetery's Civil War-era sites are concentrated in the northern and central sections of the cemetery, the southern sections also contain some historically important sites — most notably, the site of the former Freedman's Village.

Explore these sections to learn more about this important aspect of the cemetery's history.

TERMINOLOGY NOTE: During the Civil War, the U.S. Army was often referred to as the Union Army or the Northern Army. Throughout this tour, the term U.S. Army is used because the "Union Army" was the U.S. Army — the same army that Congress established in 1789 and that still exists today.



SECTION 3



WALKING TOUR STOP 1 Section 3

Section 3 was originally called the "Southern" section. It was created in the 1870s to accommodate the growing number of Civil War-era officers who wished to be buried at ANC.

As you walk through Section 3, compare it to Sections 1 and 2 — the other Civil War-era officer's sections. You might notice that the headstones in Section 3 are placed much closer together, indicating smaller gravesites than Sections 1 and 2.

As Arlington became more popular in the early 20th century, cemetery staff had to consider how to accommodate the growing number of service members requesting burial. One solution was smaller gravesites. Another was to no longer allow service members to reserve multiple burial plots for their family members; spouses could still be buried at Arlington, but only in shared plots.



Section 3 marker, April 2020. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

MAJOR GENERAL NELSON APPLETON MILES



WALKING TOUR STOP 1.1 Section 3, Grave 1873

BIRTH: August 8, 1839, Westminster, MA

DEATH: May 15, 1925, Washington, D.C.

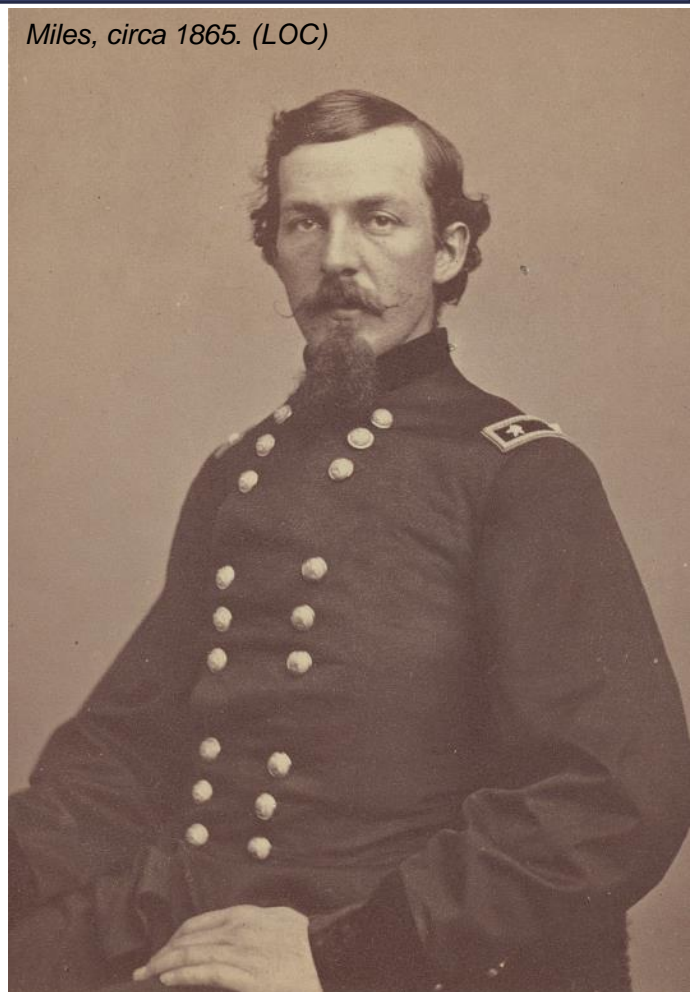
When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Nelson Miles was working as a crockery store clerk. He soon decided to join the U.S. Army and organized a company of volunteer infantryman. Miles rose steadily through the ranks, eventually becoming commanding general of the Army in 1895.

During the Civil War, he was wounded four times and received the Medal of Honor for exceptional valor during the Battle of Chancellorsville (April 30-May 6, 1863). He also served with distinction in the Battles of Fair Oaks, Antietam, Fredericksburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg. In October 1865, he was promoted to major general of volunteers.

After the Civil War, Miles led campaigns against American Indians in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as the invasion of Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War.

From 1895 to 1903, Miles served as the last commanding general of the Army, which by then had adopted a chief of staff system. On May 15, 1920, the 80-year-old retired general was grand marshal at the dedication ceremony for Memorial Amphitheater. He is interred in a large mausoleum, one of only two in the cemetery.

Miles, circa 1865. (LOC)



Right: Miles' mausoleum, March 2020. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)

Miles' funeral procession entering Arlington on May 19, 1925. (LOC)



MAJOR JONATHAN LETTERMAN



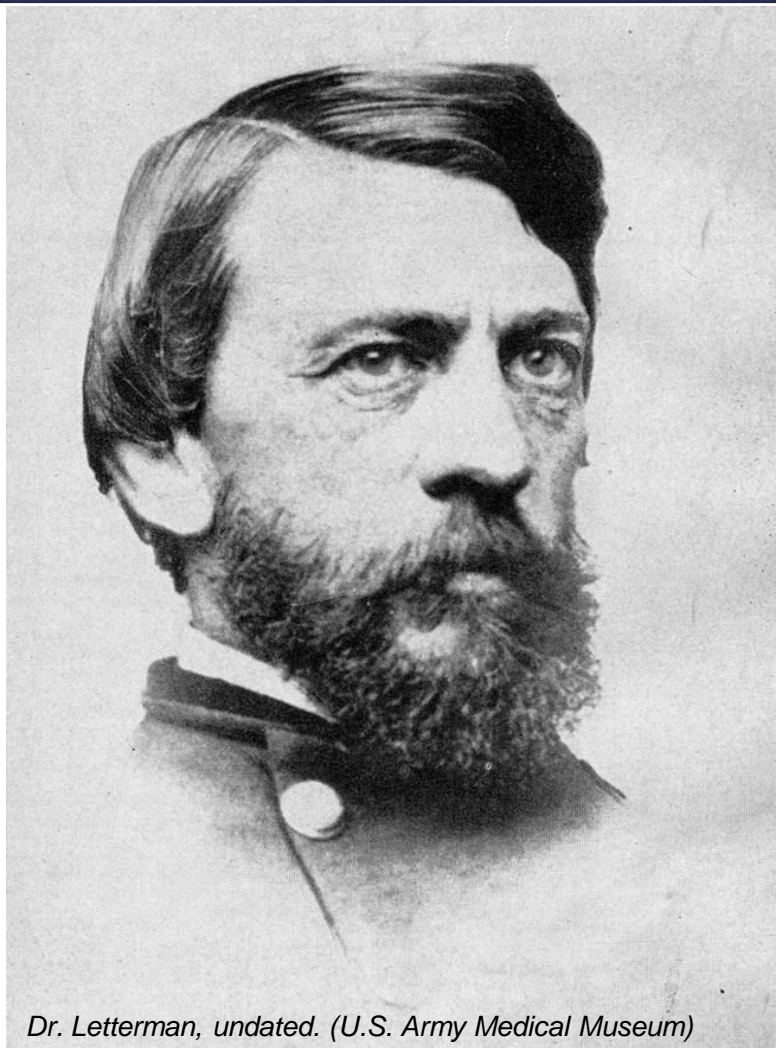
WALKING TOUR STOP 1.2 Section 3, Grave 1869

BIRTH: December 11, 1824, Canonsburg, PA

DEATH: March 15, 1872, San Francisco, CA

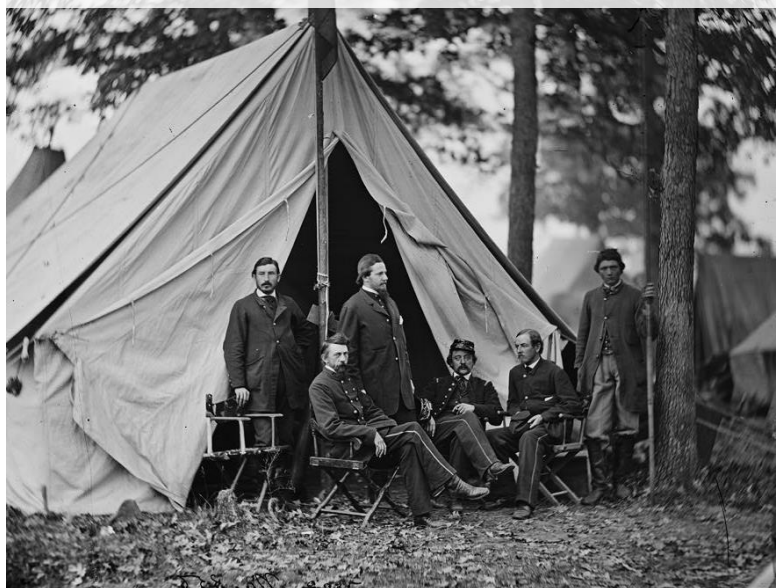
Surgeon general of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War, Jonathan Letterman has been called "the father of battlefield medicine." As medical director of the U.S. Army, his first priority was improving soldier health in Army camps. Letterman mandated that soldiers receive a proper breakfast and larger rations of food. He also improved camp hygienic practices, mostly around waste and food preparation. Finally, Letterman instituted rules that allowed soldiers to have breaks, clean uniforms, and improved sleeping conditions. After less than a month, the Army of the Potomac's disease rate had been reduced by one-third.

Letterman next worked to improve battlefield casualty evacuations. At the time, injured soldiers were left on the battlefield unless a fellow comrade carried them to safety. Following the Second Battle of Manassas (August 28-30, 1862), some wounded soldiers lay on the battlefield for a full week before they were evacuated. Letterman's solution was threefold. First, he established an ambulance corps, which ventured onto battlefields to rescue wounded soldiers with wagons and stretchers. Second, he instituted a triage system, where surgeons near the front lines assessed all wounded soldiers to determine whether a patient could be treated at the field hospital, needed transportation to a local hospital, or was too injured to save. Finally, Letterman decentralized the medical supply system, making it easier for forward units to access medical supplies. Letterman thus created the foundation for U.S. military medical operations and implemented procedures and techniques that are still used today.



Dr. Letterman, undated. (U.S. Army Medical Museum)

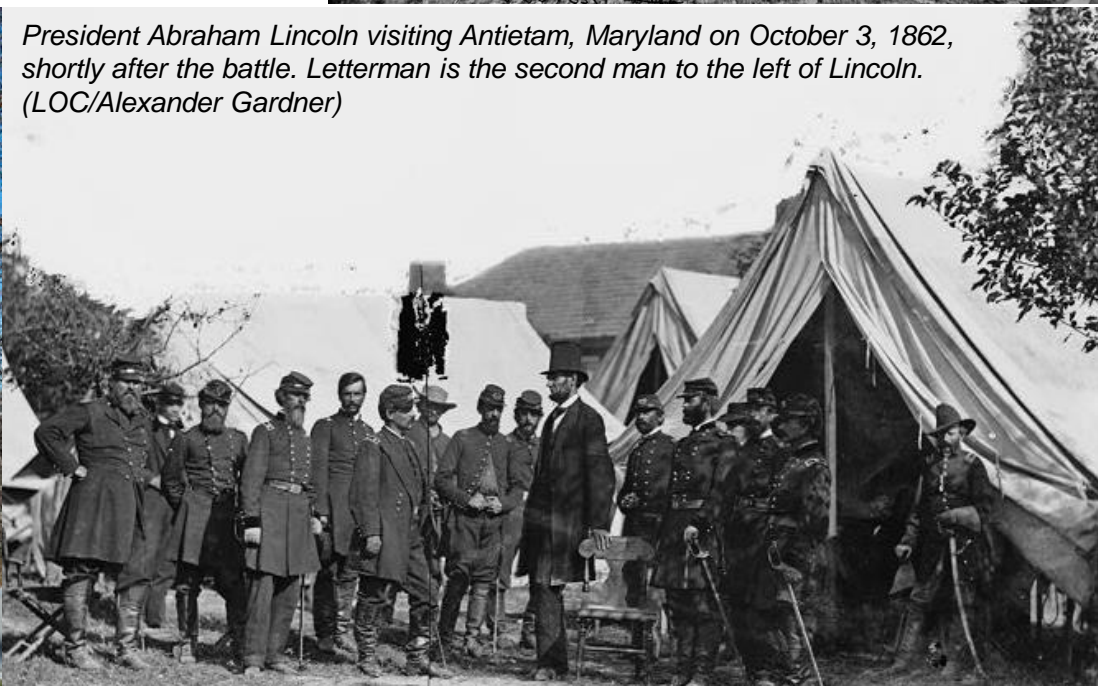
Dr. Letterman and his staff at an Army camp in Warrenton, Virginia, November 1862. (LOC/Alexander Gardner)



President Abraham Lincoln visiting Antietam, Maryland on October 3, 1862, shortly after the battle. Letterman is the second man to the left of Lincoln. (LOC/Alexander Gardner)



Letterman's gravesite, February 2018. (ANC/Elizabeth Fraser)





FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE



WALKING TOUR STOP 2 Corner of Clayton and Jessup Drives



Beginning in June 1863, a large Freedman's Village was established in the area of today's Sections 3, 4, 8, 18, and 20. Freedman's Villages were temporary settlements established by the federal government for formerly enslaved people — essentially refugee camps for men, women, and children. The Freedman's Village on the Arlington property evolved into a unique and thriving community with schools, hospitals, churches, and social services. While intended to be temporary, the community remained on the land from 1863 until 1900, and it had a lasting legacy.

During and directly after the Civil War, the population of newly freed African Americans in and around Washington D.C. increased dramatically. These displaced refugees faced numerous challenges, primarily the need for housing, food, and employment.

To address these needs, the federal government established "contraband camps"* throughout the city. However, overcrowding and poor sanitation made these camps difficult places to live.



"Contrabands" in Virginia during the Peninsular Campaign, May 1862. (LOC/James F. Gibson)

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**CIVIL WAR:
SOUTHERN
SECTIONS
WALKING TOUR**

Return to Miles Drive. Turn left at McKinley Drive and then left on McPherson Drive. Turn right on Clayton Drive and stop at the intersection of Clayton and Jessup Drives. This corner marks approximately the location of the same curved road (Hamlin Circle) in the Freedman's Village map on page six.

* Newly freed people were also called "freedmen" or "contrabands." The name "contraband" was used because in the South enslaved people were classified as property. Enemy property captured by the U.S. Army was considered contraband and would not be returned. (You can read more about the name and the official U.S. policy at the time here: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/fort-monroe-and-the-contrabands-of-war.htm>.)



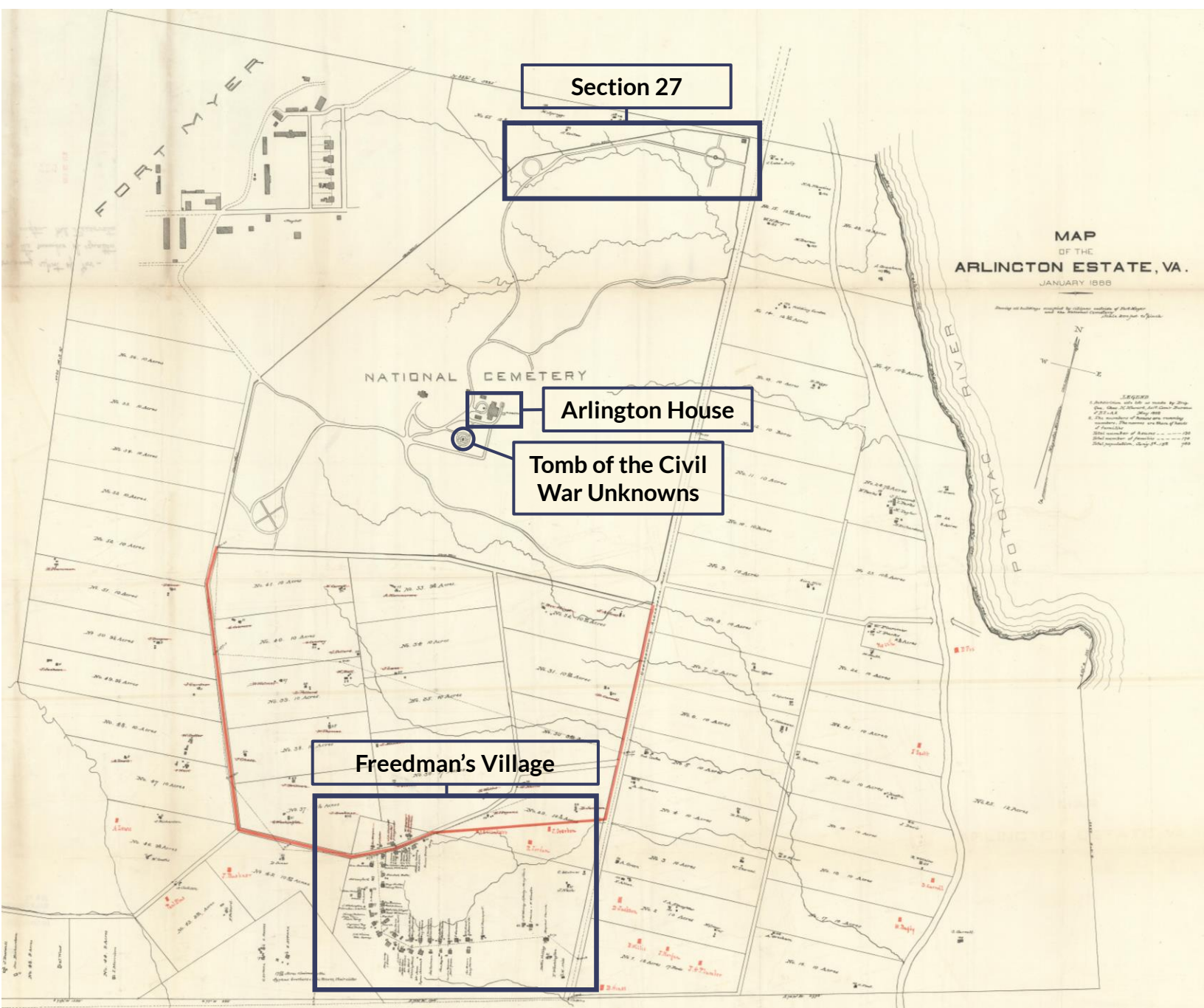
FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE



As early as 1868, the federal government made efforts to close the village and move residents out. However, the village continued to survive, and in December 1887, the Army informed villagers that they had 90 days to relocate. That deadline lapsed as Major Louis H. Carpenter, the commanding officer at Fort Myer who was ordered to remove the villagers, called for an investigation that included a survey, a census, and an evaluation of property. Nonetheless, as the investigation went on, many residents moved away. In 1888, 763 people still lived in the village. In 1890, the last 150 families moved, and the Army tore down the remaining buildings. In 1900, Congress appropriated \$75,000 to pay the villagers and settle the debt owed to them. Former residents or their descendants were also paid.

The official reason for closing the village was that Army regulations forbade civilians from residing on military reservations. However, contemporary newspaper reports outlined other considerations that may have influenced the decision to close the village, such as land developers wanting the valuable land and the larger (mostly white) Alexandria community opposing the existence of the community.

Today, no trace of Freedman's Village remains at Arlington National Cemetery. However, historical records show that part of it was situated on what are now Sections 3, 4, 8, 18, and 20.



January 1888 map of ANC. (NARA)



FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE



While the buildings of Freedman's Village were torn down, the community that the residents created did not collapse. Residents used what they had learned during their time there to form other Black communities in the Arlington area. Three of these communities — Green Valley, Hall's Hill, and Johnson's Hill — still exist, and some local families can trace their family history to Freedman's Village. The displaced residents took with them the skills they had learned, the educations they had gained, and the organizations (including churches) that they had created. Organizations that began in the village and continue in Arlington today include the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows and the Mt. Olive and Mt. Zion Baptist churches.

While nothing remains of Freedman's Village today, by visiting its site you can learn about and honor the people who lived there. These brave Americans seized their freedom and sought opportunities to build a new life during one of the most dramatic periods in American history. Their stories remind us of the cause of the Civil War — slavery — and its most significant outcome, the end of human enslavement in the United States.



In 1959, Stratford Junior High School in Arlington became the first public secondary school in Virginia to desegregate. (LOC/ Warren K. Leffler)



A Black neighborhood in Rosslyn, an unincorporated area of Arlington County, Virginia, 1937. (LOC/John Vachon)

Read "[Freedman's Village at Arlington](#)" to learn more about the village and the people who lived there.

CIVIL WAR WALKING TOUR

SOURCES

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<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/jonathan-letterman>.

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PHOTOS

Page 2: Alfred R. Waud, Freedmans village--Greene Heights Arlington, VA., April 1864, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004660337/>.

Page 2: Elizabeth Fraser, Section 3, April 20, 2020, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/49946015981/>.

Page 3: Brady's National Photographic Portrait Galleries, [Brigadier General Nelson Appleton Miles of Co. E, 22nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 61st New York Infantry Regiment and U.S. Volunteers Infantry Regiment in uniform], 1865, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2021653508/>.

Page 3: Elizabeth Fraser, Medal of Honor Recipient Headstone in Section 3, March 16, 2020, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/49669627056/>.

Page 3: Gen. Miles funeral, 5/19/25, May 19, 1925, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2016839858/>.

Page 4: Letterman, undated, U.S. Army Medical Museum, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Letterman.jpg>.

Page 4: Alexander Gardner, [Warrenton, Va. Dr. Jonathan Letterman, medical director of the Army of the Potomac and staff], November 1862, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2018666270/>.

Page 4: Elizabeth Fraser, Headstone of U.S. Army Maj. Jonathan Letterman, February 27, 2018, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/40538092041/>.

Page 4: Alexander Gardner, [Antietam, Md. President Lincoln with Gen. George B. McClellan and group of officers], October 3, 1862, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2018666256/>.

Page 5: Freedman's Village, Arlington [i.e., Alexandria], Va., circa 1862-1865, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2014645761/>.

Page 5: James F. Gibson, [Cumberland Landing, Va. Group of "contrabands" at Foller's house], May 14, 1862, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018666163/>.

Page 6: Head Quarters at Freedman's Village, Arlington, VA, July 10, 1865, National Archives, Record Group 92, Post and Reservation Maps Series, Map 110, Sequence A-6.

Page 6: Freedmans Village near Arlington Hights, Va., July 10th, 1865. Genl. [ground] Plan No. 9., April 10, 1865, National Archives, Record Group 92, Post and Reservation Maps Series, Map 110(5), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/305826>.

Page 7: Map of the Arlington Estate, January 1888, National Archives, Record Group 92, Blueprint VA Arlington 51.

Page 8: Warren K. Leffler, [Students and buses outside Stratford Junior High School on opening day, Arlington, Virginia], September 1, 1959, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013651424/>.

Page 8: John Vachon, House in Negro quarter. Rosslyn, Virginia, September 1937, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769284/>.