Dogs sniff out forgotten African-American cemetery at Camp Nelson

Four trained canines had their noses to the grindstone on a cold day in early February as they located 83 graves in three hours at Camp Nelson.

The dogs were brought in by the Historical Resource Foundation, a national organization that assists in the location, recording and preservation of historical sites.

Eagle, an 11-year-old Doberman mix, was responsible for finding most of the unmarked graves containing the bodies of African-American refugees who died during the Civil War.

Archeologist Dr. Kim McBride said that scientists knew approximately where the refugees were buried by looking at maps of Camp Nelson in Civil War records.

The camp was the third largest training ground for African-American soldiers during the war. Soldiers were also buried there, but were moved to the national cemetery about 15 years after the war ended, according to Howard Curry Teater, president of the Jessamine County Historical and Genealogical Society. The refugees were the families of the soldiers.

McBride, who participated in the search with the Kentucky Archeological Survey, said the bodies were located several hundred yards northeast of the Oliver Perry Mansion known as the White House. The area encompasses about two acres in a rectangular shape, she said.

McBride was glad the dogs were used to find the graves, because the alternative method of locating the burial sites would have been time-consuming and detrimental to the site.

“Our archaeological means would see Dogs on page 3

Living History seeks to unite diverse groups

Camp Nelson’s 2003 Living History will be a training camp for all branches of living historians: infantry, cavalry, artillery, and civilian. Each branch will train separately, but a functional camp command staff will be in place to recreate the administrative activities common at Camp Nelson and each day will feature some form of joint exercise. Civilians will be portraying the families of camp officers, as well as local citizens and dignitaries conducting business with the Camp.

Camp Nelson was a Union Army camp and depot throughout its existence. Confederate units are welcome and encouraged to attend this event; they will simply wear civilian coats, or remove their jackets to portray Union recruits in civilian clothing who have not yet been issued uniforms. Confederate buckles, etc. are discouraged. Due to the history of the site we will be using, Confederate flags and similarly obvious non-Federal or non-civilian items are not appropriate for this event.

There are two primary goals for this year’s event. The first is to recreate, as authentically as possible, a mid-war
Camp Nelson Mailbag

Hello Camp Nelson,

My name is Wayne Carter. My Great Great Great Grandfather, Solomon Carter was in the 49th Kentucky Infantry Co. K and was stationed at Camp Nelson between 1863 and 1864. John Goodin was Captain of Company K, a Knox County regiment, organized in 1863.

Solomon Carter settled near Greasy Creek Carter Branch now located in Bell County Kentucky. Carter Branch was in Knox County until 1867 when it became a part of Bell County.

Solomon’s children were John, William, James, Thomas, Dempsey, Polly, and Millie. He was married to Elizabeth Partin. Solomon was born in 1833 and died in 1897. He was a farmer. He is buried in the Ben F. Goodin Cemetery on Greasy Creek aka Bingham-Goodin Cemetery, located behind the home of JT Bingham.

Do you know if any photographs are available of his outfit? Is there a club or group of descendants of soldiers that served at Camp Nelson?

Wayne Carter
BMI TV Ops. Dept. x 5341
WCarter@bmi.com

Hello,

My name is Sheena Lunsford-White. I’m active duty Navy stationed in Virginia Beach VA. I would like more information pertaining to how I can help The Camp Nelson Foundation. Thank you and God Bless ya’ll.

Sheena Lunsford White
SK1, USN

Dear Sheena,

Thank you for your interest in Camp Nelson. You can join the Camp Nelson Restoration and Preservation Foundation for annual dues of $25. Members receive the quarterly publication, The Camp Nelson Dispatch. Contributions of $500 or more will be recognized on a permanent brass plaque at the White House. Send your name, address, and phone to:

Camp Nelson Foundation
P.O. Box 1170
Nicholasville, KY 40356

Dear Camp Nelson,

I have recently been told my ancestor, Lewis Colmore Brooks, pvt., 15th KY, is buried in Kentucky. Can you see if he is buried at Camp Nelson Cemetery?

Jane Nowicki
Jane Nowicki@aol.com

OK Clark,

Here’s your photo. Check your e-mail for some additional shots. My suggestion is that you become a Camp Nelson Foundation Member. See details in the previous letter, or on the back panel of this newsletter.

A great online source for finding those that are buried in National Cemeteries is www.interment.net

Readers are encouraged to contact Jane and the other letter-writers with advice and comments.
Living History  from front page

training camp. This will provide a valuable opportunity for living historians to learn drill and camp calls, the routines of camp life, etc. while in a low-key first-person atmosphere. It will also provide an opportunity for the public to see an accurate recreation of daily life in the Civil War. The second goal is to provide an opportunity for numerous local units of varying backgrounds and interests to come together on the same field to work together, and to help build relationships between local living historians.

Camp Nelson is a unique Civil War site located in central Kentucky’s Bluegrass region. Camp Nelson was established after the Perryville campaign, and served as a major Union army depot and training center until the end of the war. The depot supported operations in eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, and southwestern Virginia. Bounded on three sides by the steep gorge of the Kentucky River and its tributaries, the fortifications guarding the northern approach to the camp are still clearly visible. The Camp was never seriously attacked, due in part to its strong natural defensive position.

Numerous units from eastern Kentucky and Tennessee were raised at Camp Nelson, which also served as Kentucky’s largest and the nation’s third largest enlistment and training center for African American troops. Eight U.S.C.T. regiments were organized at Camp Nelson and three others were trained here. Civilians associated with the U.S.C.T. units also were eventually allowed to live at Camp Nelson, forming Kentucky’s largest African American refugee camp.

Thanks to Chuck Warnick for content used in this article.

Public Events Schedule (subject to change)

Saturday, April 26, 2003
9:00 AM Drills and other Camp instruction begins with ongoing training demonstrations and civilian reenactments throughout the day
10:00 AM Archaeology Presentation with sign-up for dig conducted at Prison site
11:00 AM Period Baseball Game
11:30 AM Interpretive Trail Walk
1:00 PM Archaeology Presentation with sign-up for dig conducted at Prison site
1:30 PM Period Baseball Game
2:30 PM Interpretive Trail Walk
4:00 PM Full Camp Drill with Dress Parade

Sunday, April 27, 2003
9:00 AM Spiritual Services
10:00 AM Drills and other Camp instruction begins with ongoing training demonstrations and civilian reenactments throughout the day
10:30 AM Archaeology Presentation with sign-up for dig conducted at Prison site
11:00 AM Period Baseball Game
11:30 AM Interpretive Trail Walk
1:00 PM Archaeology Presentation with sign-up for dig conducted at Prison site
1:30 PM Period Baseball Game
2:00 PM Interpretive Trail Walk
3:00 PM Full Camp Drill with Dress Parade
4:00 PM Camp Closes
Kentucky teachers “dig in” to Camp Nelson summer workshop

Kentucky Project Archaeology is part of a national heritage education program that introduces students to the process of archaeology and teaches them to appreciate and protect our nation’s rich cultural heritage.

Under the leadership of trained educators and professional archaeologists, workshop participants will explore the science of archaeology and its classroom applications. In addition to hands-on activities, participants will also have access to high-quality educational materials, including the activity guide, Intrigue of the Past. While the focus of the workshop is grades 4-7, the materials are adaptable to all age levels.

Workshop registration is $65. Participation in each workshop is limited to 20 teachers. Professional development credit is available to teachers who attend the entire workshop.

EDUCATOR’S WORKSHOP
WHEN
Thursday July 31 and Friday August 1, 2003
WHERE
Camp Nelson Heritage Park, Nicholasville, KY
REGISTRATION DEADLINE
July 25, 2003

This full two-day workshop will introduce participants to the process of archaeology and provide content on Kentucky Civil War history with a special focus on Camp Nelson. Participants will have an opportunity to excavate at the site with Camp Nelson archaeologist Stephen McBride on Saturday August 2, 2003. There will be an additional charge of $10.00 to participate in this excavation and the number of participants is limited to 10.

Contact: Kay DeMoss,
Phone: 859-885-5351
demoss@jessamine.k12.ky.us

Join the Camp Nelson Restoration and Preservation Foundation

Members receive the quarterly publication, The Camp Nelson Dispatch. Because the Camp Nelson Restoration and Preservation Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, all donations are tax-deductible and will go 100% toward restoration and preservation. Contributions of $500 or more will be recognized on a permanent brass plaque at the White House.

☐ Membership Dues for 2003 – $25.00

Stars & Bars Lifetime Membership
☐ $500 per individual
☐ $650 per individual & spouse
☐ $650 per business

Friends of Camp Nelson
☐ $100 per individual
☐ $150 per individual & spouse
☐ $150 per business

Name ______________________________________________________
Street ______________________________________________________
City/State/Zip ______________________________________________
Phone ______________________ Email _________________________

Send to: Camp Nelson Foundation
P.O. Box 1170
Nicholasville, KY 40356

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