

# Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board

Arlington County, Virginia



**HALRB Meeting February 21, 2024, CoA 23-14A**

**3829 N. Stafford St.:** Request to install new historic marker.

**HPP STAFF NOTE: This is the old cover letter providing context for the project's original CoA submission in 2023.**

February 1, 2023

The Conservation and Interpretation Unit is seeking to update the location and language of an interpretive sign at Glebe Park. The sign was created by Civil War Trails, Inc. (CWT), and tells the general history of Fort Ethan Allen, the remains of which are located at nearby Fort Ethan Allen Park. In the years since this sign was placed, the historical information has been retold in greater detail on other interpretive signs located within Fort Ethan Allen Park, itself. Additionally, the sign's current location within Glebe Park is isolated from the park's foot traffic. As the Conservation and Interpretation Unit pays CWT an annual fee of \$200 for the sign's continued upkeep, as well as the site's promotion on CWT travel brochures, we wish to change the sign's content and location to make better use of park resources.

We propose two changes to the sign, to be carried out by CWT per the terms of our annual membership agreement. First, we wish to move the sign from its current location at Glebe Park to the collection of interpretive signs already located Fort Ethan Allen Park. Second, we wish to change the text of the sign to tell an overlooked Union Army story connected to Fort Ethan Allen, and all of Arlington County: the story of the 107<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops. This regiment of African American soldiers, stationed in Arlington's forts during the last days of the American Civil War, has never been told on any public sign within the county. Conversely, the photographs of the regiment in Arlington are some of the most frequently used and recognizable images of the United States Colored Troops during the war. By making these changes to the current CWT sign, we will be offering a more inclusive historical narrative within our county's Civil War sites of memory, at no additional cost to the county.

For your reference, we have submitted CWT's policies & guidelines for new signs, as well as the old and new text and locations for the sign. Once the project has been approved, CWT will begin drafting the sign layout based on our proposed language and images. Once completed and approved, CWT will move and install the new sign. For further questions, please contact Fort C.F. Smith Park Historian John McNair at (703) 228-4775, or at [jmcnair@arlingtonva.us](mailto:jmcnair@arlingtonva.us). Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

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# CAPITAL PROTECTORS



## The 107th USCT at Fort Ethan Allen



CivilWarTrails.org

DEFENSES OF WASHINGTON, 1861–1865

**F**ort Ethan Allen witnessed the dramatic social change brought on by the war. In late 1865, the 107th United States Colored Troops (USCT) garrisoned Fort Ethan Allen. Two companies, C and H, roughly 200 men, drilled on the parade ground and manned

the ramparts here starting in October 1865, while seven other companies were stationed elsewhere.

The 107th came from Kentucky. USCT enlistment was not allowed in Kentucky until the spring of 1864. Enlistment guaranteed freedom for enslaved recruits, but initially required the consent of enslavers. In July of 1864, recruitment in Kentucky was finally opened to “all who present themselves.”

*“I wish for nothing but to breathe ... the air of liberty.... I have no ambition, unless it to be to break the chain and exclaim: ‘Freedom to all!’”*

—Sgt. Maj. Charles Singer,  
107th USCT, September 18, 1864



Charles Singer joined the 107th USCT in the late spring of 1864. He rose to the rank of sergeant major, then one of the highest ranks available to USCTs.

Courtesy Gettysburg National Military Park



Prior to the war, Pvt. Creed Miller was enslaved in Kentucky. He enlisted in the 107th USCT. Disease curtailed his service, and he died in early 1866. The badge he wore on his uniform reflects his pride in serving his country.

Courtesy National Museum of African American History and Culture

Some early recruits of the 107th were free men who enlisted by choice or were drafted, others were enlisted by their enslavers, and still others escaped from bondage and secured freedom through enlistment.

It's stunning to think that from 1865 to 1866, formerly enslaved men protected America's capital. On November 22, 1866, the 107th mustered out from service.