

# Camp Nelson Dubbed a Designated Lincoln National Bicentennial Site

*New interpretive signs to emphasize Lincoln connections for visitors.*

The national celebration of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial will begin on February 12, 2008, at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site near Hodgenville. This national kick-off will bring the world's attention to the Commonwealth.

The bicentennial will continue through February 12, 2010, with special events still being planned in numerous sites throughout Kentucky including Camp Nelson. More

than forty counties in Kentucky have Lincoln and Civil War sites that tell the story of the man and the conflict that shattered a nation. The Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission is committed to sharing that story with Kentuckians

and visitors to the Commonwealth as the world celebrates the contributions of Lincoln to the principles of freedom, equality, and justice.

As a designated Lincoln National Bicentennial Site, Camp Nelson benefits from state grant money, and the expectation of an influx of visitors. Lincoln-themed brochures have begun arriving, and two new interpretive signs are to be installed at Camp

Nelson. Local dates for traveling exhibits, dramatic performances, educational programs and celebrations are yet to be announced. More information about Kentucky's role in the national bicentennial available at [www.kylincoln.org](http://www.kylincoln.org).



You are invited to  
Camp Nelson's

## Civil War Days

Saturday, Sept. 8  
& Sunday, Sept. 9

See highlights inside on page 3.



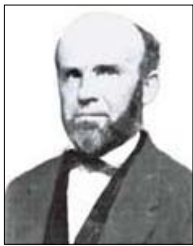
**NEW HIGHWAY MARKER:** Foundation Chairman Michael Crutcher, Jessamine County Judge Executive Neal Cassity, State Representative Bob Damron, and Magistrate George Dean were on hand to dedicate the new highway marker on US 27 in front of Camp Nelson Heritage Park.

# The Freedman's Bell

*Bell that called Camp Nelson troops and refugees to worship and school found new home in Berea church.*

*Reverend John G. Fee passionately believed in the equality of the races. As a missionary at Camp Nelson, he helped the African-American refugees organize in worship and in education. The text below picks up on the Fee story after the Civil War, when he went south to Berea and founded Berea College and two churches.*

First Christian Church of Berea, Kentucky, was initially called the "Second Church" for it was founded by the Reverend John G. Fee some forty years after he started



*John G. Fee*

Union Church and Berea College. Fee's decision to resign from his pastorate at Union in October, 1895 came after years of discussion about baptism by immersion as a requirement for church membership. Due to Fee's conviction in favor of immersion, he and six others left Union Church to establish a new church more in keeping with his religious principles.

One of Fee's religious principles that was reflected in the new church was his idea of interracial community, for among the six who left were the Reverend Anderson Crawford, an African American minister who had assisted Fee at Union since the 1870s, and local white businessmen J. M. Early, J. Wilson Chaney, and B.R. (Boss) Robinson. Robinson, a carpenter, helped construct the church building.

The original church building has undergone

numerous remodeling and enlargement projects over the years, but one feature has remained the same.

In the church's belfry hangs the Freedman's Bell, a large bell transported to Berea by wagon from Camp Nelson in Jessamine County. During the Civil War, Fee, preaching and teaching to thousands of African-American soldiers and their families, wrote to two personal friends in Cincinnati requesting a bell to call troops for worship and classes. In 1865 Camp Nelson became inactive and all government buildings were dismantled. The Freedmen's Bell was used by Berea College until 1896 when it was moved to the church.



*The Freedman's Bell now resonates in the bell tower above the sanctuary at First Christian Church of Berea.*

## Visiting Camp Nelson

Camp Nelson Heritage Park is located along US 27 about 20 miles south of Lexington (6 miles south of Nicholasville.) The Park entrance is on KY 3026, which runs parallel to US 27, one mile north of the Camp Nelson National Cemetery.

**White House Tours:** Tuesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Call Alice at 859-881-5716

**The Heritage Park** is open for guided tours Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The **Interpretive Trails** are open daily from dawn to dusk.

## The Camp Nelson Story (Capsule Version)

Camp Nelson was established along the Kentucky River in 1863 by the Union Army; serving first as a 4000 acre supply and training camp for the Army of the Ohio and District of Kentucky. In May of 1864 Camp Nelson became a recruitment point for black soldiers and later a refugee camp for other freed slaves and their families. Today the story continues to be told at the Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park.

## Foundation Meetings

The Camp Nelson Restoration and Preservation Foundation meets the first Monday of every month in the Interpretive Center at the Camp Nelson Heritage Park at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome to attend the meetings and provide their input.

## More Information

For vendor, reenactor, and tourism information contact Mary Kozak at 859-881-9126.

## Send newsletter comments or submissions to:

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Nicholasville, KY 40356  
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## Website:

[www.campnelson.org](http://www.campnelson.org)





**CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN FRENCH ON HIS NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECT:** *The Camp Nelson USCT-themed school project has continued to garner accolades. In June French advanced from the regional to the state level competition and took home the Tennessee Outstanding State Award in the Senior High Division. French is shown above with members of the 12th USCHA.*

## WHAT'S NEW AT THE UPCOMING CIVIL WAR DAYS?

- ▶ On Saturday, September 8 and Sunday, September 9 Reenactors from several states will attend including those representing the US Colored Troops Living History Association.
- ▶ At 2 p.m. each day a reenactment of a skirmish based on actual events around Camp Nelson dealing with John Hunt Morgan's retreat from Kentucky will be portrayed.
- ▶ Kentucky Bound will play period music both days. Bourbon City Brass Band will participate in the Sunday morning worship service and the Camp Parade in the afternoon.
- ▶ Chataqua-style presentations by Civil War personalities including Sojourner Truth and Frederic Douglass.
- ▶ Book-signing of new covered bridge book that includes section on Camp Nelson's Wernwag Bridge.
- ▶ A special tour of the Kentucky River and majestic Palisades will be available by Kentucky River Otter Outpost via pontoon boat.



**2007 CAMP NELSON 5K CROSS COUNTRY RUN RESULTS:** *Nicholasville/Jessamine County Parks & Recreation has released the results from the June 16 event. Overall male winner – David Webster; overall female winner – Rachel Ditto. Shown above are trophy-winning participants Kristen McDanald and Wyatt McDanald.*

## *Preakness Stakes Winner has link to Camp Nelson*



**Charlie Curlin of the 13th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery alongside Curlin, the 2007 Belmont Stakes Winner.**

CHARLIE CURLIN, a Camp Nelson soldier, will live on forever as the namesake of the thoroughbred horse that finished first in the 2007 Preakness Stakes. Shirley Cunningham of Georgetown, Ky is a part-owner of the horse, and is also the great-grandson of Charlie Curlin. Cunningham grew up hearing stories about his Civil War ancestor. The horse was considered an early Triple Crown hopeful and finished 3rd in the Derby, and 4th in the Belmont.

# Camp Nelson Restoration & Preservation Foundation Membership Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Members receive the quarterly publication, *The Camp Nelson Dispatch*. Because the Camp Nelson Restoration and Preservation Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, all donations are tax-deductible and will go 100% toward restoration and preservation. "Friends of Camp Nelson" and "Stars & Bars" will be recognized on a permanent plaque at Camp Nelson.

**Membership for 2007-2008 – \$25.00**

I would like to make a tax deductible contribution. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## **Stars & Bars Lifetime Membership**

- \$500 per individual
- \$650 per individual & spouse
- \$650 per business

## **Friends of Camp Nelson**

- \$100 per individual
- \$150 per individual & spouse
- \$150 per business

Please send this form with your check to:  
Camp Nelson Foundation, P.O. Box 1170, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40356.

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Camp Nelson Foundation  
P.O. Box 1170  
Nicholasville, KY 40356

### **Saturday Afternoon Tea at the White House**

September 15.....Tea with Addy:  
                                  An American Girl  
October 20 .....Civil War Tea  
                                  (with reenactors)  
November 17 .....Harvest Tea  
December 8 .....Christmas Tea

For reservations call 859-881-5716