

Name: _____



PRIMARY SOURCE PERSPECTIVES

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

William Henry Christman

William Henry Christman lived in Pennsylvania and worked for local farmers as a teenager. William's father Jonas became disabled around 1859, so it was important for William and his older brother Barnabus to earn money for the family. Barnabus enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1861 and was killed in battle in 1862. On March 25, 1864, William enlisted in the 67th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He received an enlistment bonus in addition to his soldier's pay, which he sent home to his family. On April 22, 1864, William became sick with either rubella or the measles, and he died at Lincoln General Hospital in Washington, D.C. on May 11. Two days later, he became the first soldier interred in Arlington Burial Ground (soon to become Arlington National Cemetery).

Cornelia Hancock

Cornelia Hancock was inspired to join the Federal cause after seeing her brother and other male relatives enlist in the Army. However, when she volunteered to travel to Gettysburg and work as a nurse, she was initially rejected for being too young and attractive. Nonetheless, she boarded a train with the other nurses and set to work when she arrived at the battlefield. Hancock built a reputation as an attentive nurse, even impressing Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. After the Civil War, Hancock worked with charitable organizations supporting formerly enslaved people, children, and the poor.

Cornelia Hancock does not have a personal connection to Arlington National Cemetery, but her experience exemplifies that of thousands of women who served as nurses during the Civil War. Anna Etheridge Hooks, a nurse who is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, also earned recognition for her work, which involved participating in 32 battles. She was one of only two women to receive the Kearny Cross, an award for extreme heroism and bravery. Unfortunately, Hooks left behind no primary sources that told her story.

Milton Holland

Milton Holland's mother was an enslaved woman owned by his father, a white slaveholder in Texas. His father freed Milton and his two brothers sometime in the 1850s and sent the three boys to Ohio, a free state. When the Civil War began, Holland attempted to enlist in the U.S. Army. At this time, the federal government barred African Americans from serving in the military. After the War Department established United States Colored Troop (USCT) regiments in 1863, Holland enlisted in the Fifth USCT Infantry Regiment. In 1865, he earned the Medal of Honor for bravery during the Battle of New Market Heights on September 29, 1864. Later in life, Holland founded the Alpha Insurance Company, the first Black-owned insurance company in Washington, D.C. He is buried in Section 23, among many other USCT soldiers.

Montgomery Cunningham Meigs

Montgomery Cunningham Meigs, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Before the outbreak of the Civil War, he supervised

Name: _____



several major federal projects, including the construction of the Washington Aqueduct and the wings and dome of the U.S. Capitol. After the start of the Civil War in 1861, Montgomery was appointed quartermaster general of the Army. In this capacity, he managed Army logistics and military burials. Often described as the “architect” of Arlington National Cemetery, Meigs authorized the burial of soldiers on the Arlington property in 1864 and directed much of the cemetery’s early development. He is buried in Section 1, just across from Meigs Drive.

John Rodgers Meigs

The son of Montgomery Cunningham Meigs, John Rodgers Meigs followed his father’s example in graduating from West Point and serving in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. During the Civil War, Meigs served on the staffs of multiple U.S. Army generals, and he was named chief engineer of the Army of the Shenandoah in August 1864. On the night of October 3, he and two other officers unexpectedly encountered three Confederate scouts behind U.S. lines; Meigs was killed in the confrontation. The Meigs family was widely admired, and John’s funeral was attended by President Abraham Lincoln, Secretary of State William H. Seward, and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. He was initially buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington, D.C., but his father later had his body moved to Arlington National Cemetery. His grave features a bronze sculpture showing Meigs in death, wearing his uniform and laying in the mud.

Wesley Norris

Wesley Norris was an enslaved man who lived at Arlington Plantation, the land owned by George Washington Parke Custis that later became Arlington National Cemetery. Upon Custis’ death in 1857, Norris, along with the other enslaved people who were part of the Custis estate, became the property of his daughter, Mary Anna Randolph Custis. Mary and her husband, Robert E. Lee managed the plantation. In 1859, Norris attempted to escape to Pennsylvania, but he was caught and returned to Arlington. His account of what happened to him upon his return was published in multiple newspapers. Following the terms of Custis’ will, Lee officially freed Norris on December 29, 1862. Little is known of his later life.

William Henry Singleton

William Henry Singleton was the son of an enslaved woman and a white man in North Carolina. When he was only four years old, he was sold and forced to leave his family to go to Georgia. A few years later, Singleton escaped and returned home, where his mother hid him in a cellar for three years. While still a child, he was caught, sold, and escaped multiple times. Finally, he was allowed to stay and work on his home plantation in North Carolina. Early in the Civil War, Singleton asked to be the servant of a local Confederate officer, and after a battle, he escaped to the U.S. Army. At the time, African Americans were not allowed to serve in the U.S. military, so Singleton formed and began training his own regiment of Black men. The regiment was allowed to enlist in 1863, and served in South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. After the war, William moved to New England and became active in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and various veterans’ organizations.

William Henry Singleton does not have a personal connection to Arlington National Cemetery and his story is exceptional in many ways. But his experience serving in the U.S. Army during the Civil War was similar to the tens of thousands of other African Americans who served. These soldiers included



Name: _____

Lucius Bingham, who had been enslaved at the Arlington Plantation. Little is known of Lucius other than that he appeared on the inventory of Custis slaves in 1858 and that he joined the 38th United States Colored Troops Infantry Regiment on February 28, 1865.

Sarah Thompson

Sarah Elizabeth Lane Thompson lived in Tennessee at the start of the Civil War. Her husband Sylvanius was a recruiter for the U.S. Army, and he and Sarah worked to organize U.S. sympathizers in their area. In 1864, Sylvanius was captured and killed by a Confederate soldier. Sarah continued her work supporting the United States, delivering dispatches and providing valuable information and insight about Confederate movements. She also worked as a nurse for the U.S. Army. Despite her service, after the war Sarah struggled to find employment that could support her family. In 1897, after many impassioned letters from Sarah and Army officers she had worked with, Congress allowed her to receive a \$12 per month pension (about \$440 today). Sarah is buried in Section 1 of Arlington National Cemetery. Her grave marker reads "Her love for her country was shown by the service she gave it."

Name: _____



PRIMARY SOURCES

Fill in the blank with the name of who you think wrote each primary source.

Primary Source 1

Letter from _____ to a cousin

Gettysburg, Pa. July 7th, 1863.

MY DEAR COUSIN

I am very tired tonight; have been on the field all day – went to the 3rd Division 2nd Army Corps. I supposed there are about five hundred wounded belonging to it. They have one patch of woods devoted to each army corps for a hospital. I being interested in the 2nd, because Will had been in it, got into one of its ambulances, and went out at eight this morning and came back at six this evening. There are no words in the English language to express the sufferings I witnessed today. The men lie on the ground, their clothes have been cut off them to dress their wounds; they are half naked, have nothing but hard-tack to eat only as Sanitary Commissions, Christian Associations, and so forth give them. I was the first woman who reached the 2nd Corps after the three days fight at Gettysburg. I was in that Corps all day, not another woman within a half mile. Mrs. Harris was in first division of 2nd Corps. I was introduced to the surgeon of the post, went anywhere through the Corps, and received nothing but the greatest politeness from even the lowest private. You can tell Aunt there is every opportunity for “secesh” sympathizers to do a good work among the butternuts; we have lots of them here suffering fearfully. To give you some idea of the extent and number of the wounds, four surgeons, none of whom were idle fifteen minutes at a time, were busy all day amputating legs and arms. I gave to every man that had a leg or arm off a gill of wine, to every wounded in Third Division, one glass of lemonade, some bread and preserves and tobacco – as much as I am opposed to the latter, for they need it very much, they are so exhausted.

I feel very thankful that this was a successful battle; the spirit of the men is so high that many of the poor fellows said today, “What is an arm or leg to whipping Lee out of Penn.” I would get on first rate if they would not ask me to write to their wives; that I cannot do without crying, which is not pleasant to either party. I do not mind the sight of blood, have seen limbs taken off and was not sick at all.

It is a very beautiful, rolling country here; under favorable circumstances I should think healthy, but now for five miles around, there is an awful smell of putrefaction. Women are needed here very badly, anyone who is willing to go to field hospitals, but nothing short of an order from Secretary Stanton or General Halleck will let you through the lines. Major General Schenk’s order for us was not regarded as anything; if we had not met Miss Dix at Baltimore Depot, we should not have gotten through. It seems a strange taste but I am glad we did. We stay at Doctor Horner’s house at night – direct letters care of Dr. Horner, Gettysburg, Pa. If you could mail me a newspaper, it would be a great satisfaction, as we do not get the news here and the soldiers are so anxious to hear; things will be different here in a short time.



Name: _____



Primary Source 2

Letter from _____ to local newspaper

Norfolk, Va.
Jan. 19, 1864

Dear Messenger:

You will be reminded of the company of colored soldiers raised by myself in the county of Athens, [Ohio], and taken to Camp Delaware, 25 miles north of Columbus, on the Olentangy. It has since been mustered into the service in the 5th Regt. U.S. Colored Troops. The regiment is organized, and has been in active service for three months. Our company is C—the color company—in which you may remember of the flag presentation, made by the kind citizens of Athens, through Mr. Moore, at which Mr. Langston was present and received it, pledging in behalf of the company, that they would ever be true to the flag, though it might be tattered or torn by hard service, it should never be disgraced....

The regiment though young, has been in one engagement. The men stood nobly and faced the cowardly foe when they were hid in the swamp firing upon them. They stood like men, and when ordered to charge, went in with a yell, and came out victorious, losing four killed and several wounded. The rebel loss is large, as compared with ours. As for company C she played her part admirably in the charge. Our 4th sergeant, Charles G. Stark, is said to have killed the picket guard while in the act of running away.

I must say of the 5th, that after twenty days of hard scouting, without overcoats or blankets, they returned home to camp, which the soldiers term their home, making twenty-five and thirty miles per day. Several of the white cavalry told me that no soldiers have ever done as hard marching through swamps and marshes as cheerfully as we did, and that if they had to follow us for any length of time it would kill their horses. During that raid, thousands of slaves belonging to rebel masters were liberated. You are aware that the colored man makes no distinction in regard to persons, so I may say all belonging to slaveholders were liberated....

The boys are generally well, and satisfied that though they are deprived of all the comforts of home, and laboring under great disadvantages as regards pay and having families to support upon less wages than white soldiers, still trust that when they do return they will be crowned with honors, and a happier home prepared for them, when they will be free from the abuses of northern and southern fire-eaters. Though we should fall struggling in our blood for right and justice, for the freedom of our brothers in bondage, or fall in defense of our national color, the Stars and Stripes, our home and fireside will ever be protected by our old friend Gov. Tod, by the loyalty of Abraham Lincoln, our Moses, and the all-wise God that created us. Friends at home be cheerful, cast aside all mercenary compensation. Spring forth to the call and show to the world that you are men. You have thus far shown, and still continue to show yourselves worthy of freedom, and you will win the respect of the whole nation. There is a brighter day coming for the colored man, and he must sacrifice home comforts if necessary to speed the coming of that glorious day. I will close my letter in the language of the immortal Henry—"Give me liberty, or give me death!"



Name: _____

Yours truly,

██████████

O.S., Co. C, 5th U.S.C.T.

Primary Source 3

Letter from _____ to family

Philadelphia, April 7, 1864

Camp Cat valenter My dear Mother I this Morning thake the opertunnity to inform you ufue times thad I am well at this present time ant hope thad my ful lines will find you the same father I must tel you that I like it very good we have enuph to eat and drink and mure we about want for the preasant time

Father I Must tel you thad I want you to take good care of my close

ant father I want you to write me weter you have thad note from Jacob Stoufer I want you to take them papers all out put them in My trunk ant keep them their til I com back father I want you to get thad deed for thad land ant get that note from hiram hey and get thad money from Timathy Miller ant pay it on thad land but mind yo thad you get a good deed

father I want you to write me how the gildren is weter they ar well again

father I haint know more to write for this preasant time

So good by for this time

from your dear Son

██████████

So please excuse my pour riting

For I hapto write on my plait

So I can't write as good as I ate

Name: _____



Primary Source 4

Letter from _____ to mother

My dear Mother,

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, August 8, 1864

I have just read your welcome letter of the 3d describing your life among the New Englanders. I am glad to see that during the tumults, stampedes, and excitements daily occurring in these regions you are far away from them in a secluded place where you can enjoy a telescopic vies of the whole ground without the violent emotions that those poor ladies have to feel who live here. Father I am sure must feel more comfortable now that you are away than if you were near him even and he was enjoying your society....

I share with you your feeling toward the contemptible puppy who dawdles about the sea beach and takes no interest in the war.

I sometimes almost wish that the calamity of a raid might be visited on those secluded people to waken them up. I fancy that McCauslands villains would excite an interest even in the fellow you write of should they approach him within a mile or two. I stand at the house Mr Thomas the other day where our headquarters were camped on the Monocacy battlefield. I have rarely seen a house more scarred by battle than was his. His daughter Miss Alice a lovely and accomplished girl was driven for safety with her Mother and the rest of the family to the cellar. She declares she that she did not feel very badly frightened though the muskets were popping out of the windows and the balls rattling against the house until a shell crashed through the wall of the dining room and burst just over their heads with only a thin flooring between. 7 shells struck the house and I counted the marks of 26 musket balls on one side of the house and discovered more afterwards. Her father she thinks caused them a great deal of unnecessary anxiety by continually going upstairs to see how the fight came on. Our men and the Rebels fought hand to hand around the house and the marks of the bloody contest were everywhere visible....

When you write send your letters addressed to Father.

Ever your Affct Son [REDACTED]

I have finished my letter but as I still feel like writing on and talking a little while longer I have taken another sheet. I have read over the first one and feel a good deal tempted to tear it up as I see sever of those inelegancies and negligencies which I know you will notice as indeed I can myself on reading the letter....

I have just been talking to a poor Mother who has come all the way from Boston to get her child 13 years old who joined a regiment leaving for the war although too young to enlist. His mother had the officer who persuaded him off arrested and made arrangements for getting him home again. So he slipped off to another regiment and in his last letter informed her that he was having a splendid time. He was with the company blacksmith and they were going to take Richmond in two weeks....

My most earnest hopes are at Atlanta now. I am sometimes afraid Sherman will find the enemy too tough for him...

Things have ~~cost~~ risen so much in price and campaigning uses up an outfit so rapidly that I have now in my pocket only my last months pay. I have no debts however except those which I owe Father amounting to 250 dollars.



Name: _____

I have not been able to buy myself a horse and hope I shall not get into trouble by using govt horses as at present though it is against orders.

Love to all Ever your affct son [REDACTED]

Primary Source 5

Letter from _____ to father

Washington 7th Oct. 1864

My dear Father,

I am waiting the body of my son, my noble brave generous gentle pure patriotic boy. We know only that he is dead how or when or where we dont yet know.

A dispatch from an unknown hand to the War Department at [?] yesterday announced his death & Mr Stanton sent Colonel Taylor at once to recover his remains.

John had made himself a friend in Mr Stanton who came to our house just after I reached home last night to prepare Louisa for the reception of his body which he thought might arrive with me. His voice failed him he beckoned me out of the house I saw that he had sad tidings & any [?] at once flew to Richmond I could not believe in any great [?] to our army but I expected to hear that Grant had fallen or that some dreadful fate had befallen the President so secure so confident have I been in the safety of my young hero. Night & morning twice at least every day since this war began I have prayed to the Almighty in his behalf.

Every one loved him all praised him & [?] myself to the intoxication felt secure that his high powers would be reserved for great usefulness to his country & for the support of his mothers declining years.

In no nobler cause can a man die. These precious jewels are of the ransom of the oppressed. He died in the [great] fight of liberty of human rights. The old quarrel between the rich & the poor the few & the many. Privilege against right and he died fighting on the side of the right the oppressed the poor & the feeble but the many the great men of [?] who have intellect to enlighten to cultivate & [?] to serve through the [?] of freedom, letters, science arts.

I have given my best & bravest to his country who has laid a holier [nature?] worthy victim upon the altar.

And now dear father do you suppose that those who have lost [?] also have risked such jewels as mine in the great contest do not feel as I do. Are they intending to make compromise and treason & [?] after [?] their [?] of the price of victory....

God bless you my father I had hoped that the gallant young knight would have been to me the hope I have endeavored to be to you when past the hurry & business of life God wills it otherwise another martyr has fallen we have another son in heaven. Break the news gentle to my mother whom she loved over again her first born.

Ever your loving son

[REDACTED]

Name: _____



Primary Source 6

Letter to the Editor printed in *The National Anti-Slavery Standard* from

My name is [REDACTED]; I was born a slave on the plantation of George Parke Custis; after the death of Mr. Custis, Gen. Lee, who had been made executor of the estate, assumed control of the slaves, in number about seventy; it was the general impression among the slaves of Mr. Custis that on his death they should be forever free; in fact this statement had been made to them by Mr. C. years before; at his death we were informed by Gen. Lee that by the conditions of the will we must remain slaves for five years; I remained with Gen. Lee for about seventeen months, when my sister Mary, a cousin of ours, and I determined to run away, which we did in the year 1859; we had already reached Westminster, in Maryland, on our way to the North, when we were apprehended and thrown into prison, and Gen. Lee notified of our arrest; we remained in prison fifteen days, when we were sent back to Arlington; we were immediately taken before Gen. Lee, who demanded the reason why we ran away; we frankly told him that we considered ourselves free; he then told us he would teach us a lesson we never would forget; he then ordered us to the barn, where, in his presence, we were tied firmly to posts by a Mr. Gwin, our overseer, who was ordered by Gen. Lee to strip us to the waist and give us fifty lashes each, excepting my sister, who received but twenty; we were accordingly stripped to the skin by the overseer, who, however, had sufficient humanity to decline whipping us; accordingly Dick Williams, a county constable, was called in, who gave us the number of lashes ordered; Gen. Lee, in the meantime, stood by, and frequently enjoined Williams to lay it on well, an injunction which he did not fail to heed; not satisfied with simply lacerating our naked flesh, Gen. Lee then ordered the overseer to thoroughly wash our backs with brine, which was done. After this my cousin and myself were sent to Hanover Court-House jail, my sister being sent to Richmond to an agent to be hired; we remained in jail about a week, when we were sent to Nelson county, where we were hired out by Gen. Lee's agent to work on the Orange and Alexander railroad; we remained thus employed for about seven months, and were then sent to Alabama, and put to work on what is known as the Northeastern railroad; in January, 1863, we were sent to Richmond, from which place I finally made my escape through the rebel lines to freedom; I have nothing further to say; what I have stated is true in every particular, and I can at any time bring at least a dozen witnesses, both white and black, to substantiate my statements: I am at present employed by the Government; and am at work in the National Cemetery on Arlington Heights, where I can be found by those who desire further particulars; my sister referred to is at present employed by the French Minister at Washington, and will confirm my statement.

Name: _____



Primary Source 7

Letter from _____ to Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman

Washington D.C.
April 19th 1879
Hon John Sherman.
Secretary of the Treasury.
Sir:

My husband, S. H. [REDACTED], was a volunteer in the 1st East Tenn Cav'y, under Col Brownlow. was ordered into recruiting service. enlisted about 500 Tennesseans, into the Union Army. was taken prisoner by the rebels, sent to Libby, and from there to Belle Isle, escaped and joined Genl Burnside's command, then operating in Tennessee. Was sent as bearer of dispatches from Genl Burnside to Longstreet, and whilst returning on this mission was captured by Morgans guerrillas and shot.

Having been thus widowed, I devoted all my strength and energy, to aid the cause which he had so signalized. I obtained information concerning the actual and intended movements, strength and disposition of the rebel forces. Led into the federal lines union men desiring to enlist. Was the frequent bearer of secret despatches between commanding officers. Obtained and gave to the Federal officers the information of Morgans presence in Greenville, which led to his defeat and death. in all of which service I was thirty six times in rebel prisons. was given three hours notice to abandon my home, and was finally proclaimed as a Union Spy by Jeff Davis who authorized a reward for my arrest, after which I served as a nurse in the Field Hospital at Knoxville, from which place I was transferred to the Hospital at Cleveland Ohio, where I remained as a nurse until the close of the war.

In the entailment of poverty thus brought upon me through the loss of my husband and home, and having three children - one an incurable and helpless cripple - to maintain, I at last sought employment from the Government to which I had sacrificed so much, but regret to say that experience is leading me to doubt, either the worth of loyalty itself, or the sincerity of those Statutes designed to recognize and reward the same, by giving preference to those who served thier country, in the award of positions, under its employ, for whilst many both of men and women, whose every thought an execration and defiance of loyalty are holding lucrative places, I with broken health, and a family to maintain, am rewarded for my childrens orphanage and my own services, by a position where I receive only \$1.00 a day. Bureau of Engraving & Printing

I ask you in the name of this government which I have served, of my widowhood, and my orphaned children, to give me at least an equal position, with the rebels in office, and a salary that will not make me blush in their presence, and my starving children's

Hoping that I will not vainly have importuned your interference in my behalf

I am very respectfully

[REDACTED]
#59 Defrees St. N.W.

Name: _____



Primary Source 8

Excerpt from *Recollections of My Slavery Days*, a memoir

by _____

I have lived through the greatest epoch in history, having been born August 10, 1835, at Newbern, North Carolina. That was not so many years, you see, after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and the winning of the Revolutionary War. But in the country of the Declaration of Independence I was born a slave, for I was a black man. And because I was black it was believed I had no soul. I had no rights that anybody was bound to respect. For in the eyes of the law I was but a thing. I was bought and sold. I was whipped. Once I was whipped simply because it was thought I had opened a book.

But I lived to see the institution of slavery into which I was born and of which I was for many years a victim pass away. I wore the uniform of those men in Blue, who through four years of suffering wiped away with their blood the stain of slavery and purged the Republic of its sin. I met, too, that great man who led those men as their great Commander-in-Chief; he shook hands with me, yes, talked to me. I can still see his sad, tired worn face as he spoke to me that day. And in those days since I was whipped simply because it was thought I had opened a book. I have seen the books of the world opened to my race. And with the help and sympathy of God's good people I have seen them make a beginning in education. And in my old age when a nation across the seas sought to enslave the world as once my race was enslaved, I saw the boys of my race take their place in the armies of the Republic and help save freedom for the world.

Comparing my position now, living in a good home, with my wife, with friends, respected in my community, with the same rights that every other man has, those days of my boyhood seem like a dream. But folks who know my story like to hear me tell about those days, how we lived, what we thought about, how we were treated, what kind of people our masters were. So I recall them for my friends and for other folks, who, though they do not know me, might like to hear a true story that may seem as strange to them, however, as a fairy tale....

Samuel Hymans, a young man from our community who was attending West Point, came home for a vacation, but when the vacation was over he did not return to West Point. Instead he commenced to organize a company of soldiers. I was very anxious to go with him as his servant and my master, at his request, let me do so. The reason why I was anxious to go with Hymans was because I wanted to learn how to drill. I did learn to drill. In fact I learned how to drill so well that after a while when he was busy with other matters he would tell me to drill the company for him. After Fort Sumpter was fired upon. Hyman's company went to form with other companies in Newbern, the First North Carolina Cavalry. This regiment was stationed at Newbern until the 14th of March, 1862, when Burnside and Foster captured Newbern and drove our regiment to Kinston. At Kinston, I ran away from the regiment and made my way to Burnside's headquarters at Newbern....

I was taken to General Burnside's headquarters and asked the best way to reach the rebels at Wives Forks, before you could get into Kinston. I laid the route out for them the best I knew how, but said that if I were going to command the expedition I would give them a flank movement by the way of the Trent river, which was five miles farther from Wives Forks than the Neuse river. But they did not accept my proposition and attacked directly, with the result that they were repulsed.



Name: _____

I took part in that attack as a guide and had a horse shot from under me. A few days later I told Colonel Leggett that I would not fight any more unless I was prepared to defend myself. He said, "We never will take niggers in the army to fight. The war will be over before your people ever get in." I replied, "The war will not be over until I have had a chance to spill my blood. If that is your feeling toward me, pay me what you owe me and I will take it and go." He owed me five dollars and he paid me. I took that five dollars and hired the A. M. E. Zion church at Newbern and commenced to recruit a regiment of colored men. I secured the thousand men and they appointed me as their colonel and I drilled them with cornstalks for guns. We had no way, of course, of getting guns and equipment. We drilled once a week. I supported myself by whatever I could get to do and my men did likewise.

I spoke to General Burnside about getting my regiment into the federal service but he said he could do nothing about it. It was to General Burnside, however, and my later association with him, when I was with him for a time as his servant, that I owe what I now regard as one of the great experiences of my life. It was one day at the General's headquarters. His adjutant pointed to a man who was talking to the general in an inner room and said, "Do you know that man in there?" I said, "No." He said, "That is our President, Mr. Lincoln." In a few minutes the conference in the inner room apparently ended and Mr. Lincoln and General Burnside came out. I do not know whether they had told President Lincoln about me before or not, but the General pointed to me and said, "This is the little fellow who got up a colored regiment." President Lincoln shook hands with me and said, "It is a good thing. What do you want?" I said, "I have a thousand men. We want to help fight to free our race. We want to know if you will take us in the service?" He said, "You have got good pluck. But I can't take you now because you are contraband of war and not American citizens yet. But hold on to your society and there may be a chance for you." So saying he passed on. The only recollection I have of him is that of a tall, dark complexioned, raw boned man, with a pleasant face. I looked at him as he passed on in company with General Burnside and I never saw him again.

On January 1, 1863, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which made me and all the rest of my race free. We could not be bought and sold any more or whipped or made to work without pay. We were not to be treated as things without souls any more, but as human beings.... It was not until May 28, 1863, however, that the thing we had hoped for so long came to pass, when Colonel James C. Beecher, a brother of Henry Ward Beecher, that great champion of our race, came and took command of the regiment. I was appointed Sergeant of Company G, being the first colored man to be accepted into the federal service and the only colored man that furnished the government a thousand men in the Civil War. The regiment was at first called the First North Carolina Colored Regiment. It later became known as the 35th Regiment, United States Colored troops. Soon afterwards we were armed and equipped and shipped to South Carolina and stationed at Charleston Harbor. From that time until June, 1866, when we were mustered out at Charleston, South Carolina, I was in active service, ranking as First Sergeant, Company G, 35th U. S. Colored Infantry. J. C. White was the Captain of that company and Colonel James C. Beecher was the commander of the regiment. We saw active service in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia. I was wounded in the right leg at the battle of Alusta, Florida. After the war ended we were stationed for a time in South Carolina doing guard duty and were finally mustered out of the service on June 1, 1866. My honorable discharge from the service dated on that day, although it is worn and not very legible now, as you can see, is one of my most prized possessions.