

Respite from War

Buffalo Soldiers at Vancouver Barracks, 1899–1900

ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 3, 1899, the steamer *Undine* arrived at the wharf in Vancouver, Washington, following a short jaunt across the Columbia River from nearby Portland, Oregon. Although this was not an uncommon occurrence — the sternwheeler traveled like clockwork between Portland and Vancouver twice each day — a large crowd had gathered, including several officers from Vancouver Barracks, the local U.S. Army post. Among the *Undine*'s usual consignment of passengers that evening were more than one hundred soldiers. Many eyes observed them closely as they disembarked, the crossed rifle insignia on their headgear familiar to many of those assembled. The insignia indicated that the soldiers were members of the infantry, not the artillery or cavalry, but perhaps it was the number atop the solid brass insignia that caught the crowd's attention — the "24" that glinted in the lights of the wharf as the soldiers gathered their belongings — and the color of the soldiers' skin. They were Buffalo Soldiers, African American soldiers from Company B of the Twenty-fourth United States Infantry Regiment.¹ The story of the men of Company B and their thirteen months at Vancouver Barracks contributes to our understanding of black western military and urban history, to the broader story of Buffalo Soldiers in the American West, and to the importance of Vancouver Barracks in the Buffalo Soldier diaspora.²

By the time of Company B's arrival at Vancouver Barracks, African Americans had carved out tenuous communities in Portland and Vancouver. There is little question that African Americans had run into hostile attitudes in the Oregon Country, especially south of the Columbia River. As a result of racial attitudes and restrictions, several African American pioneers — including Tumwater founder George Washington Bush and Centralia founder George Washington — chose to live north of the river,



Edward Gibson, pictured here as a trooper with the Tenth Cavalry early in his career, retired at Vancouver Barracks as a sergeant in 1900 after more than thirty years in the army. When he retired, the army's four African American regiments had higher re-enlistment rates than white regiments.

establishing a population base that led in part to official territorial status for Washington in 1853. By 1900, 2,514 blacks lived in Washington, ten of them in Vancouver — an increase of only seven since 1860. Across the river, although Oregon's total black population grew smaller between 1890 and 1900, the number living in Portland increased by 26 percent to 775, primarily because of the railroad and steamship connections to the region and national immigration trends.³

Company B was the first unit from one of the army's four African American regiments to serve as part of the garrison of soldiers at Vancouver Barracks. Still, we seem to know more about the *Undine* — the ferry that brought the soldiers to Vancouver — than the soldiers themselves. Company B represented the apex of a long and distinguished legacy of black military service in the United States. Although soldiers of African American ancestry fought in most early U.S. conflicts, including the American Revolution, the Civil War brought approximately 180,000 black men into the Union Army. By war's end, one-third of them had lost their lives.⁴ Following the war, the War Department established six black regiments, including two cavalry units (the Ninth and Tenth) and four infantry units (the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-first). In 1869, the infantry regiments reorganized into two — the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth.⁵

THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR motivated the U.S. Army to refocus on western conflicts with American Indians, which they did in earnest, recording 943 engagements from 1865 to 1898. Contrary to the conventional nature of Civil War battles, the majority of these actions were smaller, guerilla warfare skirmishes involving cavalry regiments, including the Ninth and the Tenth. The black infantry units had a very different experience from the white units, performing mundane activities such as clearing sagebrush, escorting supply trains, stringing telegraph wire, and building roads. Labor for such work was needed throughout the West, and the army further divided the Twenty-fourth Infantry in 1880, dispersing companies to various posts. By the mid-1890s, after almost thirty years of frontier service in the remote Southwest, the regiment requested a post near a large city. In the eyes of the War Department, Salt Lake City, Utah, met the spirit of the request, and in 1896 the army assigned the regiment to nearby Fort Douglas, uniting its far-flung companies for the first time. Despite initial concern among the largely white community about having black troops so close to the city, soldiers of the Twenty-fourth Infantry worked to give the local residents a positive example of the professionalism of the black soldier. "I do not say this as conceit," proffered one soldier, "but you will find our regiment better behaved and disciplined than most of the white soldiers."⁶



Members of the Twenty-fourth Infantry participate in Salt Lake City's Pioneer Jubilee Parade in 1897. Formal events, such as parades, provided African American soldiers with an opportunity to dispel negative racial stereotypes and demonstrate their organization, skill, and professionalism to nearby communities.

After a year and a half at Fort Douglas, the specter of war in Cuba emerged, as did speculation about the Twenty-fourth Infantry's involvement in that conflict. The regiment soon received its orders and in April set off for Cuba. On the morning of July 1, 1898, Company B, along with Companies H, D, and C, fought against "heavy and effective fire from the enemy" for possession of San Juan Heights. Their service and its resulting success brought accolades. "The gallantry and bearing shown by the officers and soldiers of the regiment under this trying ordeal," exclaimed one officer, "was such that it has every reason to be proud of its record." Although relatively short in duration, the fighting in Cuba profoundly affected the men. "The dead and wounded soldiers! It was indescribable! One would have to see it to know what it was like," wrote one soldier, "and having once seen it, I truly hope I may never see it again."⁷

Tropical fevers wreaked a heavy toll on the American soldiers, forcing the army to establish a central yellow-fever hospital at Siboney, Cuba. After eight regiments refused requests to staff the hospital, volunteers stepped forward from the Twenty-fourth Infantry. The toll on the Twenty-fourth was high, much higher than the men had suffered in the actual fighting. “No pen can depict the suffering endured by the officers and men in this regiment during the time it was in Cuba, and those who endured the agony of that ordeal decline to speak of it except in confidence,” admitted Lt. Isaac C. Jenks. When relief came, the soldiers returned to Fort Douglas and duty in the West. Shortly thereafter, the regiment divided, with companies sent to San Francisco in preparation for service in the Philippines or to various posts in the West, including Vancouver Barracks.⁸

AT THE TIME OF COMPANY B’S arrival, Vancouver Barracks was a veteran army post, having provided a U.S. military presence in the Pacific Northwest for fifty years.⁹ Established in 1849 on a ridge north of the former Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters and depot known as Fort Vancouver, the post had played a leading role in major military actions in the American West, including labor disputes, police activities, and campaigns against Indians. Since 1879, it also had hosted the headquarters for the Department of the Columbia, the organization responsible for army command and control throughout the Pacific Northwest, including Alaska.¹⁰

Due in part to its proximity to Portland and its strategic position near rail and river transportation centers, Vancouver Barracks was integral to U.S. Army operations by century’s end. As war with the Philippines erupted in 1898, the army assembled units for overseas service and authorized the formation of volunteer regiments throughout the nation. On the West Coast, troops amassed in San Francisco for service in the Philippines. As veteran units assembled, new regiments began mustering volunteers at several locations, including Vancouver Barracks.¹¹

Company B’s structure was almost identical to that in other infantry regiments, with a breakdown by rank that included three officers, six sergeants, twelve corporals, two musicians, ninety-seven privates, and one skilled laborer.¹² Contrary to popular understanding at the time — fomented in part by newspaper accounts announcing their arrival — veterans made up less than a majority of Company B’s strength. Much like companies in other regiments, Company B increased its ranks to full strength with new recruits following service in Cuba. In February 1899, the company received 4 recruits; in March 1899, the number increased to 42; in April, 16 more joined.¹³ By the end of April 1899 — their first month at Vancouver Barracks — new recruits accounted for more than half the company’s strength, with 62 of

the 118 enlisted soldiers being new recruits (a 52.5 percent ratio). While this may have been unnoticeable to the press and general public, it was not lost on the regiment's veterans. As one officer conceded, the new companies and troops were viewed by some as not "entitled in any way to any glory, beyond that which is reflected by being connected with a regiment whose record is second to none in the U.S. Army."¹⁴

In the 1900 census — the nation's twelfth — care was taken to track information from the country's military posts. Commissioned officers, designated as census enumerators, collected detailed information, including name, rank, residence, personal description (race, sex, date of birth, age, marital status, and number of years married), place of birth, citizenship, and education (including the ability to read, write, and speak English).¹⁵ Company B's enlisted soldiers were listed by rank, beginning with the sergeants. Of all the ranks of enlisted men, sergeant was one of the most complex in a company. Sergeants served as noncommissioned officers, responsible for directing the drill and work details of the company's privates. The rank of sergeant required many skills, including those of teacher, administrator, counselor, role model, and disciplinarian. At the time, it defined the *de facto* ceiling for African American soldiers and represented the highest rank in the regular army to which a black enlisted soldier could realistically strive.¹⁶

By the spring of 1900, Company B's ranking noncommissioned officer was Mack Stanfield. A thirty-nine-year-old native of Franklin, Tennessee, the first sergeant had been married for fifteen years in 1900. His wife, thirty-five-year-old Sallie, lived with him at the subsequent post (Spokane's Fort George Wright), one of the only wives to do so. The company's other sergeants included Charles Grayson, Ezekiel Hill, and Richard Williams, all from Ohio; James Grimes from Kentucky; and Parker Buford from Tennessee.¹⁷ Four out of the six sergeants were married. Five of the men had been born when slavery was legal.¹⁸

The post and regimental returns compliment these data and support the association of several other sergeants with Company B during the thirteen-month period at Vancouver Barracks. At least two sergeants ended their military careers at Vancouver Barracks — Edward Gibson retired from service on April 3, 1900, and John Chase did likewise on May 14, 1900.¹⁹ Several sergeants received commissions in short-lived volunteer regiments while at the Barracks. In a telegram of July 5, 1899, the Adjutant General's Office appointed Walter B. Williams, a sergeant with Company B, as sergeant major of the Twenty-fourth Infantry and directed him to San Francisco's Presidio. At least two other sergeants received highly sought-after commissions as officers for black volunteer regiments. "Sergeant A.V. Richardson, of the Twenty-fourth infantry, Vancouver barracks," the *Oregonian* announced



To help protect sensitive resources from depredations, such as poaching and overgrazing, the U.S. Army detailed cavalry troopers to patrol several western national parks in the 1890s and 1900s. In 1899, a detachment of the Twenty-fourth Infantry's Company H, shown here near Wawona, patrolled Yosemite National Park.

on September 26, 1899, was “recently appointed captain of the Forty-eighth infantry, United States volunteers.” Similarly, Beverly Perea, briefly associated with Company B, received an appointment as a second lieutenant with the Forty-ninth U.S. Volunteer Infantry in September 1899.²⁰

Soldiers from Company B became directly involved in one of the largest issues of the day for African Americans — the desire for black officers in the regular army. One private brought the issue to the region’s white press. Pvt. James G. Cole’s letter to the *Oregonian* stands as an articulate and expressive statement that captures the African American zeitgeist. He argued for the necessity of black officers commanding black soldiers, a concern voiced by African Americans both inside and outside the army. With emotionally charged language, he directly addressed the hypocrisy of Jim Crow-era racism faced by Buffalo Soldiers. “These brave boys did not stop to ask if it was worth while for

them to lay down their lives for a country that has silently allowed her citizens to be killed and maltreated in almost every conceivable way,” he opined, “they did not stop to ask if their death would bring deliverance to their race from mob violence and lynching. They saw their duty and they did it.”²¹

Twelve corporals reported to Company B’s sergeants, including several Virginia natives — John A. Hall, Jeremiah Bowman, and William Harris. Two men were from Kentucky — Edward Shepard and William Rollins. Algy Jackson was from Georgia, William Johnson was from Maryland, and Frank Roberts was from Tennessee. All of the corporals, with the exception of Frank Roberts, were bachelors.²² The company also included several specialized occupations — two cooks, two musicians, and one artificer. The cooks for Company B included South Carolina native Robert A. Hargrove and William Hardin from Kentucky.²³

In the U.S. Army, the vast majority of soldiers held the rank of private, and Company B was no exception. The census records list eighty-four privates with the company in the spring of 1900. Although many of the names and some of the demographic data are illegible, enough information exists to determine two trends. First, only nine of the privates (9.3 percent) were married. Second, the majority of the Company hailed from former southern slave or border states — sixteen from Tennessee, twelve from Virginia, thirteen from Georgia, eleven from Kentucky, nine from South Carolina, eight from Alabama, and seven from Maryland. The exceptions include three sergeants from Ohio and four privates from Pennsylvania. None of the soldiers hailed from any states west of the 100th Meridian, including Oregon and Washington.

UNDER THE COMMAND of various commissioned officers — all white — the soldiers of Company B performed duties both mundane and exceptional.²⁴ A typical day in the U.S. Army was predictable, regardless of the posting. Reveille raised the soldiers at 5:45 in the morning. Following breakfast, fatigue call at 7:30 roused them to their work assignment for the day. Recall from fatigue occurred at 12:15 in the afternoon, followed by a return to fatigue duty at 1:00 PM, which could include school for some of the soldiers. At 4:30 PM, the troops were recalled from fatigue duty, and a half hour of drill commenced at 4:45. Guard mount at 5:30 PM was followed by supper. The day closed with tattoo drummed at 9:00, followed by taps. This routine continued, except on Sundays and holidays.²⁵

As the greater part of the post’s regular garrison, the majority of the company’s time included garrison duty — a catchall, inclusive phrase that included regular assignments. While assigned to the frontier outposts, this duty encompassed work such as “expeditions against the Indians . . .

guarding strategic points, building roads, hunting horse thieves, and doing anything else which called for hard work and no fame.”²⁶ That changed when the regiment arrived at Fort Douglas, Utah, and undoubtedly continued at Vancouver Barracks. The soldiers drilled; practiced marching and marksmanship; improved post infrastructure; performed blacksmith, janitorial, maintenance, and clerical work; and attended the post school.²⁷

Such opportunities for schooling may have contributed to the company’s high literacy level. According to census records, only four privates — representing 3.9 percent of the enlisted men — could not read and write. Arguably, this level reflects, in part, both the army’s implementation of a regimental school system during the Civil War era as well as the specific policy of assigning a chaplain in the role of teacher for each of the four African American regiments. It also points to the success of compulsory education. In 1876, following the lead of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, the commanding officer of the Twenty-fourth required all noncommissioned officers (sergeants and corporals) to attend school on a regular basis. Interestingly, this regulation appears to be unique to these two regiments, and the high literacy level of Company B points to the success of this distinctive proviso.²⁸

IN ADDITION TO GARRISON DUTY, soldiers participated in formal ceremonial activities, such as parades, concerts, funerals, and escorts. At Vancouver’s annual Memorial Day celebration in 1899, despite the poor weather, Company B not only participated in the annual parade but also led it. Company B participated in at least three funeral details. At the funeral for the Fourteenth Infantry’s Benjamin F. Hubbard, killed in the Philippines, a National Guard group and “a detachment of Company B, Twenty-fourth Infantry . . . attended the funeral . . . and at the conclusion of the burial ceremonies a volley was fired over the grave by the soldiers.”²⁹ Such ceremonial activities — where, for example, black soldiers participated alongside white soldiers and civilians for a white soldier’s funeral — demonstrate a rare example of blacks being part of a formal function on a somewhat equal basis with whites.

The August 24, 1899, *Vancouver Independent* alluded to another of Company B’s ceremonial duties. Moses Williams, the retired ordnance sergeant from Fort Stevens, Oregon, was a Civil War veteran, a former member of the Ninth Cavalry, and a Medal of Honor recipient. He died from heart failure in his bed on August 23, shortly after his retirement to Vancouver. There is some evidence that he lived his remaining days at the post. Williams was buried in the post cemetery at Vancouver Barracks with full military honors. Since Company B was the regular post garrison at the time, the soldiers

undoubtedly provided the funeral's full military honors, helping lay to rest in Vancouver a highly decorated veteran of the army's Indian Wars.³⁰

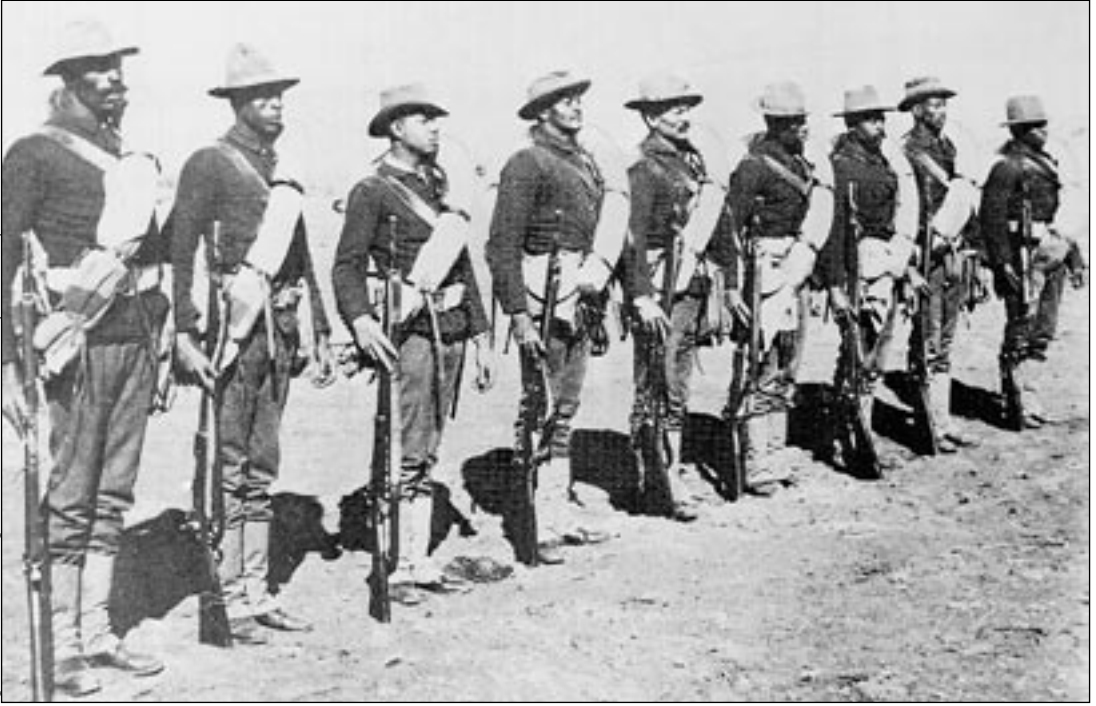
Another official duty included escorting and guarding prisoners. In September 1899, the *Vancouver Independent* reported that

First Sergeant Stanfield and a guard of three enlisted men of company B, Twenty-fourth infantry [Charlie Johnson, William R. Robinson, and William Smith], started for San Francisco yesterday with the three military prisoners — F.V. Hammond, Henry Harper, and John C. Logan — recently sentenced by court martial to the military prison at Alcatraz island.³¹

On September 13, following a trial, the army dishonorably discharged Cpl. Frank V. Hammond, sentencing him to one year's confinement, "forfeiting all pay and allowances due, and [to] be confined at hard labor at Alcatraz Isl. Cal. for the same period."³² Hammond deserted on August 7, 1899, and spent a brief eleven days away from his unit before he was apprehended by civil authorities in Portland on August 18. Privates Henry Harper and John C. Logan also received dishonorable discharges on the same date, with Logan receiving the same sentence as Hammond and Harper receiving a six-month sentence. Logan deserted on August 10 and enjoyed a slightly longer stint on the lam, which ended on August 23 when civil authorities apprehended him in Rainier, Oregon. What the newspaper omitted was that the three military prisoners were soldiers from Company B and that Stanfield and his guard escorted three of their fellow soldiers to imprisonment at Alcatraz.

While desertion rates were lower for black regiments — a rate of less than 1 percent compared to 5 percent for white soldiers — desertion still presented a major concern to the late-nineteenth-century army and accounted for the largest loss of soldiers for many years. During their thirteen months at the post, Company B recorded three losses from desertion, including J.E. Sims. Following his discharge from the county jail in July 1899, Sims reportedly "took French leave and proceeded to Portland, where he joined a hobo and formed a combination with him. They proceeded to rob an unfortunate traveler at the union depot, and escaped with their boodle to The Dalles, where they were caught by Portland police."³³ A police judge sentenced Sims to a year in the Multnomah County Jail, and the newspaper reported that the army "does not want Sims, and will probably give him a 'bobtail' for desertion."³⁴

Other African American companies in the Pacific Northwest also had problems with desertion, and several of them affected Vancouver Barracks. On July 25, 1899, for example, Pvt. Winthrop E. Lucas, a member of the Twenty-fourth Infantry's Company M, posted at Fort Wright, Washington, arrived on post awaiting trial for desertion. Confined for several weeks, Lucas left the



Soldiers of the Twenty-fourth Infantry test experimental blanket rolls while on campaign duty in the West during the 1890s. New equipment was occasionally field tested by African American soldiers. In 1896, for example, soldiers from the Twenty-fifth Infantry tested bicycles in a ride through Yellowstone National Park.

post on August 30, having been “restored to duty without trial and ordered to join company at Fort Wright.” Pvt. James Hoopins from the Twenty-fourth’s Company L, posted in Skagway, Alaska, arrived on September 24 and was eventually “sentenced to 2 years at Alcatraz.” The private did not remain in Vancouver long, though for reasons not anticipated by the general court martial. On October 20, Hoopins, now a general prisoner incarcerated at the barracks and awaiting transfer, “escaped from [the] Post Guard House.”³⁵

While most posts, including Vancouver Barracks, possessed a guardhouse for incarcerating recalcitrant soldiers, serious offenders often received longer sentences at a military prison. In addition to the escape of Private Hoopins, the danger of a guardhouse — and the value of a secure prison such as Alcatraz — was brought to light several times in 1899. In June, the *Vancouver Independent* ran a front-page item announcing that a “military prisoner at Leavenworth, Kan, was shot dead while trying to escape.” In August 1899, it reported on an elaborate plot to escape from the guardhouse at Fort Sheridan. “The prisoners had the bars of the guardhouse all sawed

through and had obtained possession of the key to the magazine. Knives, powder, and cartridges were found in their possession.”³⁶

Black soldiers also served as guards for white soldiers. In April 1899, newspapers reported that white soldiers at San Francisco’s Presidio rioted, burning down a saloon in retribution for the brutal beating of a fellow soldier. Three hundred soldiers were arrested and “guarded by cavalry and the Twenty-fourth infantry regiment, colored.” In the summer of 1899, a detachment of Company H, Twenty-fourth Infantry, served at the military prison at Alcatraz Island. On at least three occasions, soldiers from Company B escorted prisoners to Alcatraz, providing at least one opportunity for interaction with the detachment from Company H. In addition to the September escort, Cpl. John W. Hall, Pvt. Solomon Scott, and Pvt. Dave E. Singleton provided the escort in June 1899, with Cpl. William Rollins and Pvt. Philip Allsberry, Pvt. Enoch Christopher, and Pvt. Richard Wilson leading the same in May 1900. These duties were not limited to Alcatraz. In June 1899, Sgt. Richard Williams led a detachment of three privates — John Cager, Larry Miller, and Frank Roberts — to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, escorting military prisoners.³⁷

As the regular U.S. Army troops at the post, Company B also initiated other official duties while at Vancouver Barracks, including a role supporting the formation of a volunteer infantry regiment. July 1899 brought a new mission to the post — the recruitment and training of volunteers to fill out the newly established Thirty-fifth U.S. Volunteer Infantry. In a series of telegrams received in early July, the superiors of Company B’s commanding officer directed him to begin recruiting for volunteers at the post. Moreover, they required him to “telegraph each evening the no. of enlistments” and “to do everything possible for the volunteer recruits” arriving at the post.³⁸ Support is exactly what this regiment required, and the responsibility fell on the regular army — in this case, to the officers and enlisted men of Company B. The new regiment differed from the Washington and Oregon regiments mustered earlier in the region in that it was established under regulations providing for federal volunteer regiments that were controlled by the regular army. The regiments were formed following the recently adopted twelve-company, three-battalion organization. While ostensibly avoiding any conflict between state and federal authority, the use of volunteer units recruited and managed by the regular army presented it with a new responsibility, and Company B at Vancouver Barracks took a leading role.³⁹

THE ROUTINE OF OFFICIAL duty in garrison, although highly regimented, was subject to change, especially in time of crisis. Less than a month after their arrival, on April 29, 1899, violence erupted in the Coeur d’Alene

mining region of Idaho. With conflict brewing for several years between miners and mine owners, an armed contingent of miners attacked and dynamited a mill owned by the Bunker Hill and Sullivan Mining Company, killing two employees. From the start, the event garnered national attention, and military intervention was anticipated. Such a role for the army was not unusual, with soldiers frequently aiding civilian authorities in quelling domestic disorder in the late nineteenth century. Between 1877 and 1900, in response to eleven requests from civil authorities, the U.S. Army helped suppress industrial disorders such as general railroad strikes, coal strikes, and even anti-Chinese activities led by organized labor.⁴⁰

Federal troops were no strangers to the labor struggles in the Coeur d'Alene. On two previous occasions — in 1892 and 1894 — the state of Idaho and mine owners had requested and received federal soldiers to put an end to violence resulting from continuing struggles between employees unionized in the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) on one side and mine owners and state authorities on the other. Republicans, closely aligned with mill owners, controlled Idaho state offices, including the office of the governor. Miners controlled local county politics through a coalition of Democrats and Populists. Thus, under the auspices of arresting lawbreaking miners, mine owners and state officials saw an influx of federal troops — especially African American soldiers — as an opportunity to break the spirit and power of the WFM.⁴¹

Brig. Gen. Henry C. Merriam — himself a former officer of several African American units, including the Twenty-fourth Infantry — wasted no time in committing troops once they were authorized by President William McKinley. The nature of a response was another matter. War in the Philippines, as well as the occupation of Puerto Rico and Cuba, had dwindled the army's ranks in the West. The Department of the Columbia, for example, possessed a total strength of only 450 soldiers at the time, a small force compared to the reported thousand armed miners. Readiness orders alerted soldiers throughout the West — from the Department of Colorado, the Department of Missouri, and the Department of the Lakes — to prepare for a response. Through a chain-reaction of filling in behind reassigned troops, the response to the troubles in Wardner, Idaho, became national in scope.⁴²

Within days of the mill explosion, African American troops were the first federal forces to arrive on the scene. Merriam dispatched soldiers from Company M of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, then on duty at Fort Wright near Spokane; they arrived on May 2, 1899. On the same day, Company B received a telegram from Boise, Idaho, instructing it to respond to the “insurrection.” Company B wasted little time. The following morning, “all camp equipage

and ammunition was packed and ready to move,” and the unit, consisting of Capt. Henry Wygant and fifty-nine enlisted men, departed at 8:30 in the morning. “The men were equipped in heavy marching order,” the *Oregonian* reported on its front page, “with 100 rounds of ammunition to the man” and two days’ rations. They arrived in Wardner on May 4, along with a company of the Fourth Cavalry and six other companies of the Twenty-fourth Infantry. By the end of the May, approximately eight hundred federal soldiers had served in the area, almost half of them being African American. The incident reunited many companies of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, which had been widely spread throughout the West after their return from Cuba. Along with Company L and Company B, 130 members of the Twenty-fourth arrived from Fort Douglas, and 129 soldiers from Company I and Company C came from Cheyenne, Wyoming.⁴³

Duty in Wardner for these soldiers consisted primarily of imposing martial law, which included control of the railroad and telegraph lines as well as a building-to-building search for weapons and ammunition. At its extreme, martial law dictated the warrantless arrest and incarceration of every male adult in the Coeur d’Alene area. Guarding these citizens, incarcerated in a temporary state prison called the bull pen, became the primary responsibility of federal soldiers, including soldiers from the Twenty-fourth Infantry. The presence of black troops, especially in imposing martial law, was significant. Soldiers from the Twenty-fifth Infantry had briefly served in the area during the 1892 strike, perhaps fomenting antipathy. Local residents did not welcome nonwhites and had previously voted to exclude Chinese from Wardner. The presence of black soldiers in positions of authority may have added to the animosity of miners toward mine owners and the government. Complaints of abuse from the black soldiers abounded, and the union forwarded seventeen sworn complaints to President William McKinley. One miner complained that a black sergeant had threatened him with a pistol, saying “I want you to understand that we are the bosses.” Although a small number of federal soldiers remained to enforce martial law for two years, the contingent of Company B returned to Vancouver Barracks on May 15, 1899, having played a role in one of the major labor-capital conflicts of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

THE ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN to Company B, whether on- or off-post, occasionally provided the opportunity to interact with other African American soldiers. While away from Vancouver Barracks, black soldiers on detached duty assignments met in locations such as Wardner, where several other companies of the Twenty-fourth Infantry served; Fort Wright, where Company M was stationed; and Alcatraz Island, where a detachment of Company H served. The soldiers of Company B, however, did not have



Downtown Vancouver, Washington — pictured here in about 1900 — offered soldiers of nearby Vancouver Barracks access to both the comforts and vices of a small western city. On several occasions, the soldiers of Company B took part in formal activities in the downtown area, including Vancouver's Memorial Day parade in 1900.

to leave their own post to encounter black soldiers from other companies. Through its geographic location and its associated facilities — including a hospital and the departmental headquarters — Vancouver Barracks facilitated several opportunities for interaction.

On many occasions, ill or injured soldiers from other Pacific Northwest posts transferred to Vancouver Barracks for treatment at the post hospital. For example, Lafayette Coates and Benton Trice — two privates from Company L, stationed in Skagway, Alaska — stayed at the barracks in 1899, being “sick in hospital.” The location of the headquarters for the Department of Columbia at Vancouver Barracks brought soldiers from posts throughout the

department for administrative functions, such as general courts martial. On October 1, 1899, for example, Pvt. Charles Johnson from Company L arrived at the post, awaiting sentence from a general court martial. At some point, an incident occurred within Company M, and several orders in September 1899 refer to soldiers from that company traveling to Vancouver Barracks. In October, five soldiers from Company M arrived and subsequently returned, while one, QM Sgt. Yancie Banks, stayed on post for twenty-seven days.⁴⁵

During Company B's posting at Vancouver Barracks, soldiers from other units of the Twenty-fourth Infantry served at posts in relatively close proximity, including duty stations in Boise, Idaho, and Walla Walla and Spokane, Washington.⁴⁶ Because of the post's location, soldiers frequently arrived at Vancouver Barracks in transit status. In August 1899, six soldiers from Company M transferred through Vancouver Barracks. In September, four soldiers from Company L and two from Company M transferred through on their way to posts in Alaska and Fort Wright. Company L, the third African American company assigned to the Pacific Northwest in 1899, also transferred through Vancouver Barracks. En route to replace a company of the Fourteenth Infantry in Alaska, 114 soldiers from the newly formed Company L arrived on May 5, 1899, from the Presidio of San Francisco. They left the post on May 14, but their nine-day visit may have brought significant time for soldiers from the two companies to socialize.⁴⁷

Whether assigned special duty off-post or routine assignments on-post, soldiers coveted occasions for leisure activity, including organized sports. Although athletic activities were highly popular, in at least one case they proved fatal. The one death recorded by Company B at Vancouver Barracks was that of eighteen-year-old Pvt. Thomas White. On the afternoon of July 17, 1899, White swam with two other men in the small pond between the main post and the Columbia River. Witnesses reported that White had swum across the pond and was returning when "he gave out and sank to the bottom hardly without a struggle."⁴⁸ He was buried in the post cemetery, presumably with full military honors provided by the soldiers of Company B.

Of all of the athletic activities available to black soldiers, the most popular was baseball. As one chaplain noted, "The men seem to have their minds so employed now with baseball . . . that they do not get drunk."⁴⁹ At Fort Douglas, the Twenty-fourth Infantry fielded a regimental team called the Colored Monarchs, which played various teams in the area. Company B continued the tradition at Vancouver Barracks — the local press named the team the Hard Hitters — and played at least eleven baseball games, all covered by the *Vancouver Independent*.

Throughout the spring of 1899 and 1900 and the summer of 1899, the Hard Hitters played games against a mix of opposing teams, two of them

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

STATE OF Utah

City of Fort Douglas

I, Mack Stanfield, born in Maury County, in the State of Kentucky, aged forty years and four months, and by occupation a Soldier, DO HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have voluntarily re-enlisted this twentieth day of August, 1897 as a SOLDIER in the ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, for the period of THREE YEARS unless sooner discharged by proper authority; And do also agree to accept from the United States such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing as are or may be established by law. And I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies whomsoever; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Subscribed and duly sworn to before me this twentieth day of August, A. D. 1897

I CERTIFY that I have carefully examined the above-named man agreeably to the General Regulations of the Army, and that, in my opinion, he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity which would, in any way, disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

I, S. S. Kinspach, Surgeon U.S.A.,
Major Stanfield
 previous to his re-enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that to the best of my judgment and belief, he fulfills all legal requirements; and that I have accepted and enlisted him into the service of the United States under this contract of enlistment as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, and, in doing so, have strictly observed the Regulations which govern the Recruiting Service. This soldier has brown eyes, black hair, dark complexion, is 5 feet 4 1/2 inches high, married, no children, weight 140 lbs.

(A. C. S. No. 15, November 5, 1890.)

S. S. Kinspach
Adjutant 24th Infantry
 Recruiting Officer

NOTE.—Inkblot or permanent marks found upon the person of a Recruit will be here noted Hand over 1" on right hand.
Hand over 5" on left leg.

While stationed at Fort Douglas, Utah, in 1897, Sgt. Mack Stanfield re-enlisted for three years in the Twenty-fourth Infantry. After subsequent re-enlistments at posts including Spokane's Fort George Wright in 1900, Stanfield retired to Portland with his wife, Sallie. Military service records, such as this re-enlistment document of Stanfield's, provide personal information about soldiers, including place of birth, age, eye color, hair color, complexion, height, weight, marital status, children, presence of tattoos or scars, and the soldier's signature.

versus local students. In a game held on Saturday, March 17, 1900, for example, the soldiers played the Vancouver High School baseball team. In a high-scoring game, the soldiers triumphed 30 to 12. On Saturday, March 24, the team challenged Company B to a rematch, defeating the soldiers 14 to 9. A team from Battery M, Third Artillery, stationed at Fort Stevens, near Astoria, Oregon, traveled to Vancouver and played several games against town teams, including the team from Company B, who they defeated easily.⁵⁰

The Hard Hitters also played games on the road. On April 28, they traveled to Astoria to play a rematch against the team from Battery M. "The game," reported the *Vancouver Independent*, "resulted in a victory for the colored boys by a score of 14 to 12." The last reported baseball game for Company B occurred at the post on Sunday, May 14, just three days before the soldiers left Vancouver Barracks. In a game that "proved to the surprise of all, to be a hotly contested fray," the soldiers played the Portland Torpedoes. The two teams battled through nine innings to a 6-6 tie, requiring extra innings to decide the game. "The game finally resulted in a score of 10 to 6 in favor of the Torpedoes," the *Independent* reported.⁵¹

Social events, such as parties and receptions, also played a role in the soldiers' lives and, though few, provide valuable information about the company's interaction with the local community. On Saturday, April 22, 1899, "the members of Co. B, Twenty-fourth Infantry, gave a banquet and social at the post hall," the *Vancouver Independent* reported. "A large number of Vancouver people attended." Because the African American population of Vancouver was extremely small in 1899, attendance at the banquet and social event probably included whites as well as blacks, and there was positive social interaction between the soldiers and Vancouver's majority white population. Almost a year later, the *Vancouver Independent* described another gala event, announcing that "Co. B Twenty-fourth Infantry gave a swell dancing party at the post hall last evening that was largely attended. A number of colored people from Portland came over to enjoy the social event."⁵² The soldiers clearly had made some connections with Portland's African American community.

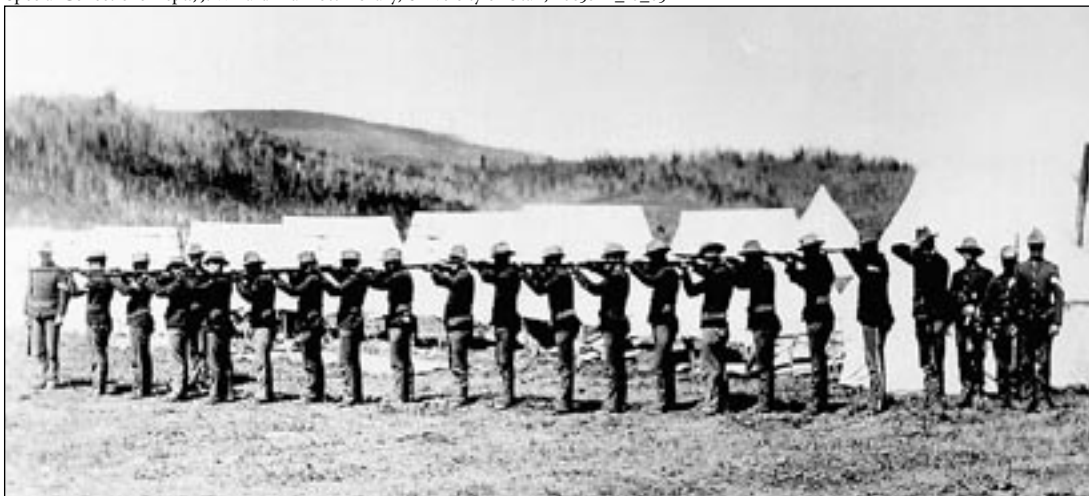
THE DESIRE FOR FEMALE COMPANIONSHIP occupied no small amount of a soldier's leisure time. For many years, the army did not allow soldiers to marry, requiring each soldier upon enlistment to sign a document absolving the army of all responsibility for his family's welfare and conceding that he could be transferred at any time regardless of his family situation. Reflecting this longstanding institutional disregard for spouses and dependents, the majority of Company B's soldiers were not married. Interestingly, and in spite of the apparent difficulty, at least two soldiers

married while at Vancouver Barracks. On December 30, 1899, Portland's African American newspaper, the *Portland New Age*, reported:

Miss Lizzie Wright, of Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and Corporal F[rank] Roberts, U.S.A., of Vancouver barracks, were united in the holy bonds of matrimony on December 14, at the residence of Mrs. Sergeant [*sic*] Willing. The wedding was a very brilliant affair, all being in full military dress. Corporal [William] Rollins was best man and Mrs. Sergeant Willing bridesmaid. Quite a number of friends from Portland attended.⁵³

Wives such as Lizzie Roberts had few choices for work near their husbands. If a soldier's wife agreed to become a servant to one of the post's officers or work in the company laundry, the army would tolerate her, but without housing or any other amenity. Some women accepted the challenging conditions and worked as servants or laundresses. In 1896, when the entire Twenty-fourth Infantry assembled at Fort Douglas, the wives and children of fifty enlisted men also came. An additional group of "about 100 colored women and a number of dark spots who follow the regiment from post to post" joined them.⁵⁴ At Fort Wright in 1900, several officers of Company B employed unmarried African American women as domestic servants.⁵⁵ By then, Cpl. Frank Roberts was assigned to Fort Wright, and his wife Lizzie appears in the 1900 census as a roomer in the home of the Estelles, an African American family in Portland. The thirty-four-year-old woman is listed in the census as a newlywed and native of Missouri working as a domestic servant. Sallie Stanfield presents a different example. In 1900, seven of the sixty-nine civilians living at Fort Wright were African Americans — all women and all single except for two. Thirty-four-year-old Stanfield lived on post with her husband, Sgt. Mack Stanfield. Although she did not list an occupation, if she worked outside the home she was probably a domestic servant; later in life, she listed her occupation as a waitress. Both Lizzie Roberts and Sallie Stanfield provide an important dimension to the story of Company B. Despite institutional challenges, married soldiers and their spouses found viable options for survival by developing a close relationship with Portland's African American community — as Roberts's wedding and subsequent occupation suggest — and by being flexible.⁵⁶

In addition to, and perhaps in conjunction with, female companionship, other occasions in the surrounding community may have provided social opportunities for the soldiers of Company B. In a highly anticipated visit in November 1899, Lucy Thurman, billed as the "World and National Superintendent for the Colored Section" of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement (WCTM), gave a lecture in Portland. She was, the *Portland New Age* announced, a "noted speaker on temperance and race questions, the methods of securing the former and eliminating the latter." Following



Soldiers of the Twenty-fourth Infantry drill with rifles during campaign duty in the West in the 1890s. Despite the remote nature of campaigning and frontier service, for many years the Twenty-fourth Infantry had the lowest desertion rate of any regiment in the U.S. Army.

her visit, the local Lucy Thurman League of the WCTU hosted several social events for Portland's African American community. On the other side of the Columbia, the *Vancouver Independent* announced the arrival of a traveling minstrel and vaudeville show presented by the Georgia Up-To-Date Company, featuring a grand parade and an evening performance on August 28, including "original patriotic songs on our war with Spain." The troupe consisted of thirty-five entertainers, including Jack M. Oliver, reportedly "one of the highest priced colored actors on the American stage."⁵⁷ Minstrel shows, which imitated and often denigrated traditional African American musical and dance forms, did not generally draw black audiences, but the members of the group may have presented an interesting social opportunity for the soldiers during the troupe's brief stay in Vancouver.

The social activities of Company B's soldiers did not always lead to positive press. On Tuesday, December 26, the *Vancouver Independent* reported that the municipal court in Vancouver had tried and fined soldiers Wade Hampton and Sam Mills "for disorderly conduct as a consequence of their Christmas celebration." While the court recognized Hampton "upon the showing of a previous good character" and fined him a dollar and court costs, they were less lenient with Mills, who "was arrested later for appearing on the streets armed with a razor and a knife, with which he sought revenge on the man that arrested his friend." Unable to pay the twenty-dollar fine

imposed by the court, Mills went to jail. On November 27, Justice Lowell convicted Charles Johnson with drunk and disorderly conduct. As a result, Johnson was “serving out the fine in the city cooler.”⁵⁸

During their thirteen months at Vancouver Barracks, Company B discharged no fewer than twenty-seven soldiers, including at least two sergeants — Edward Gibson and John Chase, who retired. The area provided an attractive option to discharged soldiers, and on at least two occasions soldiers took their furloughs in Portland rather than in other cities. Sgt. Stanfield later retired to Portland with his wife, Sallie, and they remained there for the rest of their lives.⁵⁹ Also, Moses Williams, a Medal of Honor recipient, chose to call Vancouver his home after retirement.

Although some soldiers decided to live in Vancouver and Portland when they retired, neither city was free of anti-black sentiment. On numerous occasions in 1899 and 1900, the *Vancouver Independent* reported on racial violence and lynchings, often in chillingly graphic detail. One front-page story described a lynching in Georgia:

before death was allowed to end the suffering of the negro, his ears were cut off, and the small finger of the left hand was severed at the second joint. . . . On the chest of the negro was a scrap of blood-stained paper fastened with an ordinary pin. . . . it read as follows, “Beware, darkies. You will be treated in the same way.”⁶⁰

The *Portland New Age* ran at least one editorial decrying talk of lynching two black men in Baker City, Oregon. Such activity may be condoned in the southern states, the paper argued, “but in Oregon, where a better and broader civilization prevails,” talk of lynching was “a shameful display of barbarity — an exhibition of brutality that would discredit the character of the jungle residents of Luzon.”⁶¹

Although there is no record of lynching or direct violence toward blacks in Vancouver while Company B was at Vancouver Barracks, the soldiers may have been the subject of racially based acrimony. In announcing the company’s departure, the *Portland New Age* concluded:

Their stay there gave the citizens of Vancouver an opportunity to see more Afro-Americans than many of them had ever seen, and whilst on the whole, they were well received, we have heard of one or two instances where low-bred people took an opportunity to exhibit the prejudice existing in their groveling nature.⁶²

One of these instances might have been the one described by Pvt. James G. Cole in a stirring letter to the *Oregonian* on September 26:

There has been hitherto, among the officers of the Army, a certain prejudice against serving in colored regiments, but yesterday, as I passed two of the Thirty-fifth volunteer officers, I heard one of them remark, ‘Do you know, I should not want anything better

than to have a company in a negro regiment? I am from North Carolina, and have always had the usual feeling about commanding negro troops.' I looked back at them and would have spoken, but their rank being so superior to mine, my tongue cleaved.⁶³

Cole continued by voicing a leading plea echoed by African American newspapers at the time — the desire for black units to be led by black officers, not white. "If this is done," he argued, "it will mark a distinct step in advance of any taken hitherto. It will recognize, partially, at least, the manhood of the colored troops, and break down the bar of separation now existing."⁶⁴

COMPANY B'S DUTY at Vancouver Barracks ended on May 17, 1900, when the soldiers left for Spokane's Fort Wright. Within months, on October 16, they were transferred to the Presidio of San Francisco. Thirteen days later, they arrived for duty in the Philippine Islands, where they spent almost the next two years at war.⁶⁵ The experience of Company B at Vancouver Barracks helps us better understand the history of African Americans in the urban West. In 1900, Portland's black population ranked sixth among western cities, and encompassed one of the largest African American communities near a posting of Company B. The soldiers interacted socially with Portland's black population, joining in soirees, weddings, and other activities that left several disconsolate sweethearts and at least one new bride when the soldiers moved on. The soldiers also interacted with Vancouver's tiny black community, while participating in formal and informal social activities with the town's white population. The record of the soldiers' lives at Vancouver Barracks provides a glimpse of life in the Pacific Northwest during the volatile Jim Crow era and supports the argument that African Americans made connections in western communities.⁶⁶

The experience of Company B also places Vancouver Barracks firmly within the scope of national Buffalo Soldier scholarship, where the Barracks is noticeably absent or where it has been confused with Vancouver, British Columbia.⁶⁷ Vancouver Barracks not only served as a major departmental headquarters and transportation hub for moving soldiers throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it also served as home to Company B. Several distinguished Buffalo Soldiers ended their military careers at Vancouver Barracks, including Edward Gibson and Moses Williams. Enlisting in 1869, Gibson served with the Tenth Cavalry, the Hospital Corps, and the Twenty-fourth Infantry for more than thirty years, learning to read and write in the process. Moses Williams, a decorated Medal of Honor recipient and Ninth Cavalry veteran, retired to Vancouver after a long career. He lived the remainder of his life at Vancouver Barracks and was buried in the Vancouver Barracks Post Cemetery. A monu-

ment honoring Williams and three other Medal of Honor recipients graces the lawn near the northeast entrance to the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. His grave at the post cemetery is next to that of another Buffalo Soldier, Thomas White, the Company B recruit who drowned at the post.

The evidence of Company B's tenure at Vancouver Barracks helps fill a gap in the scholarship on Buffalo Soldiers in the West. With a few exceptions — most notably works by Marvin Fletcher, Quintard Taylor, and Monroe Lee Billington — scholars who have studied the Buffalo Soldiers have looked at events before the 1890s, at the end of Frederick Jackson Turner's western frontier era. This marks a logical break, as the U.S. Army shifted its activity from domestic to overseas conflicts because of the Spanish American War and from remote to urban posts. Although substantial scholarship addresses Buffalo Soldier service during the Spanish American War and the war in the Philippines, their activities in the period between these conflicts has not drawn much attention.⁶⁸

Lastly, knowing about Company B at Vancouver Barracks fosters a connection to place, especially for African Americans. The Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (NHS) was established by Congress to tell the story of Fort Vancouver's role as the Hudson's Bay Company's headquarters and supply depot, the early end of the Oregon Trail, and the first U.S. Army post in the Pacific Northwest. As such, the fort has long been viewed from an exclusively white historical perspective. This is beginning to change, as staff explore the fort's working-class *engagés* and uncover the ethnic diversity of the fort's Village to construct an inclusive representation of the past. The story of Company B presents an opportunity for the National Park Service — the legislated need for interpretation and education programming at Fort Vancouver NHS and Vancouver NHR — the City of Vancouver, and others to better connect with the African American community. A guiding National Park Service mantra is "be relevant or become a relic," and creating a sense of belonging for all through promulgating stories like that of Company B is a path toward continued relevancy.⁶⁹

The thirteen-month sojourn of the Twenty-fourth Infantry's Company B in Vancouver, sandwiched between front-line service in Cuba during the Spanish American War and in the Philippines during the Philippine War, provides valuable insight into the history of the Buffalo Soldier, the community, and the nation. Their duty underlined major changes in the U.S. Army, as the organization — and the nation — struggled with its new imperialistic role following the sunset of decades of domestic warfare against American Indians. Company B's experience at Vancouver Barracks is a captivating microcosm that parallels and exemplifies an era, and telling their story can help make them part of the public consciousness.

Roster of Company B

Twenty-fourth Infantry

Fort Wright, Washington, 1900

Name	State of Birth	Rank	Age
Stanfield, Mack	Tennessee	1st Sergeant	39
Grayson, Charles	Ohio	Sergeant	47
Hill, Ezekiel	Ohio	Sergeant	44
Williams, Richard	Ohio	Sergeant	31
Grimes, James	Kentucky	Sergeant	36
Buford, Parker	Tennessee	Sergeant	53
Hall, John A.	Virginia	Corporal	30
Shepard, Edward	Kentucky	Corporal	40
Bowman, Jeremiah	Virginia	Corporal	50
Rollins, William	Kentucky	Corporal	30
Jackson, Algy	Georgia	Corporal	29
Johnson, William	Maryland	Corporal	26
<Illegible>, Frank	Georgia	Corporal	32
Roberts, Frank	Tennessee	Corporal	40
Harris, William	Virginia	Corporal	35
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Maryland	Corporal	38
<Illegible>, Charles	<Illegible>	Corporal	<Illegible>
<Illegible>, Joseph	<Illegible>	Musician	<Illegible>
Hammonds, Andrew	Maryland	Musician	34
Mingus, Charles	North Carolina	Artificer	24
Hargrove, Robert A.	South Carolina	Cook	41
Hardin, William	Kentucky	Cook	27
Allsbury, Philip	Virginia	Private	29
Amos, Robert L.	Tennessee	Private	23
Atkinson, Russell	Georgia	Private	51
Bailey, David	Maryland	Private	31
Banks, Charles	West Virginia	Private	21
Barnes, Louis H.	Indiana	Private	20
Bell, Floyd J.	Unknown	Private	Unknown
Burrell, Joseph	Alabama	Private	25
Busby, Mitchell	Alabama	Private	22
Christopher, Enoch	Kentucky	Private	35
Cleaver, Alonzo C.	Delaware	Private	23
Clemons, Max	South Carolina	Private	20

Cole, James G.	Illegible	Private	20
Conter, William	Washington, D.C.	Private	30
Davis, James	North Carolina	Private	34
Dickenson, James H.	Virginia	Private	23
Dunscorn, Charles G.	Kentucky	Private	21
Edings, Henry	Tennessee	Private	21
Ford, Francis W.	Pennsylvania	Private	20
Fox, William U.	Virginia	Private	27
French, Washington	Missouri	Private	25
Gaston, Moses C.	Georgia	Private	21
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Georgia	Private	19
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Georgia	Private	22
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Maryland	Private	31
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	North Carolina	Private	37
Howard, Grant	Virginia	Private	23
Howard, Henry	Tennessee	Private	20
Huddelston, William	Tennessee	Private	23
Hunter, Frank	South Carolina	Private	28
Jackson, George	North Carolina	Private	23
Jackson, William	Maryland	Private	23
James, Morris	Alabama	Private	23
Jenkins, Randolph	Georgia	Private	30
Johnson, Thomas	South Carolina	Private	20
Jones, Nicholas	Virginia	Private	24
Kittrell, Robert T.	Mississippi	Private	23
Lewis, Arthur	Pennsylvania	Private	23
Mays, James C.	Georgia	Private	23
Miller, Harry	Tennessee	Private	38
Miller, John	Kentucky	Private	22
Miller, William G.	Tennessee	Private	22
Moultrie, Frank	South Carolina	Private	22
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Alabama	Private	33
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Tennessee	Private	21
<Illegible>, Andrew	Tennessee	Private	38
Parnell, Wesley	South Carolina	Private	21
Powell, Wallace B.	Louisiana	Private	29
Reed, Charlie	Kentucky	Private	26
Riddle, Alfred	Mississippi	Private	45
Rice, Jesse	South Carolina	Private	24
Richey, Nick	Georgia	Private	31
Roberts, Dennis	West Indies	Private	33

Robinson, Arthur J.	Alabama	Private	19
Robinson, Willie	South Carolina	Private	23
Robinson, William R.	Tennessee	Private	22
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Tennessee	Private	17
<Illegible>, William H.	West Virginia	Private	23
<Illegible>, Thomas	Tennessee	Private	21
<Illegible>, Benjamin	Virginia	Private	52
<Illegible>, Thomas	Georgia	Private	25
Slaton, Archie T.	Tennessee	Private	21
Smith, Schuyler J.	Alabama	Private	23
Smith, William	Kentucky	Private	40
Spriggs, Walter	Maryland	Private	20
<Illegible>, Charles C.	Georgia	Private	25
Stratton, William R.	Tennessee	Private	19
Struthers, Edward	Pennsylvania	Private	30
Tanner, Willie	South Carolina	Private	20
Taylor, Eugene	Georgia	Private	23
<Illegible>, Frank	Kentucky	Private	21
Thomas, Lewis	Virginia	Private	50
Thomas, William H.	Virginia	Private	22
<Illegible>, <Illegible>	Pennsylvania	Private	30
Wilson, William H.	Virginia	Private	43
Wilson, James	Alabama	Private	22
Wood, Will	Alabama	Private	19
Wooten, Allen P.	Indiana	Private	26
Young, Toney	Georgia	Private	30
Young, Robert	Florida	Private	39
Zellers, John C.	Kentucky	Private	20
WHITE OFFICERS			
Keene, Henry C., Jr.	South America	Captain	37
Nelson, Hunter B.	Tennessee	1st Lieutenant	31
Baldwin, Theodore A., Jr.	Indian Territory	1st Lieutenant	22

Note: Three Privates and one Corporal whose names are illegible are not listed.

Source: 1900 Census, Fort Wright, Washington, transcribed by the author, supplemented by Regimental Returns, February, March, April, May, November 1899

NOTES

1. *Vancouver Independent*, April 6, 1899; (*Portland*) *Oregonian*, April 4, 1899.

2. See Frederick Jackson Turner, *History, Frontier, and Section: Three Essays by Frederick Jackson Turner* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); W. Sherman Savage, *Blacks in the West* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976); Kenneth Wiggins Porter, ed., *The Negro on the American Frontier* (New York: Arno Press, 1971); William Loren Katz, *The Black West* (Seattle: Open Hand Publishing, 1987); Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998). On Buffalo Soldiers, see William H. Leckie, *Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869–1891* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1971); Marvin E. Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1891–1917* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974); Willard B. Gatewood Jr., *Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers 1898–1902* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1974); Frank N. Schubert, *Black Valor: Buffalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870–1898* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1997); Frank N. Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier: Records, Reports, and Recollections of Military Life and Service in the West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003); Monroe Lee Billington and Roger D. Hardaway, eds., *African Americans on the Western Frontier* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998); William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866–1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,

2001). For African Americans in the Pacific Northwest, see Ted Van Arsdol, *Northwest Bastion: The U.S. Army Barracks at Vancouver, 1849–1916* (Vancouver, Wash.: Heritage Trust of Clark County, 1991), 70; Donald Richard Whitbeck, *A Man Named Moses: The Military Life of a Heroic Buffalo Soldier* (Los Angeles: WT Records & Publishing, 1996), 153–4; Joseph Franklin, *Black Exodus, Journey to the Promise Land: African American Migration, Settlement, and Activity in Clark County and Vancouver, Washington 1825–2000* (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 2004), 23–30; Donna L. Sinclair, *The Waking of a Military Town: Vancouver, Washington, and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, 1898–1920* (Vancouver, Wash.: Vancouver National Historic Reserve, 2004).

3. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 75–77, 82, 135; Bosco–Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community: Buildings of Portland's African American History* (Portland, Ore.: Bosco–Milligan Foundation, 1995), 3–18; City of Portland Bureau of Planning, *History of Portland's African American Community* (Portland, Ore.: City of Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993), 2, 14–16; Elizabeth McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788–1940* (Portland, Ore.: Georgian Press, 1980), 24; Savage, *Blacks in the West*, 10–12; Carlos Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 120–1, 153–4; John McClelland Jr., “Almost Columbia, Triumphant Washington,” *Columbia Magazine* 2:2 (Summer 1988); Franklin, *Black Exodus*, 19, 27. See also Quintard Taylor, “Slaves and Free Men: Blacks in the Oregon Country, 1840–1860,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 83:2 (Summer 1982): 150–73. For more on George Washington Bush and George Washington, see Savage, *Blacks in the West*, 106–10; Taylor, *In*

Search of the Racial Frontier, 82; Billington and Hardaway, *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, 255; and Katz, *The Black West*, 72–7.

4. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “History of African Americans in the Civil War,” http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/history/aa_cw_history.htm (accessed November 26, 2005). On African American soldiers in the Civil War, see Dudley Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861–1865* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1987).

5. Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 267.

6. Ibid; Fowler, *Black Infantry in the West*, 10, 22–30; J. Anthony Lukas, *Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets off a Struggle for the Soul of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 127–31; Quote in Michael J. Clark, “Improbable Ambassadors: Black Soldiers at Fort Douglas, Utah, 1896–1899” in *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, 76. See also Michael J. Clark, “A History of the Twenty-fourth United States Infantry Regiment in Utah, 1896–1900” (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1979).

7. Capt. Henry Wygant, Fort Douglas, Utah, to Adjutant General’s Office, October 4, 1898, Special Collections, U.S. Army Center for Military History, Collins Hall, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.; also available at <http://www.army.mil/CMH-PG/documents/spanam/BSSJH/2-24Inf2.htm> (accessed November 26, 2005); United States Army, Return of the Casualties in the Twenty-fourth Infantry Action at San Juan Hill Before Santiago, Cuba, on July 1, 2, and 3 1898, National Archives Microfilm Publication M665, Roll 250, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. [hereafter NARA Microfilm]; United States Army, Regimental Returns, Twenty-fourth Infantry, July 1898, NARA Microfilm M665, Roll 249; quote in Gatewood, *Smoked Yan-*

kees and the Struggle for Empire, 70.

8. *Skagway Daily Alaskan*, January 1, 1901, available at <http://www.yukonalaska.com/akblkhist/earlyTwenty-fourth.html> (accessed December 9, 2004); Clark, “Improbable Ambassadors,” 87–89; Regimental Returns, September and October 1899; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, 42–43; Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire*, 41–83.

9. See Van Arsdol, *Northwest Bastion*, and Sinclair, *The Waking of a Military Town*.

10. For more information on the resources, boundaries, and management of Fort Vancouver NHR and the Vancouver NHS, see U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Vancouver National Historic Reserve Cooperative Management Plan* (Vancouver, Wash.: National Park Service, 2000); U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2003). The parade ground is now a unit of the National Park System (part of Fort Vancouver NHS), and its Officers Row and many other extant structures are within the boundaries of the Vancouver NHR.

11. Van Arsdol, *Northwest Bastion*, 65–68; Sinclair, *The Waking of a Military Town*, 1–27.

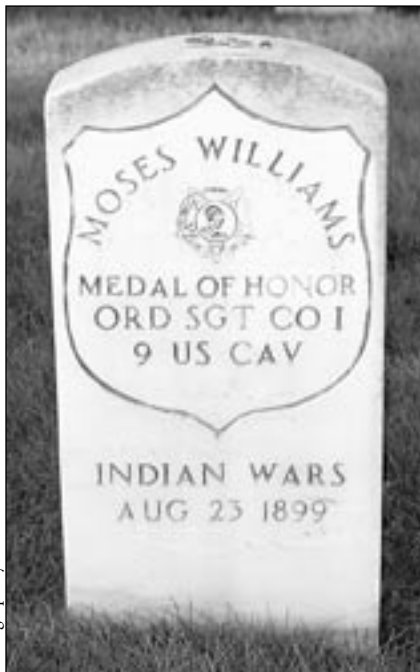
12. United States Army, Post Returns, Vancouver Barracks, April 1899, NARA Microfilm M617, Roll 1319. This study is based primarily on post returns, regimental returns, the few surviving company returns, U.S. Census data, and newspaper reports. Historians Dobak and Phillips — in *The Black Regulars, 1866–1898* — uncovered valuable information on enlisted soldiers through researching other government records, including court-martial testimony and pension affidavits.

13. Several African American recruits actually preceded the full company’s arrival.

On March 18, 1899, five new recruits from Company B — Andy Callaway, Charles G. Dunscomb, Henry Edings, James E. Hays, and Dave E. Simelton — reported for duty at the Barracks, awaiting arrival of their company. Five days later, four additional recruits — Henry Howard, Solomon P. O’Neil, Schuyler J. Smith, and William R. Stratton — joined them. By March 30, the final three privates — William W. Robinson, Robert L. Amos, and Thomas White — rounded out the contingent of new recruits for the company. See Post Returns, March 1899; Regimental Returns, March and April 1899.

14. Post Returns, March 1899; Regimental Returns, February–April 1899; quote in *Daily Alaskan*, January 1, 1901, available at <http://www.yukonalaska.com/akblkhist/earlyTwenty-fourth.html> (accessed December 9, 2004).

15. United States Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, Fort Wright, Spokane, Washington, June 1, 1900, NARA Microfilm T623, Roll 1750.



Photograph by the author

Company B departed Vancouver Barracks just days before the post’s enumerators collected census information. The unit’s information was documented at their subsequent post, Fort Wright, fourteen days later.

16. At this time, there was one black commissioned officer in the U.S. Army who had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point — Charles Young. Following his graduation in 1889, blacks were not admitted to the Academy for over thirty years. Another African American would not graduate from West Point with a commission until 1936. See Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, 74.

17. Parker Buford is listed on the 1910 census rolls for Salt Lake City, apparently retired and on his “own income.” He is listed along with his wife Eliza. Although their ages are not recorded, they had been married for forty-four years. According to the Utah Death Index, Parker Buford died on February 19, 1911, in Salt Lake City.

18. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fort Wright, June 1, 1900.

19. The author has been unable to locate Edward Gibson in the 1900 U.S. Census. Of the many African Americans named John Chase in the 1900 Census, a forty-eight-year old John Chase, “Soldier U.S.,” is recorded as a lodger in the Leavenworth, Kansas, home of Minister H.W. King. See 1900 U.S. Census, Leavenworth Ward 1, Leavenworth, Kansas. While at Fort Wright after duty at Vancouver Barracks, Parker Buford retired from service in September 1900. Post Returns, July 1899; United States Army, Company Returns, Return of Company B of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, April, May, and September 1899, NARA Microfilm M665, Roll 249.

20. By 1910, Perea had retired to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he lived with his wife Missouri and his daughter Margaret. In the 1910 census, the fifty-seven-year old Virginia native listed his occupation as railroad porter. Perea died on April 3,

1915, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

21. *Oregonian*, September 26, 1899.

22. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fort Wright, June 1, 1900.

23. *Ibid.*

24. The commissioned officers assigned to Company B while at Vancouver Barracks included Capt. Henry Wygant, Maj. Alfred Collins Markley, 1st Lt. William Louis Murphy, Capt. Henry Clay Keene Jr., 2^d Lt. Walter Campbell Sweeney, 1st Lt. Hunter Bithal Nelson, and 1st Lt. Theodore Anderson Baldwin Jr. With one exception at the time, black soldiers in the regular army served under white officers.

25. Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, 80.

26. John M. Carroll, ed., *The Black Military Experience in the West* (New York: Liverright, 1971), 92, quoted in Clark, "Improbable Ambassadors," 64–87.

27. Post Returns, January 1900. Evidence supports a school at Vancouver Barracks at this time, for a letter from the department headquarters calls for "report of Post School for period ending Jan 31, 1900."

28. Dobak and Phillips, *Black Regulars*, 125–34, 311; Fowler, *Black Infantry in the West*, 92–108; Elizabeth Arnett Fields, "The West, 1865–1897," in *A Historic Context for the African-American Military Experience*, ed. Steven D. Smith and James A. Ziegler (Champaign, Ill.: U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories, 1998), <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/ES-ProgramsConservation/Legacy/AAME/aame2b.html> (accessed November 26, 2005).

29. *Vancouver Independent*, June 1, 1899, February 15, 1900.

30. *Vancouver Independent*, August 24, 1899. For more information on Williams, see Whitbeck, *A Man Named Moses*; Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier*, 100–6; Schubert, *Black Valor*, 79–83, 87–88; and Dobak and Phillips, *The Black*

Regulars, 254–5. Williams had to formally request his Medal of Honor, and he has the distinction, along with John Denny, of the longest wait for a Medal of Honor (fifteen years). See Dobak and Phillips, *Black Regulars*, 332n34. See correspondence between the Office of the Adjutant General and the commanding officer of Vancouver Barracks, reproduced in the Military Records Supplement of Whitbeck, *A Man Named Moses*, 235–41. The inventory of Williams's effects is reproduced in Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier*, 106. See also Whitbeck, *A Man Named Moses*, 153, and Franklin, *Black Exodus*, 27.

31. *Vancouver Independent*, September 21, 1899.

32. Company Returns, September 1899.

33. *Vancouver Independent*, August 3, 1899.

34. *Ibid.*; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, 79; Fowler, *Black Infantry in the West*, 78–79.

35. Post Returns, July and August 1899, September 1899, October 1899.

36. *Vancouver Independent*, June 22, August 24, 1899.

37. *Vancouver Independent*, April 20, 1899; *San Francisco Call*, July 2, 1899; Company Returns, June 1899 and May 1900. That same summer, a detachment of Company H was detailed to Yosemite National Park in northern California. At least one photograph of these soldiers exists in the National Park Service's collections at Yosemite; it is used on a poster for sale by the Yosemite Association.

38. Post Returns, July 1899.

39. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 296.

40. Jerry M. Cooper, "The Army and Industrial Workers: Strikebreaking in the Late 19th Century," in *Soldiers and Civilians: The U.S. Army and the American People*, ed. Garry D. Ryan and Timothy K. Nenninger (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1978), 136; Lukas,

Big Trouble, 118–54.

41. Cooper, “The Army and Industrial Workers,” 138–9; Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 118–54.

42. *Oregonian*, May 3, May 6, 1899.

43. *Oregonian* May 2, 3, 4, 1899; Post Returns, May 1899; Cooper, “The Army and Industrial Workers,” 141.

44. Quoted in Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 151; Cooper, “The Army and Industrial Workers,” 139, 141; Katherine Aiken, “Fire in the Hole: Interview Transcripts,” <http://www.kued.org/productions/fire/interviews/aiken.html> (accessed November 26, 2005).

45. Post Returns, May, September, and October 1899.

46. When Company B arrived at Vancouver Barracks, it represented, on a local level, the army’s reassignment of troops at western posts. The *Oregonian* reported that Company M of the Twenty-fourth Infantry arrived at Spokane’s “new Army post” (Fort Wright) on the same date as Company B arrived at Vancouver Barracks. See the *Oregonian*, April 4, 1899.

47. Post Returns, May, August, and September 1899.

48. *Vancouver Independent*, July 20, 1899.

49. Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, 101.

50. *Vancouver Independent*, March 22, March 29, April 26, 1900.

51. *Vancouver Independent*, May 3, May 18, 1900.

52. *Vancouver Independent*, April 27, 1899, April 19, 1900.

53. *Portland New Age*, December 30, 1899. Leavenworth, Kansas, possessed a significant African American population — 16 percent of the total population in 1865. See Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 98–100. Beginning on June 26, 1899, Roberts had spent several weeks on detached service escorting prisoners to Fort Leavenworth. It is highly likely that he kindled a romantic flame with Wright during this period, since his service loca-

tion matches her hometown.

54. Quoted in Clark, “Improbable Ambassadors,” 79.

55. For example, Lizzie Roberts, a single thirty-four-year-old Missouri native, served as a cook for the household of Company B’s Captain Henry Keene, while Rebecca Hill, a single twenty-one-year-old, cooked for the family of Company B’s 1st Lt. Hunter B. Nelson. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fort Wright, June 1, 1900.

56. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fort Wright, June 1, 1900; Thirteenth Census of the United States, Portland Ward 5, Multnomah, Oregon, April 20, 1910 NARA Microfilm To624, Roll 1286.

57. *Portland New Age*, November 25, 1899, May 19, 1900; *Vancouver Independent*, August 17, 1899.

58. *Vancouver Independent*, December 28, November 30, 1899.

59. For more information on the Stanfields, see United States Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, Portland Ward 5, Multnomah, Oregon, April 20, 1910 NARA Microfilm To624, Roll 1286; Fourteenth Census of the United States, Portland, Multnomah, Oregon, January 10, 1920, NARA Microfilm To625, Roll 1500; Fifteenth Census of the United States, Portland, Multnomah, Oregon, April 5, 1930 NARA Microfilm Roll 1950; “Portland, Oregon Deaths, 1915–1924,” Ancestry.com, http://www.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=4479&o_lid=8913&xt=8913 (accessed November 26, 2006); “Oregon Death Index, 1903–98,” Ancestry.com, <http://www.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=5254> (Accessed November 26, 2005). By 1910, Stanfield worked as a janitor in the Portland Heights Club, and his wife worked as a waitress. Ten years later, they owned their own home and Stanfield managed a pool room. He died on March 18, 1921. Sallie, who lived for another twenty-one years in Portland, died on November 6, 1942. The couple appears to have been childless, and no indication

of any Stanfield children is evident from the census documents. In reviewing census data, the Stanfield home on SE 42nd Avenue appears to be in a white neighborhood, which would be a notable exception for African Americans in red-lined Portland.

60. *Vancouver Independent*, April 27, 1899.

61. *Portland New Age*, December 2, 1899.

62. *Portland New Age*, May 19, 1900.

63. *Oregonian*, September 26, 1899. For an interesting comparison, note the textual similarities between Cole's letter and an incident involving Chaplain Allen Allensworth. "For a long time there was among Army officers a certain prejudice against serving in Negro regiments. But he [Allensworth] heard a Lieutenant in the Ninth Infantry say with a show of genuine enthusiasm one day: 'Do you know, I shouldn't want anything better than to have a company in a Negro regiment? I am from Virginia, and have always had the usual feeling about commanding colored troops. But after seeing that charge of the Twenty-fourth up the San Juan hill, I should like the best in the world to have a Negro company.'" Charles Alexander, *Battles and Victories of Allen Allensworth. A.M., Ph.D., Lieutenant-Colonel, Retired, U. S. Army*, (Boston: Sherman, French, 1914), 368–70.



64. *Oregonian*, September 26, 1899. Ironically, the *Oregonian* announced in the same issue — with a large image — the promotion of Sgt. A.V. Richardson to a position as a commissioned officer with the Forty-eighth U.S. Volunteer Infantry. For examples of newspapers demanding that black soldiers be led by black officers, see the *Richmond Planet*, May 7, May 14, May 21, May 28, 1818, cited in Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire*, 10117.

65. Regimental Returns, October 1900.

66. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 193.

67. The author was unable to locate references to Buffalo Soldiers at Vancouver Barracks in major works on blacks in the West or recent National Park Service scholarship, including Deidre McCarthy, "Exploring the Contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers Through New Technologies," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2:1 (Winter 2005). Two versions of Michael J. Clark's article, "Improbable Ambassadors: Black Soldiers at Fort Douglas, Utah, 1896–1899" — one appearing in Billington and Hardaway's *African Americans on the Western Frontier* and the other in Stanford J. Layton, ed., *Being Different: Stories of Utah's Minorities* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2001), 74, 88 — appear to confuse Vancouver Barracks' location in Vancouver, Washington with Vancouver, British Columbia. The author has not encountered evidence of soldiers from the U.S. Twenty-fourth Infantry assigned to a post in British Columbia.

68. For a notable exception, see Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire*, 3–18.

69. David L. Larson, "Be Relevant or Become a Relic: Meeting the Public Where They Are," National Park Service Interpretive Development Program, <http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/berelvant.pdf> (accessed November 26, 2005).