



Camp Douglas

1861-1865

Chicago and the American Civil War



Camp Douglas was built during the American Civil War. The southern states and the northern states were divided over slavery. People in the southern states wanted slavery to continue and to even spread as the country grew. Many people in the northern states were Abolitionists, people who wanted to end slavery.

The states could not agree on what to do. Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States. He wanted the southern states to stay in the Union, and he also wanted to end slavery. The southern states decided to leave the United States and form their own country. They called it the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy. The northern states stayed in the United States of America. The northern states were called the Union. The Confederacy and the Union went to war. President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the document that freed the enslaved people.

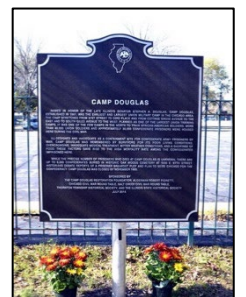
At the start of the war, Camp Douglas was built in Chicago in what is now Bronzeville as a place to train Union soldiers. About 40,000 Union soldiers, including many African Americans, entered the Union army, were trained at Camp Douglas, and sent off to fight in the war.

Once the fighting started, both the Confederacy and the Union needed places to keep captured enemy soldiers called prisoners-of-war. Camp Douglas became a camp for Confederate prisoners. Between 1862 and 1865 about 30,000 Confederate prisoners were held at Camp Douglas.

After four long and terrible years, the Union won the Civil War in 1865. The prisoners at Camp Douglas were released and the camp was torn down in December 1865. The Confederate states rejoined the Union.

The historical marker on Martin Luther King Drive in Chicago marks the location of Camp Douglas. So, we know where Camp Douglas was, but how do we learn more about what it was like to be a prisoner-of-war or a Union soldier at Camp Douglas? We can get help from archeologists to learn more about what life in Camp Douglas was like.

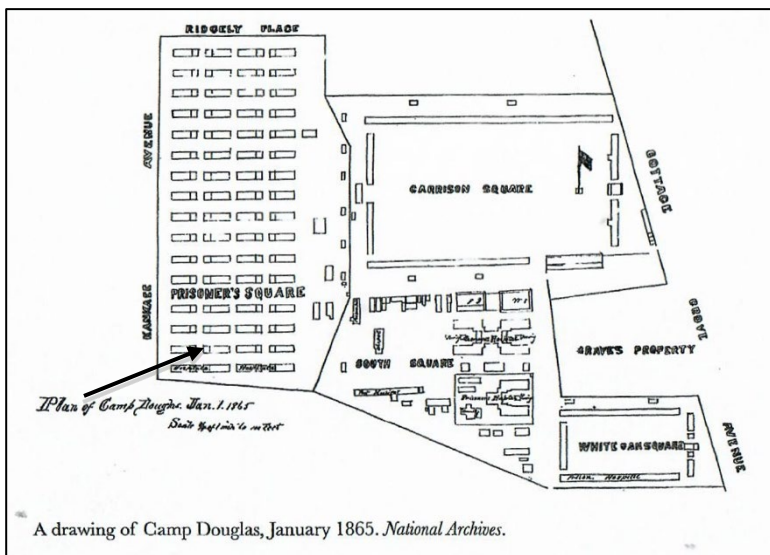
Archeologists are scientists who learn about the lives of people in the past by digging into sites (places where people lived) and uncovering what people have left behind. Being an archeologist is a lot like being a detective, putting pieces together to solve a mystery. The



objects that archeologists uncover are called artifacts. They are objects made and used by people in the past. Artifacts are the clues that help archeologists solve the mystery of what things were like in the past.

Several archeological digs have taken place on the site of where Camp Douglas once stood. The first dig was in the summer of 2012. Since then, several more digs have taken place, including in the playground of a school and in the backyard of a home.

This map shows the layout of the camp. The arrow on the map points to Prisoners Square. The prisoners-of-war lived in buildings called barracks in Prisoners Square. Archeologists determined that Prisoners Square once stood on ground that is now the playground of a school.



The red buckets in the photo below are filled with dirt from the pit. The red arrow points to people sifting through dirt that has been removed from the pit in hopes of finding something important. They are volunteers helping the archeologists dig.



A few of the many artifacts that have been found during these digs are pictured below. The letter B from the cap of a Union soldier and the button from the uniform of a Union Soldier were found buried in the school's playground. Civil War bullets called minié balls, pieces of glass, and more buttons were also found. These artifacts help to tell the story of what it was like at Camp Douglas for soldiers and prisoners over 150 years ago during the Civil War.

