

An African American Recruitment Station

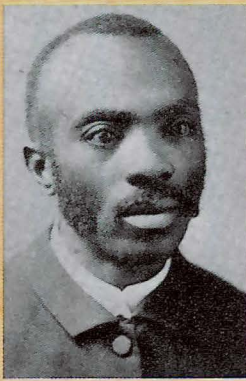
More than 10,000 African Americans came to Camp Nelson where they gained their freedom. Many of these black soldiers brought their families. Eventually, the Army established a refugee camp, which had 97 cottages and numerous tents and shacks providing housing for more than 3,000 people.



Abolitionist John Fee

The Reverend John G. Fee, an abolitionist and founder of Berea College, helped administer and teach at the refugee camp, which included both

a school and hospital. After the closing of Camp Nelson, Fee bought 130 acres including the refugee camp land which he sold or leased to the African American residents. Remnants of this community are in evidence in the community of Hall today.



Solider Elijah Marrs

I can stand this, said I...this is better than slavery, though I do march in line at the tap of a drum. I felt freedom in my bones, and when I saw the American eagle with outspread wings upon the American flag with the motto E Pluribus Unum, the thought came to me, 'Give me liberty or give me death.' Then all fear banished.

-- Elijah Marrs, 12th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery
Camp Nelson, Kentucky

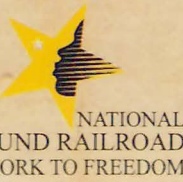


Camp Nelson Heritage Park is located along US 27 about 20 miles south of Lexington, 6 miles south of Nicholasville on US 27. The Park entrance is on the original Danville Pike, adjacent to US 27, one mile north of the Camp Nelson National Cemetery.

Camp Nelson Heritage Park

Trails and grounds open dawn to dusk.
Guided tours of White House and Interpretive Trails
Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Admission is free
(859) 881-5716 or (859) 492-3115
www.campnelson.org

Camp Nelson is a Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Participating Site, and has been designated as a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Site.



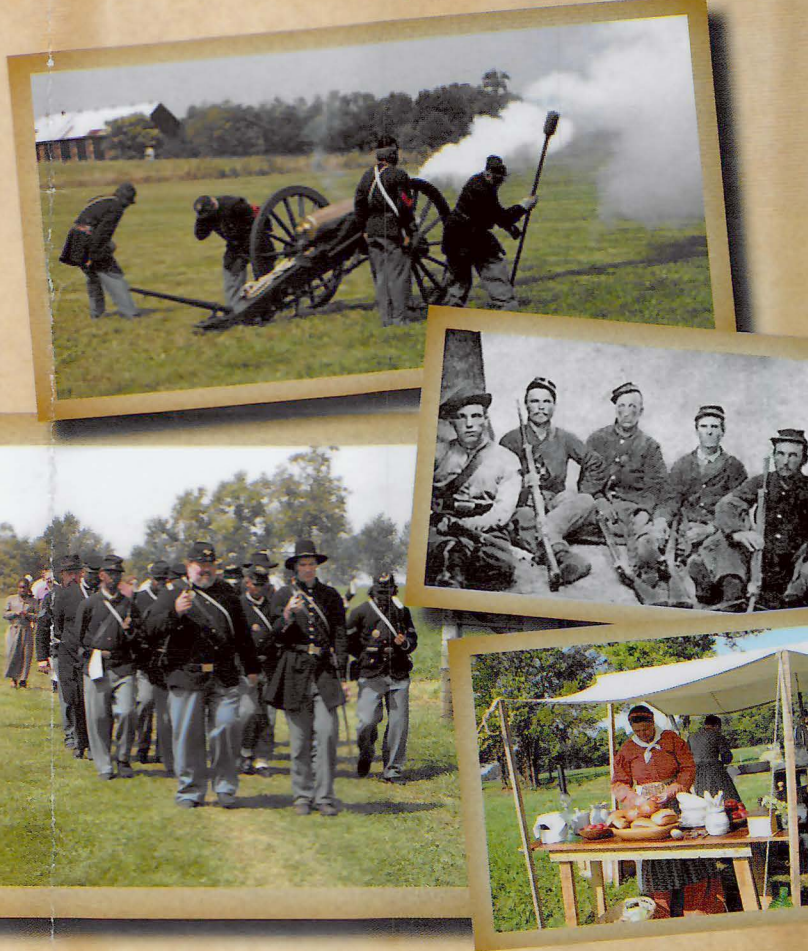
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CAMP NELSON

Civil War Heritage Park

Union Army Supply Depot,
Training and Enlistment Center,
African American Refugee Camp,
and Hospital Facility



Jessamine County, Kentucky



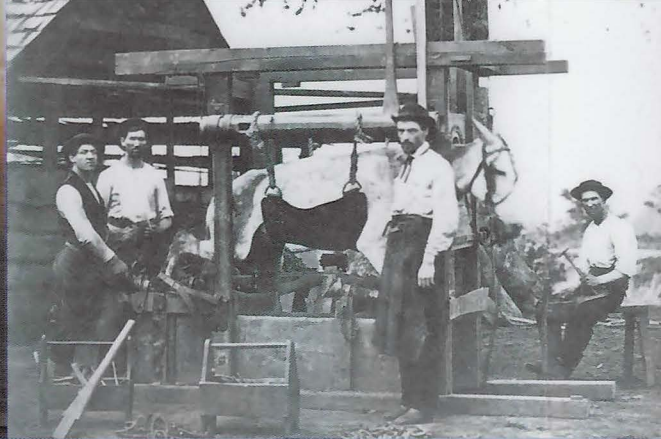
Soldier James Gray



Charlie Merritt of Garrard County, KY



Quartermaster Theron Hall



Civilians posing with mule chute



General Edward H. Hobson



General Speed S. Fry

Walk the grounds where 80,000 Union Army troops lived and worked...

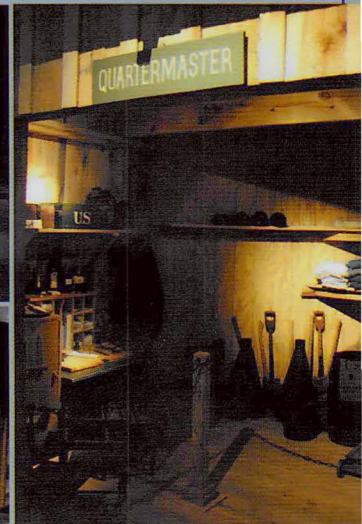
Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park currently includes 525 preserved acres of the original 4,000 acres which served as a Union Army Supply Depot, Enlistment and Training Post for the Army of the Ohio along with a Refugee Camp for the families of the enlisted African American soldiers. The Union Army converted the rolling pasture land of southern Jessamine County into an enormous base of operations. Camp Nelson contained more than 300 wooden buildings and numerous tents. These buildings were suited to the camp's function as a quartermaster and commissary depot, recruitment center, and hospital facility as well as functions associated with personnel maintenance. All of the buildings, except the officers' quarters, which was called the White House, were dismantled and sold following the closure of the base.

Many features of Camp Nelson are intact with some in excellent condition. Six earthen forts with entrenchment lines are part of the preserved site and available for interpretations. The 800 acre core of Camp Nelson is in a predominately rural area. The expansive viewsheds from the site's prominent locations have very few modern intrusions. A visitor can walk along the interpretive trails and vividly imagine what it would have been like to have been stationed at Camp Nelson.

The antebellum Oliver Perry House, known as the White House (below), served as an officers' quarters and has been meticulously restored to interpret military occupation and a private residence.



Interpretive Center with Museum



Exhibits in the Interpretive Center include: (clockwise from top left) Refugee Shanty, Quartermaster Depot, and Hospital Ward. Not shown: Refugee Duplex replica, Camp Life and artillery display. Barracks Building with Geneo-logical Research Facility opening late 2008.

Camp Nelson is a protected artifact recovery area.

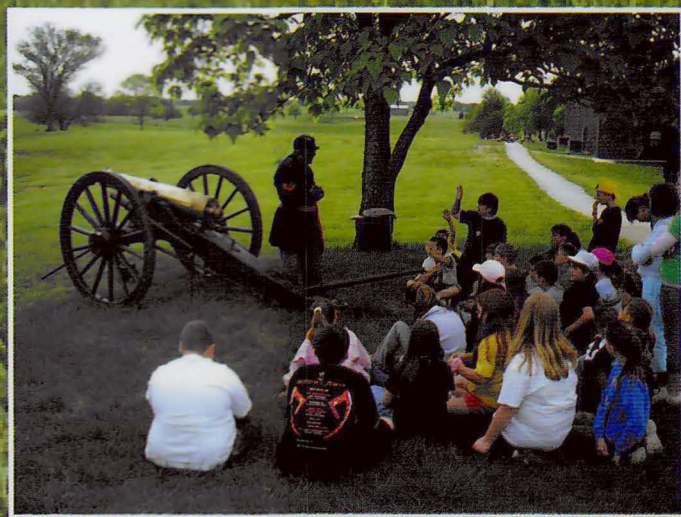
...and 10,000 African-Americans traded their shackles for freedom and changed the course of American History.

Camp Nelson was established in June 1863 under the orders of Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, Commander of the Army of the Ohio.

Camp Nelson provided the Union Army with over 10,000 African American soldiers, making it the third largest recruiting and training depot for African Americans in the nation.

EVENTS:

The Camp Nelson Foundation sponsors various educational programs for school children and the general public. The major event, held in September, is the Camp Nelson Civil War Days, a living history and remembrance of the soldiers and refugees. More events at www.campnelson.org



The Wade Brothers



Joseph Hall



Samuel Trueheart



Henry M. Walker



Sam Show



Edward Clark



A Suitable Location for a Base of Operations in Central Kentucky

THE ORIGIN OF CAMP NELSON is closely linked with President Lincoln's desire to free pro-Union sections of east Tennessee from Confederate control. The camp supplied Union efforts in eastern Tennessee, central and eastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia.

In spring of 1863, the new Army of the Ohio was organized and placed under the command of Major General Ambrose E. Burnside with explicit orders to invade East Tennessee. To assist the campaign and to defend central and eastern Kentucky, Burnside ordered his engineers to find a suitable location in central Kentucky. The site chosen was the high plateau above the Kentucky River in southern Jessamine County. The depot and encampment established was officially named Camp Nelson on



General Bull Nelson, Commander of the Army of the Ohio, is the namesake of Camp Nelson.

June 12, 1863 after the late Major General William "Bull" Nelson, who founded Camp Dick Robinson, the first Union recruitment camp in Kentucky, located south of Camp Nelson.

One of the Most Impregnable Points in the Country

The location of the camp was chosen for a number of logistical and strategic reasons – it was naturally defensible and had good transportation -- astride a major turnpike and a bridge across the Kentucky River.

The site is bounded by the Kentucky River and Hickman Creek, both enclosed by nearly vertical limestone walls, the Palisades, which extend up to 500 feet in height. The only exposed portion of the camp was its northern end where a line of fortifications and entrenchments was constructed.



It is naturally fortified on three sides by the river and creek, the cliffs of which average four hundred feet high and perpendicular. Across the narrow neck from the river to the creek are fortifications of a most formidable character connected by rifle pits and protected by abates. Every approach to the camp is commanded by mounted guns and so far as its natural defenses are concerned it is one of the most impregnable points in the country.

-- Captain Theron E. Hall
Chief Quartermaster