



'We looks like Men-er-War'

[Greene County Pioneer, Volume 31 Number 1]

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863. Shortly thereafter, multitudes of black men began to enlist. The USC troops were under the command of white Officers. An estimated 180,000 black men served in the War. One in five died.

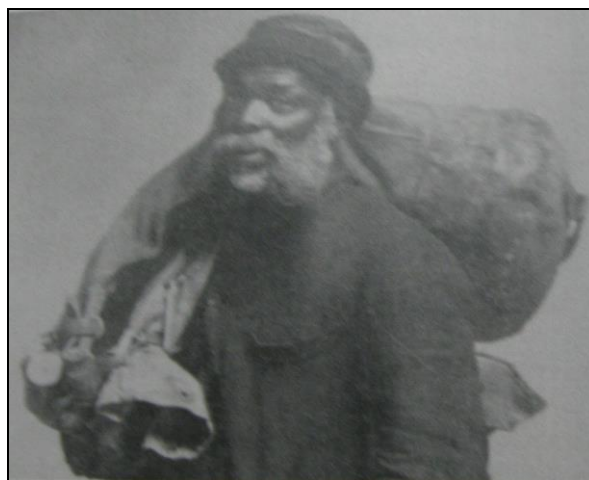
In 1865, a survey of battlefields, highways and by-ways was made to locate the Union dead. The USC troops were assigned the grim task of recovering the bodies and re-interments began. National Cemeteries were created in 1867. It was the largest reburial effort in U. S. history. Over 303,000 Union men were reinterred into 74 National Cemeteries, with 54% identified by name. Included in that number were 30,000 black soldiers, of whom only one-third could be identified. They were buried in a segregated section. The reburial effort was substantially complete in 1871, costing \$3.2 million, the equivalent of \$75 million today. [*Death and the Civil War*, a PBS documentary by Ric Burns, ISBN 978-1-60883-759-5.]

Some of the black soldiers remained in the Army and became known as the famed Buffalo Soldiers of the American West, including men in the 40th USC Infantry. [Greene County Pioneer, Volume 29, Number 2, page 123-24.]

***'We-e looks li-ike me-en a-marchin' on.
We-e looks li-ike men-er-war.'***



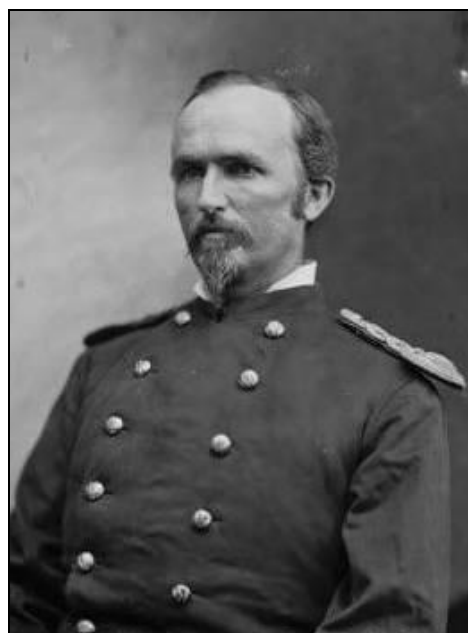
Private Luther Crum
Company L, 1st USC Heavy Artillery



Private Lee Andrew King Rutledge
Company H, 1st USC Heavy Artillery



Capt. John J. McCorkle
1846-1933, White Officer
USC Heavy Artillery Troops
buried Monte Vista Cemetery,
Johnson City



Col. Gaines Lawson
1840-1906, White Officer
4th TN Infantry, Union and later
career Soldier, 39th US Infantry,
the "Buffalo Soldiers"

One Hundred and twelve men of color who served with the USC Troops are included in the more than 4,100 soldiers researched in *Greene County Civil War Soldiers, Volume I*. The majority of these men served with the 1st USC Heavy Artillery or the 40th USC Infantry, half of whom were identified from records of the USC Hospital in Greeneville.

Approximately 36 men of color who served with the U. S. Colored Troops are known or are believed to be buried in Greene County. Wesley Cemetery, the first chartered African American Cemetery in Greeneville, chartered in 1886, holds the largest known concentration of these men of color. Several of these men have Military Headstones denoting their service. Some graves are now unmarked.

An extract from the Greene County Civil War Soldiers Database of these men of color who died in Greene County appears on the following page.

GREENEVILLE U.S. COLORED HOSPITAL

Although the location has been lost to time, very late in the War a Union hospital for the U. S. Colored Troops was established somewhere in Greene County. It is probable the location was very near the railroad so that transport of wounded and sick soldiers could be more easily accommodated. Most of these men served with the 40th USC Infantry.

The deaths in the Greeneville hospital of over fifty soldiers is recorded in the regimental records. These deaths occurred between April and September 1865. Some of these men were buried in the Knoxville National Cemetery; however, for most no interment or re-interment was recorded. This leaves open a real possibility that there was (and still is) a graveyard for U. S. Colored Troops somewhere in Greene County. Could it possibly be located on West Main Street where the A.M.E. Zion Church purchased a lot in 1870 on 'Grave Yard Street'?



**US Colored
Troops in Action**

**Harper's Weekly,
Library of
Congress**

Greene County Burials

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Cemetery	Company	Regiment
Bayless, Robert	c 1846	Aug 4, 1870	possibly Stone Dam, unmarked	Co F	1st USC Hvy Art
Bowers, Andrew Jackson	c 1824	after June 1900 before Dec 1877 (Orphan Court Rec)	probably Greene, unmarked	Co M	1st USC Hvy Art
Broyles, John Jackson	c 1820	1930	Greene, unmarked	Co H	1st USC Hvy Art
Bryce, Richard	1842	1930	Brice Cem, Hawkins Co	Co G	1st USC Hvy Art
Cannon, John Wesley note 1	c 1845	Feb 21, 1887	Wesley Cem	Co L	2nd OH Cav & 55th MA Co Inf
Cannon, Leander "Lee" note 1	Sep 29, 1840	Sep 16, 1919	Wesley Cem, unmarked	Co G	1st USC Hvy Art
Cannon, Newton note 1	c 1837	May 17, 1890	Wesley Cem	Co C	2nd NC Mtd Inf
Collet, Henry note 2	c 1846	Jul 6, 1865	Greenville Hospital for USC Troops	Co H	40th USC Inf
Crosby, Robert	c 1832	Apr 12, 1877	Concord	Co E	1st USC Hvy Art
Crum, Luther	c 1844	1908	New Hope Cem	Co L	1st USC Hvy Art
Dickson, Isaac	c 1839	1880-1889	Wesley Cem	Co F	1st USC Hvy Art
Dillon, Lewis	Jul 4, 1837	Apr 9, 1928	Black Cem Midway area, unmarked	Co D	14th USC Mtd Troops
Dixon, Edward	c 1845	before Dec 1890	Greene, unmarked	Co K	1st USC Hvy Art
Forby, Greene note 3	c 1831	before Jul 1908	possibly Black Cem Midway area, or Wesley Cem, unmarked	Co M	1st USC Hvy Art
Gillespie, Preston note 4	c 1840	Nov 6, 1887	Broyles G-yard or Woolsey's College Cem, unmarked	Co F & L	1st USC Hvy Art
Gillispie, Hardin	Jan 4, 1831	Nov 29, 1909	Rheatown	Co F	1st USC Hvy Art
Gillispie, Henderson	1837	1902	Shiloh CP	Co F	1st USC Hvy Art
Henderson, Edward "Ed" note 5	Feb 1837	Mar 9, 1902	Shiloh CP	Co G	1st USC Hvy Art
Henderson, John note 5	1827	Mar 8, 1902	Shiloh CP	Co G	1st USC Hvy Art
Jackson, Robert	c 1845	before Jul 1891	possibly Wesley Cem	Co L or S	1st USC Hvy Art
Jackson, William	c 1841	Aug 26, 1889	possibly Wesley Cem	Co B	1st MO St Militia Cav & 14th USC Inf
Kennedy, Charles J note 6	c 1846	Oct 24, 1896	Shiloh CP	Co M	3rd USC Hvy Art
Lodger, Jefferson note 7	c 1842	after 1890	possibly Greene, unmarked	Co K	40th USC Inf
McCallister, Samuel	c 1846	Mar 31, 1896	Washington College Cem, unmarked	Co F	1st USC Hvy Art
McGhee, William note 8	c 1844	Feb 10, 1895	Wesley Cem, unmarked	Co H	2nd KS Inf & 83rd USC Inf
Morrison, Thomas	c 1841	Sep 9, 1898	Wesley Cem	Co K	40th USC Inf
Rankin, Adam	c 1820	1881-1889	North Greene area, unmarked	Co E	1st USC Hvy Art
Rutledge, Lee Andrew King note 9	Mar 1842	Jan 12, 1918	Wesley Cem, unmarked	Co H	1st USC Hvy Art
Sharp, John	c 1826	before 1880	Greene, unmarked	Co M	1st USC Hvy Art
Smith, Henry note 10	May 11, 1845	Jun 20, 1924 Morristown	Mountain Home Nat	Co G	1st USC Hvy Art
Snapp, Joseph note 11	c 1846	before Jun 1890	Greene, unmarked	Co F	1st USC Hvy Art
Snapp, Thomas note 11	c 1818	before Feb 1897	Greene, unmarked	unassigned	42nd USC Inf
Susong, Henry note 12	c 1835	1881-1889	Greene, unmarked	Co M	1st USC Hvy Art
Williams, Warren	c 1824	Dec 17, 1908	Wesley Cem, unmarked	Co G & M	1st USC Hvy Art
Williams, William Sr	c 1817	Sep 16, 1892	Wesley Cem	Co B	42nd USC Inf
Woodford, Edward note 13	c 1844	after 1910	Wesley Cem	Co K & M	1st & 124th USC Hvy Art

Notes:

1. John Wesley, Leander and Newton Cannon were brothers and were born free men of color. Newton Cannon was a Charter Member of Wesley Cemetery. Newton served in a "white" Regiment formed by the Greene County Kirk brothers.
2. Henry Collet was born in North Carolina and enlisted in Greenville. He died in the Negro soldiers hospital in Greenville. There is no burial or reinterment record into a National Cemetery for him. The enlistment record describes Henry as age 19, born Caldwell Co., NC, 5'7 1/2", complexion, eyes & hair, black. He died of cholera pneumonia, leaving "effects" of 2 trousers, 1 shirt, 1 hat, 1 pair of shoes & 1 knapsack. Many men with the 40th USC Infantry died in the Negro hospital in Greenville. Some were reinterred to National Cemeteries, but for others, there is no record of reinterment. An article on this hospital and the soldiers who died there will be included in a future issue of *The Greene County Pioneer*.
3. Greene Forby enlisted in Knoxville on October 10, 1864. His enlistment record describes him as age 33, born Cocke County, 5'8", complexion, eyes & hair, black. Also enlisting in Knoxville on 6-5-1864 was Richard Forby, age 28, born in Cocke County. He is described as 5'9", complexion, eyes & hair, black. Richard Forby is not found in Greene County or elsewhere after the War. They may or may not have been related.
4. Preston Gillespie enlisted at Knoxville on April 29, 1864. He is described as 5'7", complexion, eyes & hair, black. He filed for invalid pension on February 26, 1879. The application for a military headstone gives his date of death and place of burial in Woolsey College Cemetery. There is no marker for him there.
5. Edward (died March 9, 1902) and John (died March 8, 1902) Henderson. The dates of death are from their Union headstone applications.
6. Charles Kennedy and his forebears had been slaves for several generations of the Kennedy family who are buried at Zion Presbyterian. After the War, Charles was detailed to battlefields to recover and rebury the Union dead. In 1880, the family lived in District 13, the Tusculum area. Charles' mother, sister, and an aunt are buried in New Hope Cemetery, established shortly after Charles died.
7. Jefferson Lodger enlisted in Greenville on April 29, 1865. He is described as age 23, born McDowell County, 5'5", complexion, eyes & hair, black. He was drawing Union pension in 1890 and lived in Greenville.
8. William McGhee first enlisted in Kansas with a Kansas Regiment. Noted on his enlistment card is, "slave".
9. Lee Rugledge was born in Sullivan County. He served during the years of 1862-64, and drew Union pension in Greenville where he was a barber. His death certificate gives his place of burial as Wesley Cemetery. The grave is unmarked.
10. Henry Smith was a free man of color and a cousin of the Cannon brothers. After the War, he worked for many years at the Soldiers Home in Johnson City. Henry gave the death certificate information for Newton Cannon, who in later years lived at the Soldiers Home.
11. Joseph Snapp enlisted in Knoxville on April 30, 1864. He is described as age 18, born Greene, 5'8", complexion, eyes & hair, black. Joseph may have been a son or stepson of Thomas Snapp, who with his wife, Alice and five children, lived in or near the Camp Creek area in 1870 and by 1880 lived in District 13, the Tusculum area.
12. Henry Susong enlisted on October 17, 1864 in Knoxville. He is described as age 29, 5'11", complexion, eyes & hair, black. In 1880 Henry and his mother, Cynthia, lived in District 9 near the Link community. He is not found after 1880, nor did he draw pension.
13. Edward Woodfin was enlisted as 'Edmond Woodford' in the 1st USC Heavy Artillery at Knoxville on October 11, 1864. The enlistment record reports he was 20 years old, born Buncombe County, North Carolina, 5'7" tall with black eyes and hair. His Will was signed in Greenville on January 30, 1913. A Union Headstone marks his grave at Wesley Cemetery.



**Newton Cannon,
2nd NC Mounted Infantry**

Wesley
Cemetery
Greenville,
Tennessee



**Edward Woodford/Woodfin
1st US Colored Heavy Artillery**

A little known fact is that is not taught in schools is after the Civil War was over, the Black Soldiers were assigned the duty to find and retrieve the Union dead for re-interment in the newly created National Cemeteries.

Greene County's Private Charles Kennedy was one such man. In February 1866, Charles was on duty at the Chickamauga Battle Field. There is little doubt, that Charles among other soldiers in the US Colored Troops were recovering the Union dead for re-interment into a National Cemetery.

Charles returned home to Greeneville after his discharge. He like millions of other Union soldiers, drew a Union pension. Charles never married. He died on October 24, 1896. Charles is buried with a Military Headstone in Shiloh Cumberland Presbyterian Church Cemetery in the African American section. Two other men, John and Edward Henderson, 1st USC Heavy Artillery, also have Military Headstones there.

**USC TROOPS
BATTLE OF THE CRATER, PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA
July 30, 1864**

[Courtesy, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Edited by Ned Bradford]

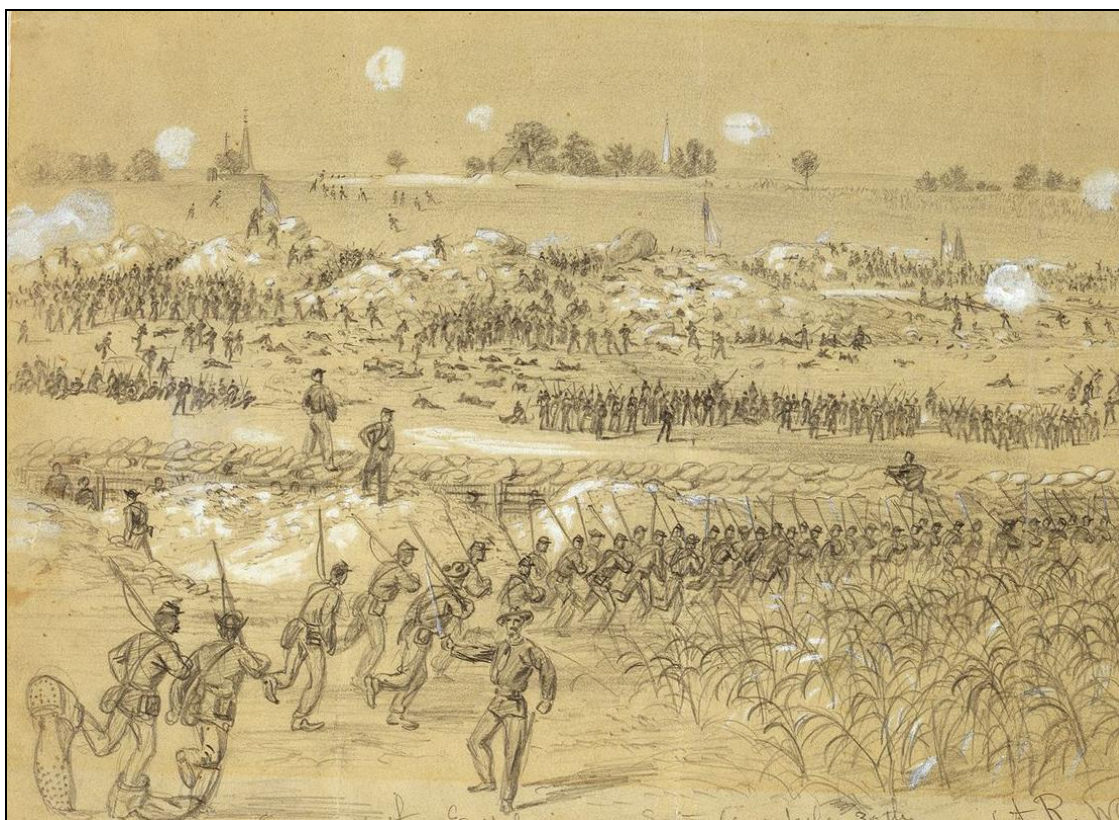
"The night we learned that we were to lead the charge the news filled them [USC Troops] too full for ordinary utterance. The joyous Negro guffaw always breaking out about the camp-fire ceased. They formed circles in their company and were setting on the ground intently and solemnly "studying". At last a heavy voice bean to sing,

*"We-e looks li-ike me-en a-a marching' on,
We-e looks li-ike men-er-war."*

Over and over again he sang it, making slight changes in the melody. The rest listened to him intently. All at once, when his refrain had struck the right response in their hearts, his group took it up, and shortly half a thousand voices were upraised extemporizing a half dissonant middle part and bass. It was a picturesque scene - these dark men, with their white eyes and teeth and full red lips, crouching over a smoldering camp-fire, in dusky shadow, with only feeble rays of the lanterns. Until we fought the battle of the crater they sang this every night to the exclusion of all other songs. After that defeat they sang it no more.

... Finally, about 7:30 a.m., we got the order for the colored division to charge. As we mounted the pits, a deadly enfilade from eight guns on our right and a murderous cross-fire of musketry met us. The black men followed into the jaws of death, and advanced until met by a charge in force from the Confederate lines. Our little band, after my second charge was repulsed, defended the intrenchments we had won from the enemy, exhibiting fighting qualities that I never saw surpassed in the war. Hundreds of heroes 'carved in ebony' fell. These black men commanded the admiration and respect of every beholder."

Henry Goddard Thomas, Brevet Major-General U.S.V.



**Sketch by Alfred Rudolph Waud as seen from the Union Lines
[courtesy Library of Congress]**

[Excerpted from www.CivilWar.Org.]

A plan was hatched by Colonel Henry Pleasants, 48th Pennsylvania, a mining engineer by profession, to end the stalemate at Petersburg, Virginia. He proposed to build a mine under the Confederate's position. He began digging on June 25th. A 510 foot shaft was completed in three weeks and the mine was packed with 8,000 pounds of gunpowder.

The Ninth Corps commander chose Brig. Gen. Edward Ferrero's division of black troops to lead the assault. On the day before the assault, General Meade ordered Burnside to select a white unit instead. These white troops were 'untrained and ill-prepared' and were led by 'possibly the worst general officer in the Union army'.

The mine exploded at 4:44 a.m. on July 30th. "Clods of earth weighing at least a ton, and cannon, and human forms, and gun-carriages, and small arms were all distinctly seen shooting upward in that fountain of horror", recalled by a newspaper correspondent. When the dust settled, a crater 130 feet long, 60 feet wide and 30 feet deep scarred the landscape."

A total of 352 Confederates were killed by the blast.

The Virginians were the first to charge, their zeal for combat sharpened by the presence of United States Colored Troops. The black soldiers, had shouted "No Quarter" during their attack, and the Confederate men prepared to fight on that basis.

When the firing stopped, some 3,800 Federals were casualties. The Confederates lost fewer than 1,200 men, including the 352 men killed by the explosion.

The black troops suffered disproportionately as they became special targets for the Confederates. Many were killed after they had surrendered.