



Colored Soldiers Monument

Norman Dasinger, Jr., January 18, 2021

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Colored Soldiers Monument | public domain

The state of Kentucky was not allowed to recruit black soldiers until March 1, 1864. Twenty-three Union regiments were formed, enlisting over 23,000 black men once recruitment began. It has been claimed that one-third of all United States Colored Troops (USCT) came from Kentucky.

The only monument in the state honoring these black soldiers was dedicated on July 4, 1924. The day before, the *Frankfort State Journal* wrote, "Colored Soldiers Monument to be unveiled. The monument, which has been erected to the memory of the Colored Soldiers of the Civil War from Frankfort and Franklin County, will be unveiled at Green Hill Cemetery tomorrow afternoon at four o'clock. Short and appropriate exercises are to be held. This monument has been erected at the cost of several hundred dollars under the direction of the Woman's Relief Corps. ... Contributions are being made to the fund by patriotic and public-spirited citizens of both races."

The primary purpose of the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) was to perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). It is the only legally recognized auxiliary by the GAR and was organized in 1883 in Denver, Colorado, at the request of the GAR.

The design and erection of this unique memorial was the project of the local WRC Chapter #8. The president of the group's monument committee was Mrs. Ellen T. Strauss. She was a Frankfort citizen who had been involved in the education of local black teachers in the late 1800s

The monument is a simple, 10-foot tall, four-sided limestone pillar. Its base is made of poured concrete. Inscribed around the column are the names of 142 black soldiers who hailed from central Kentucky. It is located in Frankfort's Green Hill Cemetery.



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