

Brass Letters and a Blue Cap:

William Wesley Broadway's Life in Transition

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Chestertown's America

I pledge my word of honor that I have abided by the Washington College Honor Code while
completing this assignment.

By the time William Wesley Broadway was 21 years old, he had served as a slave, was enlisted and fought in the Civil War, was subsequently freed, and witnessed the greatest civil rights issue in American history. Broadway's life story was neither unique nor necessarily significant, but it was largely emblematic of the African-American experience on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The fact that Broadway's story was not unique makes his story a genuine window into a relatively unknown past. He carried the story of the African-American struggles, as well as the Civil War struggles, into the 1930s and created a connection among generations.

After the first year of the Civil War, President Lincoln determined that the enlistment of African Americans was necessary for a Union victory over the rebels.¹ In 1863, the negro recruitment campaign accelerated and the United States Government declared that "any citizen of Maryland, who shall offer his or her slave for enlistment into the military service, shall, if such slave be accepted...become entitled to compensation for the service or labor of said slave not to exceed the sum of three hundred dollars."² This order also manumitted any slaves that enlisted in the Union army. The Union army was in a major recruiting phase, calling for the enlistment of free blacks, as well as sending soldiers out to "seize upon and carry into the encampment at Benedict all negro men found" to be enrolled and trained in the Union



Figure 1. 1860 Simon Martenet, Queen Anne's County, Spaniards Neck. J. G. Stong's Map of Queen Anne's County, 1866, MSA SC 5080-1.

¹ John W. Blassingame, "The Recruitment of Negro Troops in Maryland." *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (March 1963), 20.

² "Colored Troops in Maryland," *Alexandria Gazette*, November 2, 1863, p.1.; Blassingame, 20.

army.³ The government call for the enlistment of free blacks caused a lot of tension. Farmers and slave owners were concerned that taking away the cheap labor force would force people to start hiring and paying slaves to fill the labor gap. Small, non-slaveholding farmers were at quite a disadvantage because if the free black labor was recruited for the war, the farmers would have to rely on the slaveholding farmers for their labor source.⁴ People, instead, proposed “persons owning slaves should bear their proportion of the public burden, and that slaves should be enlisted *pari pasu* with the free persons of color.”⁵ Recruiting agents even argued that “the slave is the only loyal man and anxious to fight for the country, but is prohibited from doing so.”⁶ This proposal reduced any significant impact on the cheap labor force by ensuring that the free blacks would be enlisted at the same rate as the slaves.

One such recruited Union soldier was Broadway, who was born in May between 1844 and 1845 at one of William Emory's plantations on Spaniards Neck of Queen Anne's County on Maryland's Eastern Shore.⁷ William Emory owned multiple farms in Queen Anne's County, in addition to a lot in Chestertown.⁸ William Emory's inventory reflects a typical Eastern Shore farm with ordinary items such as flat irons, chairs, wine glasses, book cases, as well as

³ “Slave Enlistments in Maryland,” *Annapolis Gazette*, January 19, 1864.

⁴ Blassingame, 21.

⁵ “Baltimore Judge to the Secretary of War,” in *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. Series II The Black Military Experience*, edited by Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 200.

⁶ “Eastern Shore Recruiting Agent to the Secretary of War,” in *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. Series II The Black Military Experience*, edited by Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 205.

⁷ Special Collections (U.S Colored Troops Pension File Collection) Wesley Broadway, MSA SC 4126-1-557, Bureau of Pensions, 13.; Act of May 11, 1912, 18.; Declaration for Pension, 21. “Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops, 2nd Through 7th Colored: 7th US Colored Infantry, Bowz-Bun: Broadway, Wesley,” from <http://www.fold3.com/image/#140208389>, 3. Ancestry.com. Based on his military records, he was believed to be born around 1844 in Queen Anne's County. His age varies based on each record and how much time passes between them, but, taking his military enlistment age as most accurate, he was 18 in 1863.

⁸ Queen Anne's County Register of Wills (Probate Records), William Emory, 1860, Last Will and Testament. Familysearch.org.

agricultural tools such as grind stones, scythes, and corn shellers. Broadway was originally William Emory's slave and was working on the farm, probably swinging the scythes through the wheat, oat, and corn harvest, or perhaps tending the 115 sheep, several oxen, twenty hogs, twenty-one horses, and thirty head of cattle.⁹ When William Emory died in 1860, "Wesley" was valued at \$600.00 and was broken from the only family he had known and transferred to serve William's son, Stewart R. Emory.¹⁰ Broadway continued to serve as a farm hand on the Emory farm on the peninsula between the Chester and Corsica River.¹¹ Stewart R. Emory, in 1850, had one ninety-year-old black servant named Flora, as well as nine slaves.¹² By 1860, Stewart R. Emory is listed as having only one fourteen-year-old male slave, but, on the same slave schedule, William Emory had thirty slaves, who were divided among William Emory's heirs, including Stewart.¹³

Broadway was born into a time of slavery and farming on the Eastern Shore. Instead of just cash crops, such as tobacco and wheat, there was a market for corn, wheat, oats, rye, beans, potatoes, flour, and clover.¹⁴ Farming technology had advanced and advertisements for the most advanced ploughs, plough castings, corn shellers, and other agricultural implements filled the

⁹ Queen Anne's County Register of Wills (Probate Records), William Emory, 1860, Inventory of Chattels. Familysearch.org.

¹⁰ Queen Anne's County Register of Wills (Probate Records), William Emory, 1860, Inventory of Chattels. Familysearch.org.; Note: In the account of sales, Wesley is listed as going to Stuart R. Emory, but is only listed as \$300.00. Queen Anne's County Register of Wills (Probate Records), William Emory, 1860, Account of Sales, Family search.org.

¹¹ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Bureau of Pensions, 33.; J.G Strong's Map of Queen Anne's County, 1866, MSA SC 5080-1, Courtesy of the Queen Anne's County Historical Society, at the Maryland State Archives.; "Compiled Military Service Records," 3.; U.S Census Bureau (U.S Slave Schedule), Stewart R. Emory, District 6, Queen Anne's County, p.9, ancestry.com; Comptroller of the treasury (Bounty Rolls), 1864-1868, Slaves and owners, by USCT Regiment, Comptroller's Index to MSA S629-1, MdHR3814. p.148.

¹² U.S Census Bureau (Census Record), Stewart R. Emory, 1850, Queen Anne's, District 3, p.26. ancestry.com; U.S Census Bureau (Slave Schedules), Stewart R. Emory, 1850, Queen Anne's, District 6, p.9. ancestry.com.

¹³ U.S Census Bureau (Slave Schedules), Stewart R. Emory, 1860, Queen Anne's, District 3, p.7, ancestry.com; U.S Census Bureau (Slave Schedules), William Emory's heirs, 1860, Queen Anne's, District 3, p.7, ancestry.com.; Queen Anne's County Register of Wills (Probate Records), William Emory, 1860, Last Will and Testament, Familysearch.org.

¹⁴ "Markets," *The Kent News*, May 2, 1846, p.2., M-2349, Miller Library Microfilm.

newspapers.¹⁵ Broadway was probably largely removed from the news of the town, the war in Texas and New Orleans, the latest clothing for women, taxes for stock brokers, new offers for fire insurance.¹⁶ He was, however, probably aware of the omnipresent threat of being sold South as slave traders continued to buy and transport slaves from Baltimore to New Orleans.¹⁷

As slave recruitment proceeded, news of slaves leaving their masters to fight as volunteers in the war littered the newspapers. The call for volunteers rang clear in the slaves' ears, and perhaps in the masters' ears as well. The agricultural production had plummeted due to drought and pests and so plowing of the crops began earlier. Forfeiting slaves to the government provided the masters a \$100 bounty incentive.¹⁸ The permission to allow and encourage slaves to enlist in the army was met with great contention. Opponents argued that it was a "palpable infraction of the Constitution."¹⁹ Whether Emory saw it as an infraction or not, he eventually gave permission for Broadway to go to Baltimore to enlist.

At nineteen years old, Broadway enlisted in Company A of the Seventh Regiment of the United States Colored Troops on September 26, 1863. He enlisted in Baltimore under Colonel William Birney at Birney Barracks. Broadway's owner, Emory, was paid \$100 in bounty for Wesley's enlistment.²⁰ The \$100 bounty suggests that Broadway was only required to serve the Emory family for between three to five more years. The amount of the bounty granted to the

¹⁵ "To Farmers," *The Kent News*, May 2, 1846, p.3. M-2349, Miller Library Microfilm.

¹⁶ *The Kent News*, May 16, 1846. M-2349, Miller Library Microfilm.

¹⁷ "Negroes Wanted," *The Kent News*, May 16, 1846, p.4. M-2349, Miller Library Microfilm.

¹⁸ "Col. William Paca," *The Kent News*, September 5, 1863, p.2 M-1621, Miller Library Microfilm.; "The Corn Crop," *The Kent News*, September 5, 1863, p.2 M-1621, Miller Library Microfilm.

¹⁹ "Enlistment of Slaves in Maryland," *The Kent News*, September 19, 1863, p.2, M-1621, Miller Library Microfilm.

²⁰ Maryland State Archives pension record, Interview answers, 7.; Declaration for Pension, 21; Adjutant General (Muster Rolls), 186301866, U.S Colored Troops [MSA S936-47]. Wesley Broadway, Company A, 7th Regiment, Page 59, Line 24.; "Compiled Military Service Records," 3,4.

owner increased as the remaining term of service increased.²¹ Eventually, the government offered increased incentives, including the \$100 bounty plus an additional \$300 from the National Government, \$50 to the slave upon enlistment, and another \$50 when the slaves were mustered out.²² The money paid to the owner was about the average value of a slave and the money paid to the slave was an extraordinary step towards freedom. Many enlisted slaves saved their military pay for after the war when they could buy or rent their own property.

Broadway enlisted with a fellow slave, William Moody, from the Stewart R. Emory farm. The records suggest that Moody was not transferred from William Emory to Stewart R. Emory, which means that Broadway would have known him for three years at most, prior to enlistment.²³ Both enlisted and served in Company A of the Seventh Regiment.²⁴ One of the fourteen-year-old males listed on William Emory's heirs slave schedule could very well have been Broadway and the fourteen-year-old male listed on Stewart R. Emory's slave schedule could have been Moody.²⁵ Enlisting and serving with a familiar face must have been reassuring in a time when most variables were unknown. They were probably uncertain of what they would be doing, where they would be going, and whom they would meet along the way, but at least they had a quasi-family connection between them.

²¹ Blassingame, 24-25.

²² Blassingame, 28.

²³ Queen Anne's County Register of Wills (Probate Records), William Emory, 1860, Inventory of Chattels. Familysearch.org.

²⁴ Comptroller of the treasury (Bounty Rolls), 1864-1868, Slaves and owners, by USCT Regiment, Comptroller's Index to MSA S629-1, MdHR3814. p.156.

²⁵ U.S Census Bureau (Slave Schedules), William Emory's heirs, 1860, Queen Anne's, District 3, p.7, ancestry.com.

With curly hair, black complexion, and brown eyes, Wesley Broadway donned a Union uniform by October 8, 1863 and was assigned a weapon by October 18.²⁶ From the point that these soldiers wore their uniforms, they transformed from property to free men with something worth fighting for. Frederick Douglass relates this feeling saying that “Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.”²⁷

Despite the feeling of pride and excitement welling up in the new soldiers, camp life must have been monotonous, drilling for no less than four hours each day.²⁸ The day after receiving their arms, Companies A and B of the Seventh Regiment were mustered out to Camp Benedict in Charles County, Maryland.²⁹ Soon after

Broadway's arrival, in October 1863, a slave owner, Colonel John Satherton, murdered Lieutenant Eben White of the Seventh Regiment. Under orders from Colonel Birney, who led the camp at Benedict, Lieutenant White went to recruit slaves in St. Mary's County. Apparently



Figure 2. Capt. Joseph Prince with officers,” Fort Stanton, Feb. 1864.

Colonel Satherton was not agreeable to any terms of enlistment of his slaves and so when White attempted to appeal to Satherton's slaves themselves, despite his protests, Satherton shot and

²⁶ Seventh Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers,” *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-1866, Vol.2, Vol.366*, p.155.; Maryland State Archives pension record, Interview answers,7.

²⁷ Frederic May Holland, *Frederick Douglass: The Colored Orator*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891), p.301.

²⁸ Califf, Joseph Mark. *Record of the Services of the Seventh Regiment, U. S. Colored Troops* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries, 1971), 7.

²⁹ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Interview answers,7.; Califf, 7.

killed White. It is possible that Broadway was part of the detail group on the recruiting mission, especially because he was dispatched out to a recruiting mission in St. Mary's County during October of 1863.³⁰ Satherton was acquitted of murder because the witnesses to the murder were still in service.³¹ These recruiting missions became routine for officers and soldiers in the USCT. Colonel Birney gave only verbal orders to "do a hundred things they had legally no right to do," which included "stealing" slaves.³²

After Lieutenant White's death, Colonel James Shaw took command of the Seventh Regiment.³³ In early 1864, Broadway continued service doing guard duty at Camp Stanton in Benedict, Maryland, where Brigadier General Birney was recruiting black slaves.³⁴ Unfortunately on January 11, 1864, Broadway's comrade William Moody died at Camp Stanton. During that winter, reports indicate unhealthy conditions and cases of the measles, which led to countless deaths among the soldiers in the Seventh.³⁵ Just five days after Moody died, the men received their commission payment, which amounted to only \$7.00 a month, after having to spend \$3 for their clothing and supplies. Such a wage was rather bitter sweet. They had never been paid for their work before, yet it was still a discounted pay from what the white soldiers received and so racial discrimination continued to permeate their new freedom.³⁶ On March 3,

³⁰ "Murder of a Lieutenant by a Slaveholder," *Cleveland Morning Leader*, October 22, 1863, p.3.; Compiled Military Service Records," 4.

³¹ Califf, 11-12.

³² Califf, 10.

³³ Califf, 15-17.

³⁴ "U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1861-1865: 7th USCT," recorded by R.N. Bayles, 220; *Annapolis Gazette*, "Slave Enlistments in Maryland: Letter from Gen. Birney" (Annapolis, MD: January 28, 1864), 2; *Easton Gazette*, "Legislative" (Easton, MD: January 16, 1864), 2.

³⁵ "Seventh Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers," *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-1866, Vol.2*, Vol.366, p.161.; Califf, 19-20.

³⁶ Califf, 20.

1864, Company A was sent to join the 9th Regiment on the steamer *United States* to briefly stop in Hilton Head, South Carolina, then board the *Delaware* for Jacksonville, Florida.³⁷

Upon their arrival in Jacksonville, Florida, Broadway and his comrades proved their worth in their fast and capable work, as well as in several skirmishes with the rebels. They helped to create the camp at Jacksonville, which was shared by several colored Regiments.³⁸ No doubt, the time spent in the camp was a great bonding experience among the soldiers, who were able to gather and share their stories with each other. Time spent outside of the camp, however, was a different matter. Colonel Shaw and 300 of his soldiers marched at least twenty miles throughout the region and met Confederate troops and captured Camp Melton in Florida by late May, 1864.³⁹ Their constant engagement in marching and fighting earned them highest praise from Inspector General George H. Gordon, who claimed, “that the 7th Regiment was the best colored Regiment in the service of the United States.”⁴⁰ Jacksonville, however, was not as pleasant as their success because Broadway claimed to have contracted dyspepsia from the bad food, water, and conditions.⁴¹ By June, the Florida weather was hot, cultivating many illnesses among the soldiers. It is possible that Broadway’s illness could have kept him at the camp while the company went out to confront the Confederates. Until now, the company had been largely sheltered from open fire in a battle.⁴² A quick mission to John’s Island, South Carolina presented the first opportunity for the Seventh Regiment to fight “under the fire of a line of battle” and performed flawlessly. By August, the Seventh Regiment left Jacksonville for Hilton Head, South

³⁷ Califf, 20-22.

³⁸ “Seventh Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers,” *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-1866, Vol.2, Vol.366, p.156.*; Califf, 23.

³⁹ Califf, 24-26.

⁴⁰ “Seventh Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers,” *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-1866, Vol.2, Vol.366, p.156.*

⁴¹ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Invalid Pension, 22.

⁴² Califf, 28.

Carolina and then Fortress Monroe, to aid the Army of the Potomac and General Birney on the James River.⁴³

From Fortress Monroe, the Seventh Regiment stayed on the James River in Virginia and eventually was called to assist in another battle known as the Second Battle of Deep Bottom. Deep Bottom, Virginia was at a horseshoe bend near the headwaters of the James River. It was late August and it was probably extremely humid and hot, with mosquitoes that resided in the marshy and forested land.⁴⁴ The Seventh joined the 29th Connecticut and the Eighth and Ninth USCT under the command of General William Birney. None, except the Eighth, had significant battle experience nor had they ever fought together. It must have been disconcerting to enter into a battle without really knowing who they were fighting with and how they fought. The Seventh and the Ninth “were on the right of the corps and participated in the seizure of the Confederate line in their front,” while the Eighth and 29th defended their fortifications.⁴⁵ An account of the Second Battle of Deep Bottom on August 26, 1864, suggested that Broadway sustained a gunshot wound to his right hip in the charge on the enemy.⁴⁶ A gunshot wound to the right thigh ripped the tendons and muscle, leaving his leg torn and atrophied. This wound supposedly was the cause of his chronic rheumatism. It is possible, however, that Broadway’s injury may have been from friendly fire. In the Second Battle of Deep Bottom, the Seventh Regiment fought the rebels and by mistake the Fourth New Hampshire also fired upon the Seventh Regiment thinking

⁴³ “Seventh Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers,” 156.

⁴⁴ “Deep Bottom, Henrico, Virginia,” Google Earth.

⁴⁵ William Glenn Robertson, “From the Crater to New Market Heights: A Tale of Two Divisions,” in *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, edited by John David Smith (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 188-189.

⁴⁶ Maryland State Archives Pension record, Proof of Disability, 37.

them to be Confederates. After charging the rebel army, the Seventh Regiment exchanged fire with a fellow Union Regiment before they realized the mistake.⁴⁷

After the Battle of Deep Bottom, the Seventh was assigned to manual labor, working in the trenches and making bomb proofs. Soldiers were sent as reinforcement, but saw little action. By November 1, General Birney gathered the Regiment to announce the new State Constitution, which abolished slavery in Maryland. These men and their families no longer belonged to anyone but themselves.⁴⁸ Upon receiving their pay in February 1865, Company A donated \$3,356 to the Christian Commission.⁴⁹

It is significant that the soldiers decided to donate their scant earnings and savings to the Christian Commission. Including officers, there were 122 soldiers in Company A, which means that each man donated about \$27.50. This may not sound like a lot, but the black soldiers were also only receiving \$7.00 a month. The Christian Commission was developed during the Civil War in a time of religious revival. Their primary goal was to bring religion to the young soldiers on the battlefields, in camps, and at the hospitals. An army committee was established to bring religious instruction to the soldiers, and "this...was the first recognition of the Army as a field for evangelical labor and effort."⁵⁰ These soldiers obviously valued religion and appreciated the effort to bring hope to the battlefields.

Their exuberance over the abolition of slavery and the end of the war quickly came to halt when they heard news of President Lincoln's assassination. Their excitement fell to sorrow

⁴⁷ "An Unfortunate Occurrence in General Grant's Army." *Daily Ohio Statesman*, September 7, 1864, p.1, reported from the Cor. Phila. Press, August 1864, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028645/1864-09-07/ed-1/seq-1/>>.

⁴⁸ Califf, 49.

⁴⁹ Califf, 76.

⁵⁰ M. Hamlin Cannon, The United States Christian Commission, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 38 (1), 1951: 62-63.

as “Everyone seemed to feel that it was a personal as well as a national misfortune.”⁵¹ They named their camp in honor of the late President and soon after were sent to Texas, despite the end of the war. Because most African-American soldiers were enlisted in 1863 or 1864, they signed for a three year term of service, which meant that they were still obligated to fulfill their service even though the war was over.⁵²

After suffering several injuries and deaths in the East, the Seventh Regiment moved on to Indianola, Texas. Apparently service in Texas “was unpopular with black soldiers because it was far from their homes and evoked a fear of the unknown.”⁵³ Their purpose in Texas was also somewhat ambiguous given the end of the war. Their arrival was delayed due to a storm and they had to seek refuge in New Orleans and returned to Indianola two weeks later.⁵⁴ On May 27, 1866, Mexicans in Brownsville, Texas killed Surgeon Joel Monroe, who tended to Wesley’s wound and dyspepsia while in Texas and had traveled with the Seventh Regiment since November 25, 1863. Monroe had attributed Broadway’s dyspepsia to “unwholesome food, bad water, and aggravated by the hardships and exposure of the service.”⁵⁵ Upon deadly outbreaks of cholera, in addition to the recent murder to Surgeon Monroe, the Seventh Regiment suffered great losses, ironically not from fighting, but from the harsh environment and conditions. They soon received news that they were to be mustered out at Baltimore. Upon their departure, Colonel Shaw ensured that the men departed on an adequate and large boat and that the men received new colors. They were to return valiantly, despite all of their recent sorrow.⁵⁶ On

⁵¹ Califf, 70-71.

⁵² Donald R. Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 23.

⁵³ Shaffer, 26.

⁵⁴ Califf, 72-73.

⁵⁵ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Act of February 6, 1907, 27.; Califf, 17.

⁵⁶ Califf, 84.

November 2, 1866, Broadway and his company were finally sent back to Fort Federal Hill in Baltimore, Maryland, where they were paid and mustered out of service.⁵⁷

All of the men of the Seventh Regiment were slaves before the war. Consequently, these soldiers' late masters were entitled the \$100 bounty. Colonel Shaw, however, pulled some strings to ensure that his men received an additional \$100 bounty that they could keep. By November 15, 1866, the Seventh Regiment disbanded leaving the men paid and scattered throughout the Chesapeake region and Fort Federal Hill abandoned.⁵⁸

With probably no more than \$100 in his pocket, Broadway made his way across the Chesapeake Bay to Chestertown, where he set out to start his free life. This was the first time that he walked on Maryland soil as a free man. He may have passed the fields where he used to labor as a slave, but now those were nothing but memories. This rather abrupt transition from serving in the military to living as a civilian was "the first real taste of freedom."⁵⁹ Within the black community, Civil War veterans were revered with the highest honor. These men not only emerged from slavery, but also "risked their lives to help destroy slavery and had taken on a more visible role in the war's outcome than any other segment of the African-American population."⁶⁰ There was some contention, however, between the veterans and the men who had not served. So much attention was paid to the veterans that the other black men thought it

⁵⁷ *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-1865*, "Seventh Regiment Infantry, USCT., MD Vol.— Company A," 160.; "From Fortress Monroe," *The evening telegraph*. (Philadelphia [Pa.]), 05 Nov. 1866. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025925/1866-11-05/ed-1/seq-1/>>

⁵⁸ Califf, 84-85.

⁵⁹ Donald Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), p.29.

⁶⁰ Shaffer, 59.

necessary to exaggerate their roles in the war at home, so as not to be left out.⁶¹ Their reception in the Chestertown community, however, was not always as sweet.

In fact, “the targeting of black veterans was unquestionably linked to their status as leaders of the African Americans...and the assertive way they defended the community’s interests.”⁶² Black soldiers also represented the social revolution within Maryland, which seemed to further justify attacks by the disapproving whites.⁶³ In some areas, such as Washington D.C., black Civil War veterans were left so destitute and burdened by white hostility that they were forced to reenlist to serve in the infantry in the West.⁶⁴ Black veterans must have suffered quite a dilemma because they were proud of their service and after having to pay for their uniforms, they would likely wear them, yet it seems that right after the war, it was dangerous to show that they were veterans.

White Marylanders justified their routine attacks on blacks as a means for ensuring racial separation.⁶⁵ Barbara Jeanne Fields details one horrific story about the treatment and disrespect of black veterans and their families in Chestertown:

A “white-haired old colored man” walking along the street in Chestertown, Kent County, suffered only taunts and insults from a group of young white men until his tormentors learned that his son had been a Union soldier. That was sufficient cause to punish the old man and one of the rowdies struck him over the head and kicked him, meanwhile the white spectators laughed in chorus.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Shaffer, 63.

⁶² Shaffer, 37.

⁶³ Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) p.143.

⁶⁴ Shaffer, 38.

⁶⁵ Richard Paul Fuke, *Imperfect Equality: African Americans and the confine of white racial attitudes in post-emancipation Maryland* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 205.

⁶⁶ Fields, 144.

Only imagine if this old man was Wesley Broadway. He fought valiantly for his country and risked his life for the freedom of his people. There he was just a few years after the war, hindered by his atrophied and wounded leg and slowed by his rheumatism, yet still a proud man in his community, and he had no way to shield the kicks and slander that fell upon him.

Part of the white community, however was not as harsh towards the now free African-Americans. The white Union veterans, in fact, gained a profound respect for the black soldiers. Racism was still prevalent in the North, but some Northerners were beginning to rework their views on African-Americans after some had fought in the war.⁶⁷ This amity between the white and black veterans is evident in Chestertown. William Burchinal, a white Unionist, is listed in many of the land records. It is possible that Burchinal helped many of the Colored Troop veterans to acquire property of their own upon their return.

Having enlisted at such a young age, Broadway's story was far from over once he left the service. In fact, his life as a free man was just beginning. Many Colored Troop veterans used their army pay and bounty money to try to acquire land of their own.⁶⁸ In Broadway's case, however, he began with a family and a job. A few months after he returned to Maryland, he married his first wife, Martha Woodland.⁶⁹ Married, Wesley and Martha lived with two white families, while he served as a hostler.⁷⁰ By 1880, however, the Broadways rented a place of their own in Chestertown and Wesley worked as a laborer.⁷¹ Sometime in 1890, Wesley and Martha

⁶⁷ Shaffer, 49.

⁶⁸ Shaffer, 41.

⁶⁹ *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce—Bureau of the Census, Chestertown, Kent County, Maryland, by John C. Davis, 6.; Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Bureau of Pensions, 13.

⁷⁰ U.S. Census Bureau (Census Record), 1870, Wesley Broadway, Chestertown 4th Election District, Kent County, Maryland, 33. Ancestry.com.

⁷¹ U.S. Census, 1870, 33.

decided to divorce by common consent. Martha went to work in Wilmington, Delaware, where she later died in 1896.⁷²

The Charles Sumner Post was an amazing resource for the African-American community, especially the veterans. Making ends meet, especially for veterans was not easy. Most veterans were disabled and poor and “were forced to live on federal military pensions, and some, especially those who had no family to care for them, were obliged to take up residence in government homes for disabled veterans.”⁷³ Fortunately, Broadway, though he had little money and was disabled from his chronic rheumatism, could rely on the community at the Charles Sumner Post. With little family, Broadway’s extended family at the Charles Sumner Post helped to protect and care for Broadway. Broadway was lucky to find a job as a servant for a private family. Many veterans who were disabled and who could not engage in heavy physical labor, “had trouble finding work or getting the wage of a full hand. Disabilities...reduced veterans to a pitiful state.”⁷⁴

By 1897, Wesley married his second wife, Annie, who worked as a chambermaid. The records are actually quite sparse for Wesley’s connection to Annie, which suggests that they were perhaps not officially married. They lived at 332 Cannon Street near other African-American Civil War veterans, such as Thomas Carmichael.⁷⁵ The information given to the census enumerator, however, appears to have been given by Annie, which leads to the assumption that she claimed they were married, but it was not actually an official marriage. By

⁷² *Twelfth Census of the United States: Schedule No. 1—Population*, 1900, Chestertown, Kent, Maryland, by Fred S. Russell, 18., Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Bureau of Pensions, 13.

⁷³ Shaffer, 54.

⁷⁴ Shaffer, 54.

⁷⁵ *Twelfth Census*, 1900, 18.

1910, Annie died, leaving Broadway widowed for a second time and still without children of his own.⁷⁶

With the lack of family, Broadway stayed very involved with his Regiment, playing an active role in the Charles Sumner Post #25 in Chestertown. In 1899, the Grand Army of the Republic held a reunion where white and colored troop Regiments from around the country gathered in Philadelphia. Wesley Broadway, listed as commander, along with four other colored men represented the Charles Sumner Post Number 25 from Kent County, Maryland. The trip to Philadelphia must have been rather long and expensive, but apparently worth the magnitude of the event, which, according to the newspaper coverage, was quite extravagant. The scene must have been amazing—a gathering of the “boys in blue,” both black and white Civil War veterans from Washington D.C., Massachusetts, New York, Michigan, Missouri, Illinois, and North Carolina to celebrate their service. One of the men of the Grand Army of the Republic commented, “never have we been so royally welcomed.”⁷⁷ Decoration days were grand events, especially for the Grand Army of the Republic and the United States Colored Troops. Every year, starting at least in 1880, members of the Charles Sumner Post #25 decorated the graves of the fallen soldiers in multiple cemeteries in town and then proceeded back to the Post for a gathering and reception.⁷⁸

Wesley Broadway, along with Perry H. Landen, William H. Barrett, Thomas Carmichael, and George Jones served as trustees for the Charles Sumner Post No. 25. In a series of land records, these veterans purchased land along Princess Street (now South Queen Street). The deed

⁷⁶ *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population*, Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, Chestertown, Kent, Maryland, by Foster Cannan, 17.

⁷⁷ “Boys in Blue,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 5, 1899, p.7. America's Historic Newspapers Database.

⁷⁸ “Decoration Day,” *The Kent County News, Kent County News*, June 2, 1883.

for the Charles Sumner Post land was signed in 1895 and by 1900, a land extension mentioned the adjoining Charles Sumner Post, which means that the post was built between 1895-1900.⁷⁹ It took at least eight years for the Post to be built and officially incorporated under the Public General Laws of the State of Maryland.⁸⁰ Though a long process, it is quite impressive that these men, the majority of whom were illiterate, were able to establish such an institution and have it officially recognized by the State.

In addition to his involvement in the Charles Sumner Post, Broadway may also have played a role in Jane's Church.⁸¹ For African-American communities, churches not only served as a place of worship, but also of sharing ideas and shaping public opinion.⁸² In addition to churches, the African-American community worked to establish schools and organizations to give their community footing in the greater Chestertown area. By proving themselves successful constituents of the community, through "finding new jobs, building schools, seeking the return of their apprenticed children, and struggling for civil and political rights, they sought to accomplish what they believed to be their full potential, and through it to open the door to racial equality."⁸³ They still found, however, that they were denied acceptance into the community, so "By necessity, blacks pursued pragmatic goals shaped by a combination of their own priorities and those of the whites with whom they lived and worked."⁸⁴ While the white society seemed

⁷⁹ Kent County Circuit Court (Land Records) Perry H. Landen, 1895, SGF Liber 3, Folio 189. Kent County Courthouse.; Kent County Circuit Court (Land Records) Peter G. Miller and wife to Perry H. Landen et al Trustees, 1900 JTD Liber 3, Folio 216.

⁸⁰ Kent County Circuit Court (Charter Record) 1869-1984. Articles of Incorporation of Charles Sumner Post No. 25 Grand Army of the Republic. MSA CM648. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis. The listed trustees were listed Perry H. Landen, Nelson Reed, William H. Barrett, Thomas Carmichael, and William Wesley Broadway.

⁸¹ We have not been able to trace any church records that would indicate Wesley Broadway's involvement in the church, but he and his family are buried at the cemetery (along with Henry Worrell, another soldier from the Charles Sumner Post) and typically black communities are largely centered around some sort of church.

⁸² Shaffer, 62.

⁸³ Fuke, 248.

⁸⁴ Fuke, 250.

unforgiving, the black community was in flux to make this transition from slavery to freedom possible.

In 1909, Wesley Broadway was marshal of the Decoration Day in Chestertown. On this occasion, he was leading the procession to a cemetery (likely Jane's Cemetery) on Quaker Neck Road, no doubt to honor the lives of his deceased comrades, when he confronted Mr. William E. DeFord, who was trying to pass the procession. Broadway was indignant that DeFord should not pass and interrupt the procession. Broadway's men told him that it was not his place to order such indignity upon Mr. DeFord, who later filed charges against Broadway resulting in a trial.⁸⁵ Even by the turn of the century, racial tensions were still very prominent in Kent County and there was also disrespect for the African-Americans who served in the USCT. Not only did Mr. DeFord deem the procession unworthy of his time, but Kent County also deemed Broadway's actions punishable by law. The whites were unwilling to accept the changing social structure whereby "the ultimate confines of white racial attitudes lay in the inability of whites to meet the challenge of a society in transition."⁸⁶

Perhaps, because the Eastern Shore denizens tended to support pro-slavery sentiments, they were bitter about the African-Americans fighting and gaining their freedom. In fact, William DeFord graced the *Kent News* on September 19, 1863, because he was arrested for cheering for Jefferson Davis. He later had to take an oath of allegiance to the Federal Government in exchange for his release.⁸⁷ Perhaps, also, there was still a general disrespect of people whom the whites considered to be inferior. A valiant soldier praised for his "unflagging

⁸⁵ "A Daring Holdup: An Incident of a Decoration Day Parade," *The Chestertown Transcript*, June 1, 1909.

⁸⁶ Fuke, 247.

⁸⁷ "Took the Oath," *The Kent News*, September 19, 1863, p.2. M-1621, Miller Library Microfilm.

energy and steady perseverance of [his] officers in the discharge of [his] various duties,” during the war, was reduced back into inferiority in Kent County.⁸⁸

In 1915, Broadway and his third wife Mary lived in 228 South Queen Street, on the corner of South Queen and South Cross Streets, a few houses down from the Charles Sumner Post building.⁸⁹ The sense of community around the Charles Sumner Post was so important for the veterans and their families. The transition from working on a farm as a slave to renting a property in town as a free man must have elicited such a sense of freedom. Few free blacks actually owned property, most rented a property. Regardless of direct ownership versus renting a property, these men were free to raise their families under their own direction and were free to come home to their houses on their own accord. This community on South Queen and South Cross streets was known as Scott's Point.

By the 1920s, Wesley was about 75 years old and most of his comrades had died. True, Wesley had his family (a rather fluid family) and did have the community support of the Charles Sumner Post No. 25, but it must have been lonely to be the last veteran at the Post. Everyone could listen, but no one but another veteran would truly understand the struggles during and after the war that these USCT soldiers went through. The children and grandchildren of these soldiers would not understand, they simply saw the scars without knowing their origin. A Civil War veteran became an image of isolation, just as a Revolutionary war hero had been revered as a thing of the past. With some of the white Chestertown community disrespecting the black

⁸⁸ Califf, 28.

⁸⁹ *Thirteenth Census*, 1910, 17, 8.; Maryland State Archives Pension Record, 13-14. Kent County Circuit Court (Marriage Record), 1895-1915, Wesley Broadway to Mary Berryman, MSA CM 664-3, SGF Liber 1, Folio 115.

veterans and some wishing to move on from the Civil War, "the old veteran of the Union army will pass away, to be only known in history, and in the Silent City of the Dead."⁹⁰

Wesley Broadway, however, made himself a prominent figure in Chestertown and in 1922, James A. Pearce, a Chestertown judge, died and left \$25 to Wesley Broadway via his executor James A.P. Crisfield. Pearce left \$25 for two other people as well, though none of these exchanges were specified in his actual will.⁹¹ In the 1920 census, Wesley Broadway is listed as a servant for a private family. While it is unfortunate that Broadway had to work serving someone else, after finally getting a taste of freedom, he at least was working on his own accord and was paid for his labors. He was living on South Queen Street, while the Pearce family lived nearby on Maple Avenue.⁹² It is certainly possible that Broadway served as a servant for the Pearce family and that upon James A. Pearce's death, Broadway was rewarded as being a faithful servant.

After suffering from organic heart trouble for two years, in addition to his ailments that he sustained during the war, Wesley Broadway died on March 15, 1931.⁹³ He was buried two days later at Jane's Cemetery on Quaker Neck Road, although community depositions suggest that he was buried in 1928.⁹⁴ He was the last remaining veteran of the Charles Sumner Post No. 25. Despite his payment for serving with the Seventh Regiment and the \$25 from James A.

⁹⁰ Charles A. Foster, "History of the G.A.R., Department of Delaware, with Special Mention of the Department of Maryland, 1881 to 1893" (Wilmington, Del, 1893), p. 25.

⁹¹ Kent County Register of Wills (Wills) James A. Pearce, 1922, RRH, Liber 1. Folio 151. Accessed at Kent County Courthouse; Kent County Register of Wills (Releases and Receipts) James A. Pearce to Wesley Broadway, 1921-1925, Liber RRH, Folio 175, accessed at the Kent County Courthouse.

⁹² U.S. Census Bureau (Census Records), James A. Pearce, 1920, Chestertown, District 65, p.1, ancestry.com; U.S. Census Bureau (Census Records), Wesley Broadway, 1920, Chestertown, District 66, p.18, ancestry.com.

⁹³ Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics (Death Record, Counties) Kent County, Dates: 1910-1951. [S1179]. Wesley Broadway, March 17, 1931. Certificate Number 03314.

⁹⁴ Broadway Gravestone, Jane's Cemetery, visited May 5, 2013.; Kent County Circuit Court (Depositions), June 16, 1950, "Sumner Beneficial Society," Henrietta Landing, Adella Jones, Annie Hynson, and Ellen Gilben, Files courtesy of the Kent County Arts Council.

Pearce, Broadway left no significant personal or monetary property.⁹⁵ Mary Broadway took care of the funeral proceedings and applied to the government for help covering the \$117 funeral costs, receiving \$107.⁹⁶ She later moved to Philadelphia to live with her daughter (from another marriage).⁹⁷ Mary died the following year in 1932 and was buried at Jane's Cemetery, along with Wesley and her previous husband, John Berryman. Her daughter, Blondine, and Blondine's father-in-law, Clarence, were buried there as well, in the 1980s.⁹⁸

Wesley was a prominent figure in the Chestertown community. At his death, a death notice appeared in *The Enterprise*, which read "Wesley Broadway, well known colored citizen, of Chestertown, died here today. Broadway is thought to be the last of the G.A.R. organization which once flourished in Kent."⁹⁹ This notice is significant to Wesley's legacy, not only because it labeled him as a citizen, but also because it labeled him as well known. The fact that a notice was printed in the paper the day that he died also indicates that Wesley held a prominent role in the community. In testimonies recorded to prove the legitimacy of the title for the G.A.R building, community members listed Wesley Broadway as the last veteran and every deponent said that they went to his funeral, some even traveling from Baltimore. After Broadway's death, the Charles Sumner Post No.25 no longer existed, but the building was still used for the Sumner

⁹⁵ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Affidavit Supporting Burial Claim,"17.

⁹⁶ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Voucher for Payment of Expenses of Burial, Funeral, and Transportation of Body of Deceased Veteran,11.

⁹⁷ Maryland State Archives Pension Record, Certified Copy of Certificate of Death, 8-9.

⁹⁸ Broadway Gravestone, Jane's Cemetery, visited May 5, 2013. Granted that Blondine was recently buried just 30 years ago, it is possible that Wesley Broadway's step grandchildren are still alive. Unfortunately, the 1940 census is the most recent census available and as of 1940, Blondine did not have any children.

⁹⁹ "Wesley Broadway," *The Enterprise*, March 18, 1931, p.1. M11362, Miller Library.

Beneficial Society, which helped to carry the Civil War legacy and continue the African-American legacy in Chestertown.¹⁰⁰

There was a John Wesley Broadway, born in 1876, from Chestertown, who registered to serve in World War I and was listed as “negro.” There are not many black Broadways in Chestertown at that time, so it is possible that John Wesley was a descendant of William Wesley.¹⁰¹

Broadway's life epitomizes the intense life transitions from serving as property to serving for a greater cause to serving for oneself. His relatively recent death is a stark reminder of the proximity of Civil War history to the present day. Just one or two generations prior to today, Wesley Broadway served as a rare connection to the Civil War and to the “best colored Regiment in the service of the United States.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Kent County Circuit Court (Depositions), June 16, 1950, “Sumner Beneficial Society,” Henrietta Landing, Adella Jones, Annie Hynson, and Ellen Gilben, Files courtesy of the Kent County Arts Council.

¹⁰¹ “John Wesley Broadway,” United States, World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918. World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards. Image Number 01211. Familysearch.org.

¹⁰² “Seventh Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops, Maryland Volunteers,” *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-1866, Vol.2*, Vol.366, p.156.

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May 11, 2013
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