Civil War Defenses of Washington

National Capital Parks – East

Fort Davis – Fort Dupont – Fort Mahan

Rock Creek Park

Battery Kemble – Fort Bunker Hill – Fort Reno – Fort Slocum – Fort Stevens

What is oral history?

Oral history, or talking history, refers to historical information obtained through informal or recorded interviews with participants who have experienced significant events or times.

Who would interview me and where would it be done?

Dr. Taylor and her research assistants would conduct individual interviews. The interviewer would contact you in advance to set up a convenient location and time to talk.

Why do you want to interview me?

We want to find out more about descendant communities of Civil War refugees in Washington, DC Your connection offers a unique and valuable perspective. Your story will help preserve this important facet of history for future generations.

What do you do with the interviews?

We won't do anything until and unless we have your written permission. If you agree by signing the release form, your interview will be used for historical and possibly educational purposes. Your interview will be transcribed into written format. You will receive copies of all materials generated as part of your interview.

What kinds of questions will you be asking?

There are no right or wrong answers during an oral history interview. You will tell the story of what you know and have been told about the Civil War forts, Civil War freedom seekers, and your connection to these communities, especially near today's national park fort sites. Questions will depend on the connections you have to this topic.

Are you Interested in Participating?

Please contact Dr. Sue Taylor at:

Phone: 202-885-1830

Mail: Sue Taylor, Ph.D., Department of Anthropology
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016

Email: suet@american.edu

The National Park Service is conducting this project in partnership with American University, Washington, DC

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

National Capital Region
Cultural Anthropology Program
African American Civil War Descendants Study
Washington, DC

Can You Trace Your Family to the Civil War Period in Washington, DC?

"Contrabands" at Camp Brightwood
(Courtesy Library of Congress)

Can You Trace Your Family to the Civil War Period in Washington, DC?

We Want to Hear from You

The National Park Service, in partnership with American University, is undertaking a project to document the local history of African American "contraband" communities —established during or after the Civil War (1861-1877) and associated with eight Civil War Defense sites in Washington, DC. "Contraband" refers to enslaved people who sought freedom by escaping to Union forts during the Civil War.

Who: The project will document the stories of these communities and their descendants in the Washington, DC, area. Dr. Sue Taylor, American University, is the principal investigator for this project.

Why: Sharing your story will help the National Park Service document and preserve cultural resources of historical importance that are still important to the community today.

Where: Communities east of the Anacostia River around Fort Davis, Fort Dupont, and Fort Mahan and in Northwest DC near Fort Bunker Hill, Fort Reno, Fort Slocum, Fort Stevens, and Battery Kemble are included in the project.

Your story is important!

If you want to participate please contact Sue Taylor at suet@american.edu or 202-885-1830.

For more information about the project visit: http://www.nps.gov/cwdw

Project Information

African American Civil War Descendants Study – Washington, DC

Sponsors:
The National Park Service in partnership with the Anthropology Department of American University

Principal Investigator:
Sue Taylor, Ph.D., American University

Project Locations:

Northwest DC:
- *Near Battery Kemble*: Spring Valley, Palisades, Wesley Heights, Foxhall Crescent, Foxhall Village, Cathedral Heights, McLean Gardens, Glover Park
- *Near Fort Bunker Hill*: Park View, Woodbridge, Fort Lincoln, Gateway, Brookland, Brentwood
- *Near Fort Reno*: Friendship Heights, Tenleytown, North Cleveland Park, Forest Hills, Van Ness, Brightwood Park
- *Near Fort Slocum*: Lamont Riggs, Queens Chapel, Fort Totten, Pleasant Hill
- *Near Fort Stevens*: Takoma Park, Manor Park

Northeast and Southeast DC:
- *Near Fort Davis*: Penn Branch, Fort Davis Park
- *Near Fort Dupont*: River Terrace, Benning, Greenway, Dupont Park, Buzzard Point
- *Near Fort Mahan*: Deanwood, Burrville, Grant Park, Lincoln Heights, Fairmont Heights, Mayfair, Hillbrook, Mahaning Heights

Fort Stevens, 1865
(Courtesy Library of Congress)