



Freedom Journey: Black Civil War Soldiers and The Hills Community, Westchester County, New York (Excelsior Editions)

Edythe Ann Quinn

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The story of thirty-six African American men who drew upon their shared community of The Hills for support as they fought in the Civil War.

Through wonderfully detailed letters, recruit rosters, and pension records, Edythe Ann Quinn shares the story of thirty-five African American Civil War soldiers and the United States Colored Troop (USCT) regiments with which they served. Associated with The Hills community in Westchester County, New York, the soldiers served in three regiments: the 29th Connecticut Infantry, 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (11th USCT), and the 20th USCT. The thirty-sixth Hills man served in the Navy. Their ties to family, land, church, school, and occupational experiences at home buffered the brutal indifference of boredom and battle, the ravages of illness, the deprivations of unequal pay, and the hostility of some commissioned officers and white troops. At the same time, their service among kith and kin bolstered their determination and pride. They marched together, first as raw recruits, and finally as seasoned veterans, welcomed home by generals, politicians, and above all, their families and friends.

“This book takes a fascinating look at ‘forgotten history’ and makes it clear that, although freedom was partially gained by these African Americans, their ‘Freedom Journey’ continued long after the shooting stopped. Highly recommended.” — *Civil War News*

“Quinn’s meticulous research and refined historical interpretation has allowed her to recover a uniquely enlightening chapter of nineteenth-century African American history in the North. By tracing the lives of Union soldiers from a free, black community in Westchester County, New York, we discover the commitment of these men and their families from The Hills to the eradication of slavery in the South. With notable sensitivity, the author produces a tale of black men who risked their lives and the security of their families for the sake of freedom. It is a story about conviction—poignant, inspiring, and persuasive.” — Myra Young Armstead, editor of *Mighty Change, Tall Within: Black Identity in the Hudson Valley*

“As an in-depth case study of the African American volunteers from The Hills community who served in the Civil War, Edythe Ann Quinn’s *Freedom Journey* is a well-researched book that explores a much needed ethnic aspect of that war. For those interested in genealogy and local history, *Freedom Journey* offers unique insights into the social and cultural history of The Hills community, first settled in the 1790s. Additionally, the work contains a roster of the volunteers and thirteen historical sidebars that relate to the African American wartime experience.” — Anthony F. Gero, author of *Black Soldiers of New York State: A Proud Legacy*

“Edythe Ann Quinn has taken a little-known community, The Hills in Westchester County, and using a comprehensively well-resourced and researched methodology, has written not only an enjoyable and engagingly attractive family history (individual and collective) of black New Yorkers from slavery to freedom, but as well the sacrifices that the community’s young men gave. It is the voices of those sable warriors that are heard through the personal letters, woven into the overall engaging literary style of the

author.” — A. J. Williams-Myers, author of *Long Hammering: Essays on the Forging of an African American Presence in the Hudson River Valley to the Early Twentieth Century*

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Denise Kerrigan:

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