

Charles H. Wright
Museum of African
American History



1863

First Michigan Colored Regiment is Organized



1

The 102nd Regiment United States Colored Troops was an African American infantry unit of the Union Army during the Civil War. Eight-hundred and forty-five men from Detroit, southern Michigan, and Ontario, Canada, volunteered. The regiment also had artillery and cavalry units.

The 102nd Regiment fought bravely and effectively in ten engagements throughout South Carolina, eastern Georgia and Florida. In Baldwin, Florida, the soldiers proved their skills and valor by easily defeating a Confederate cavalry unit. The regiment returned to Detroit where it was disbanded on October 17, 1865. Of the 1446 men enrolled in the 102nd Regiment, 6 were killed in action, 5 died of wounds, and 129 died of disease.



2



3



4

¹ Kinchen Artis joins 1st Michigan Colored Troops.

From the Collections of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Gift of Norman McRae

² Michigan soldier Samuel Lett serves 13 months.

Courtesy Archives of Michigan

³ Black recruits defeat Confederates at Milliken's Bend, Mississippi.

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Credit:

Wikipedia

Keywords/Topics:

Wars/Military

Questions:

1. Why did African American men volunteer to serve in the Army?
2. What were their duties and how did they perform in battle?
3. Why were colored troops assigned to all-black units?
4. Where are many of these Civil War veterans buried?

Links to Internet Websites:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/102nd_Regiment_United_States_Colored_Troops

<http://www.michiganinthewar.org/infantry/1stcol.htm>

http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/historic/districts/first_regiment.pdf



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Kinchen Artis was a free black from Battle Creek, Michigan. When Secretary of War Edwin Stanton instructed Michigan's Governor Blair to recruit African American men to form a regiment, Artis walked to Camp Ward near Detroit to enlist. Until pay rates were made equal in June 1864, black soldiers received \$10 per month while white privates received \$13.



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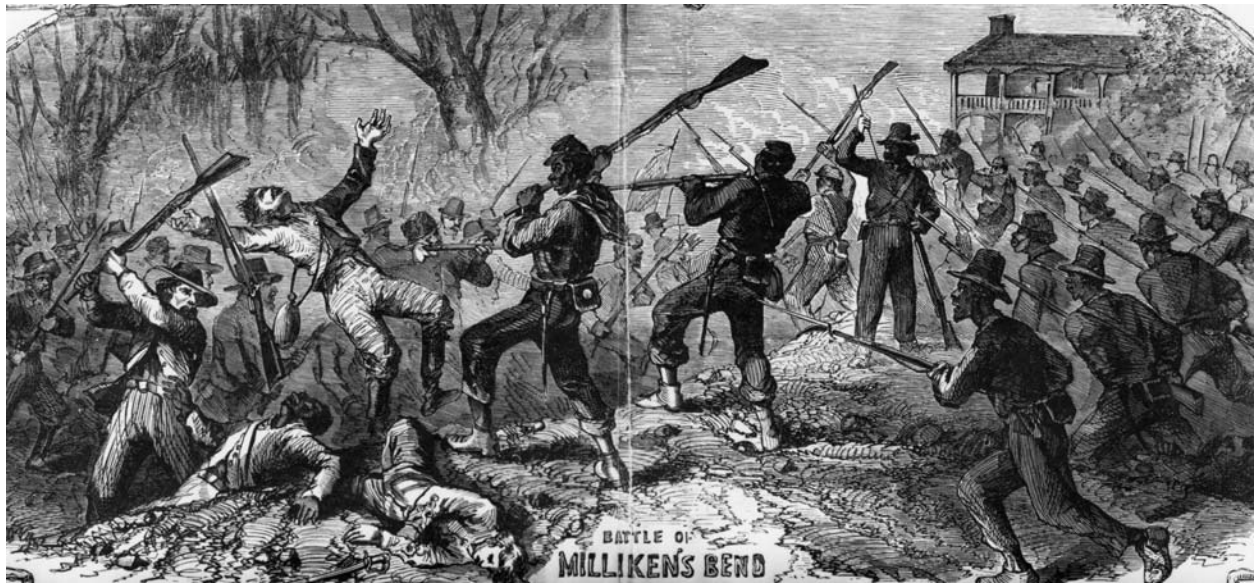


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A group of African American Army recruits helped convince army officers that black soldiers should be recruited and armed to fight for the Union. On June 7, 1863, a Confederate force attacked Union General Grant's supply lines at Milliken's Bend just north of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Grant had used this area as a supply depot and hospital, and it was guarded by new black recruits. Despite inferior weapons and lack of training, the black soldiers held off the Confederate Army and, with the help of Union gunboats, forced a Confederate retreat.



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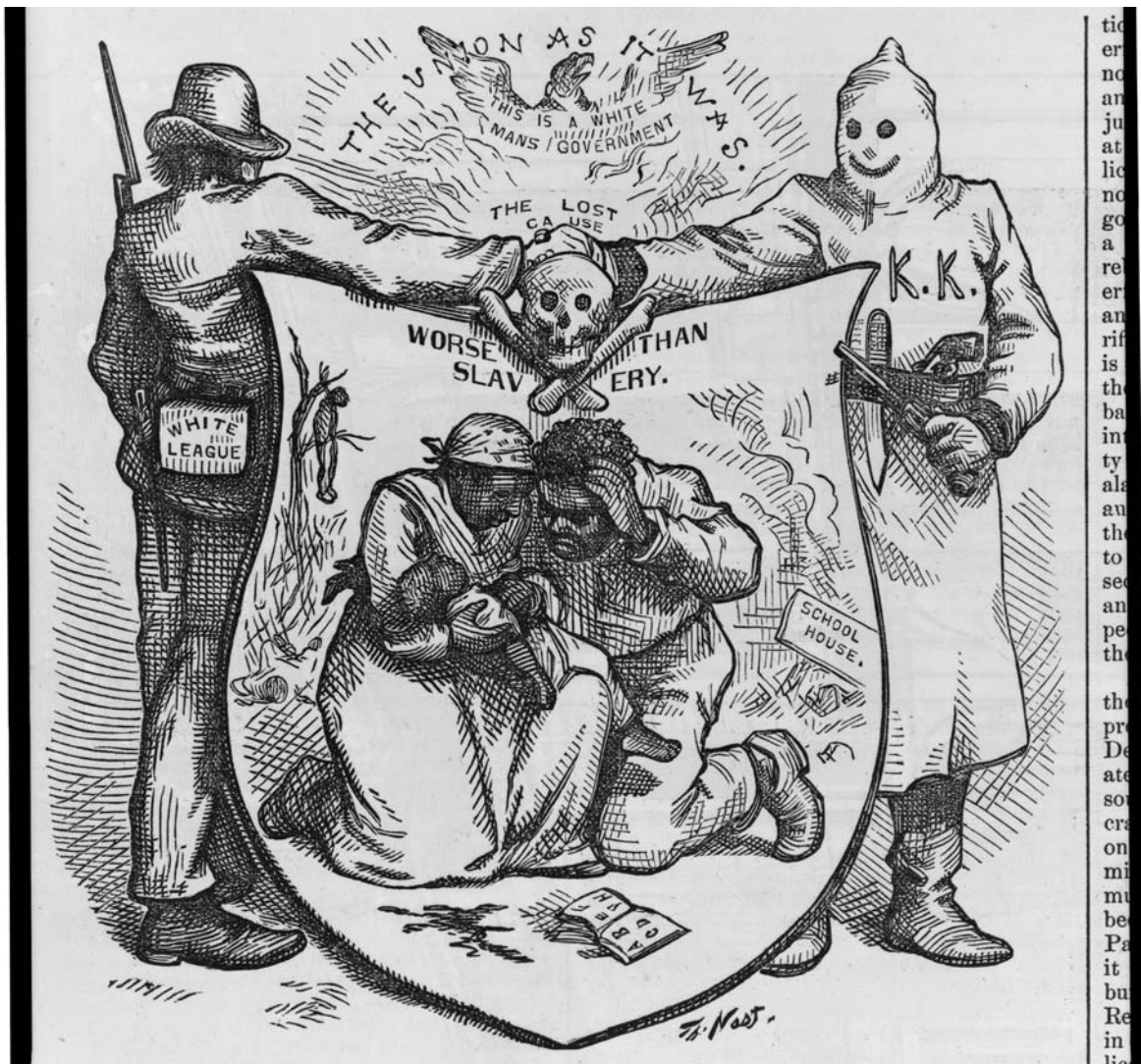


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1866 Ku Klux Klan #4

Credit: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

The atmosphere of fear and violence that the Ku Klux Klan created was intended to ensure that blacks did not seek the rights to which they were entitled as citizens. African Americans who tried to vote, purchase land or compete with white businesses were often targeted. Whites who supported black rights were also victims. Tragically, the law often turned a blind eye to Klan activities.

