

Fort Scott and the First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment

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February 24, 2011

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It was 1863, one year into the Civil War. Henry Tims, a black soldier at Fort Scott in Kansas, was preparing to fight in a battle that would one day change the ways of the American people. He had come so far and was now getting ready to fight as a black in the Civil War. Fort Scott had given blacks the chance to fight and make a difference. This was one of the many things that Fort Scott did to bring this nation together.

Tims had once been a slave from Mississippi. His master had been a fair and loving man, but Henry still felt controlled. Henry often dreamt of being a free man, having a family, and knowing someone cared. He had heard of blacks soon being able to fight against the South. He longed for the chance to fight and to make a difference for those who could not. After receiving his master's consent he traveled north to Kansas where he was taken in by a farmer and his wife from Lawrence. Henry lived with the farmer and his family for two years, helping with the livestock and taking care of his new master's family.

Finally, in 1862 he received word that a black military unit was to be formed at Fort Scott. Kansas was the first state to recruit and train black soldiers for the military. Many of the black men were not educated. Others were timid of taking action because they had been treated so poorly in previous times. Work had to be done in order to form a strong and forceful unit.

Tims was put into the First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment. He and his fellow troops underwent much hardship and training. The sense of contentment and life filled the whole camp. Never had the men felt so needed and established.

Henry Tims was finally where he wanted to be. He finally had a place where he felt free. Henry felt strong, and his adrenaline rushed with excitement. He was ready for his first battle. He was no longer scared of death, for he had never felt so alive. At a time when the world was

ending, he was on top of it. He feared nothing and no one. He was ready to fight and give hope to his people. He wanted an end to the brutal way whites treated blacks. He wanted change and was ready to earn it.

It was time to fight. The soldiers had rallied and were heading on to battle. Never had the men been so enthused. Their spirits were calm. Nothing could get in their way. Then, the battle began. The regiment's superior attitude overwhelmed the enemy. Never had they seen such willingness and sacrifice. Although many men died, they did it for the love of their country. The men who fought in this battle continued to fight and inspire others. Because of their testimony and hard work, they eventually won the war.

Because of Fort Scott, blacks had a say in what happened in the war. They had a chance to fight for what they believed in. Because of Fort Scott, a man like Henry Tims had the chance to follow his dreams, and eventually earn his freedom. Because of Fort Scott, blacks and whites now live as one.