



A NEGRO REGIMENT IN ACTION.—[See Page 114.]

## African Americans in the Civil War

14 H. Art'y. U.S.C.T.

*Thomas Gibbs*

Appears with rank of *Pat.* on

Muster and Descriptive Roll of a Detachment of U. S. Vols, forwarded for the *1st Reg't Col'd Cavalry* Roll dated *New Bern, N.C. Jan. 24, 1864*

Where born *Onslow Co., N.C.*

Age *19 yrs*; occupation *Farmer*

When enlisted *March 15, 1864*

Where enlisted *Croatan, N.C.*

For what period enlisted *3* years.

Eyes *black*; hair *black*

Complexion *dark*; height *5 ft. 4 in.*

When mustered in *March 20, 1864*

Where mustered in *New Bern, N.C.*

Bounty paid \$ *100*; due \$ *100*

Where credited *New Bern, Crown Co., N.C.*

Company to which assigned *D*

Remarks:

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Private Thomas Gibbs of Onslow County, was mustered into Union service at New Bern, NC.

In spite of the great difficulty involved in becoming a soldier or sailor in the Civil War, many black men were determined to serve. Most served on the Union side, but a few chose to join the Confederacy. After the January 1, 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and the establishment of the Bureau of Colored Troops by the Federal government in May, 1863, black men found their way to cities such as New Bern and Beaufort that were enlisting and organizing primarily black units. At least seventeen men born in Onslow County served in the Union Navy; approximately ninety enlisted in Union infantry, cavalry and artillery units.

## TO COLORED MEN!

### FREEDOM, Protection, Pay, and a Call to Military Duty!

On the 1st day of January, 1863, the President of the United States proclaimed FREEDOM to over THREE MILLIONS OF SLAVES. This decree is to be enforced by all the power of the Nation. On the 21st of July he issued the following order:

#### PROTECTION OF COLORED TROOPS.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, July 21."

"General Order, No. 232.

"The following order of the President is published for the information and government of all concerned—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, July 30.

"It is the duty of every Government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition, and especially to those who are duly organized as soldiers in the public service. The law of nations, and the usage and customs of war, as carried on by civilized powers, permit no distinction as to color in the treatment of prisoners of war as public enemies. To sell or enslave any captured person on account of his color, is a relapse into barbarism, and a crime against the civilization of the age.

"The Government of the United States will give the same protection to all its soldiers, and if the enemy shall sell or enslave any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in our possession. It is, therefore, ordered, for every soldier of the United States, killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every one enslaved by the enemy, or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and continued at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to prisoners of war.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

"By order of the Secretary of War.

"E. B. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant General."

That the President is in earnest the rebels soon began to find out, as witness the following order from his Secretary of War:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, August 8, 1862.

"Six: Your letter of the 2d inst., calling the attention of this Department to the cases of Otis H. Brown, William H. Johnston, and Wm. Wilson, three colored men captured on the gunboat Isaac Smith, has received consideration. This Department has directed that three rebel prisoners of South Carolina, if there be any such in our possession, and if not, three others, be confined in close custody and held as hostages for Brown, Johnston and Wilson, and that the fact be communicated to the rebel authorities at Richmond.

"Very respectfully your obedient servant,

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

"The Hon. GIBBS WALLIS, Secretary of the Navy."

And retaliation will be our practice now—man for man—to the bitter end.

## LETTER OF CHARLES SUMNER,

Written with reference to the Convention held at Poughkeepsie, July 15th and 16th, 1862, to promote Colored Militiamen.

BOSTON, July 15th, 1862.

"I doubt if, in times past, our country could have expected from colored men any patriotic service. Such service is the return for protection. But now that protection has begun, the service should begin also. Nor should relative rights and duties be weighed with slowness. It is enough that our country, aroused at last to a sense of justice, seeks to send colored men among its defenders.

"If my country should reach such persons, I would say, resist at once. Now is the day and now is the hour. Help to overcome your cruel enemies now battling against your country, and in this way you will surely overcome those other enemies hardly less cruel, here at home, who will still seek to degrade you. This is not the time to hesitate or to flinch. Do your duty to your country, and you will set an example of generous self-sacrifice which will conquer prejudice and open all hearts.

"Very faithfully yours,

"CHARLES SUMNER."