

**OUR RETURNING SOLDIERS.****THE 20TH AND 31ST COLORED TROOPS—THEIR ARRIVAL THIS MORNING.**

The steamer *Granite State* left New York at 8:30 a. m., yesterday, with eight hundred and thirty officers and men of the 20th (colored) regiment, and came up the river as far as South Glastenbury, where, owing to the difficulty of navigating, the night being so dark, she tied up and was to remain till this morning. It was supposed until midnight that the regiment would come through, and a large crowd of people waited at the City Hall "expecting every minute" to hear the boat had landed. At this time Sam Silloway, like the solitary horseman, reached town overland from the decks of the *Granite*, and reported the condition of things. There was much disappointment at the announcement, and some of the girls who were expecting their Johnny's were quite indignant.

The 20th was raised under authority of the War Department, and, though strictly a Connecticut regiment and credited on the quota of the State, has been attached to the United States Volunteers, and its officers have received their appointment direct from the War Department, those who left the State with it being commissioned upon the nomination of Governor Buckingham. The regiment rendezvoused at New Haven and was filled to the maximum (over one thousand men) on the 12th of January, 1864. It left by steamer March 10th, for Annapolis, Md., under command of Colonel Wm. B. Wooster, formerly Lieutenant Colonel of the 26th C. V., and upon arriving in Maryland was attached to the Ninth Army Corps, Major General Burriside commanding. On the 8th of April it embarked at Annapolis, sailed to the Department of the South, and was assigned to duty at Beaufort, S. C. Here it remained until August 8th, and then proceeded to Bermuda Hundred, Va., arriving there on the 13th, just in time to participate in the demonstrations against the enemy on the following day. From the 20th of August until the 24th of September, the regiment was on duty in the works before Petersburg, then marched to the rear, and on the 23th of September, with the 10th Army Corps, crossed the James river and took part in the advance toward Richmond. Up to October 29th its casualties were one hundred and forty-three, killed and wounded. In a demonstration against the enemy's lines on the 27th and 28th of October, the regiment bore a conspicuous part. Adjutant Brown, writing of this movement at the time to General Morse, said:

"We feel a peculiar pride in knowing that in this, our first time at the extreme front, we have not only gained honor ourselves, but also added renown to the State that sent us forth, a black regiment bearing her name upon our banner.

"From Generals Birney and Hawley, who personally congratulated us; from General Doubleday commanding the brigade, and Colonel Wright of General Birney's staff, we have received congratulations and praise for the gallant conduct of our men. 'They have done all that I could have asked of them,' said General Hawley, 'I am perfectly satisfied.' Orders were never more cheerfully and promptly complied with than those we received.

"Through twenty-three hours on the skirmish line, and the men excessively fatigued, I beg to call special attention to the fact that there are none missing."

Captain T. E. Camp, who commanded the regiment on the occasion referred to, wrote to the Adjutant General as follows:

"I take great pleasure in reporting the universal steadiness and good behavior of the officers and men, and when all did so well it is almost impossible to mention any particular cases without injustice to others. First Sergeant Jacob F. Spencer, of Co. D., with the assistance of three men whom he called to his aid, captured three prisoners belonging to the 11th South Carolina regiment. I went into the action with thirteen officers and five hundred and twenty-one men. The casualties were one captain wounded, twelve men killed, and sixty-eight wounded: none missing."

Subsequently the regiment was ordered to New Orleans, and has been in that department several months. Reports of its doings have been sent direct to the War Department, and there are no files in the office of the Adjutant General to enable us to make further notice.

**The 31st Colored Troops.**

Upon the complete organization of the 20th C. V., it was proposed to organize another colored regiment to be designated the 30th, there being a surplus of men recruited which would form a nucleus, but only four companies were raised, and these were consolidated into the 31st United States colored troops on the 18th of May, 1864. These troops operated in the movements against Richmond, and like their brothers in arms and color gained much credit for their efficiency and bravery. Subsequently they proceeded to the department of the Gulf. They arrived in New York yesterday, and left there at 4 o'clock p. m., and will reach here this morning, probably between 8 and 9 o'clock. The battalion has five hundred and nineteen men, under command of Colonel Ward, formerly Assistant Adjutant General of this State. Sixty men were mustered out in New Orleans at their own request.

**THE RECEPTION TO-DAY.**

The non-arrival of the 20th will bring it along with the 31st, and both regiments will be received to-day by the city authorities, the City Guard and Buckingham Rifles, under command of Captain John K. Williams, acting as escort. Governor Buckingham will deliver an address of welcome, as will also Colonel Wm. B. Wooster, of Derby, formerly colonel of the 20th. There will be a parade through the principal streets, and the display will be well worth witnessing. Fourteen hundred black soldiers, who have gone forth to battle for many white men who have remained at home and abused them and their race—these in line ought to feel proud of their achievements, and loyal men and women will be proud of them. Give them a hearty welcome; fling the good old flag out; and let them feel that the people of Hartford appreciate patriotism and pluck in a black man, as well as in a white.

The speeches of welcome will be made at the State House, after which the collation, and then a line of march will be taken up as follows: Up Main to Pratt street; down Pratt to Trumbull; up Trumbull to Church; down Church to Ann; up Ann to North Main, and down Main to Buckingham; up Buckingham to Washington, thence to camp on Park street.



Mills, John. "Parade Route of 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Regiments, November 24, 1865." via *Google Earth*, March 2024.

### Reception of Colored Regiments.

**THE 29TH AND 31ST AT HOME—AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME—ADDRESSES BY GOV. BUCKINGHAM, GEN. HAWLEY AND COL. WOOSTER.**

The Twenty-ninth (colored) regiment and the Thirty-first C. T., both numbering about fourteen hundred officers and men, arrived here yesterday forenoon on the steamers City of Hartford and Granite State. They were furnished with a fine collation at the City Hall, everything being creditably arranged, and afterwards assembled at Central Row where they were welcomed to the city by Mayor Stillman, who said:

*Gentlemen, Officers, and Soldiers:*—In behalf of the City of Hartford I am here this morning to bid you welcome. We rejoice at this opportunity to express to you our satisfaction with your services. We believe you have done your duty, and your whole duty, and for this we give you a cordial greeting. [Applause.] I now beg leave to introduce to you His Excellency Governor Buckingham.

The Governor appeared, and was given three hearty cheers. He said:

#### SPEECH OF GOVERNOR BUCKINGHAM.

*Officers and Soldiers of the 29th and 31st Regiments:*—A little more than four and a half years ago the President called for troops to suppress a rebellion against a government which some believed was established for the exclusive benefit of white men. Those who entertained that opinion did not offer their services, their names were not enrolled in the Union army. But hundreds of thousands who believed in the principles of liberty as set forth in the Declaration of Independence voluntarily responded to the call. It was, however, soon found that the black man was interested in the result of the conflict between the government and its enemies, and he was invited to take part in the struggle. In obedience to that invitation, you tendered your services and were organized into these regiments and sent into the field under officers who for ability and fidelity have been seldom equalled.

I have watched your course with great interest. You went to Annapolis; the 29th went to Hilton Head; you guarded and preserved public order in Beaufort, S. C.; you were ordered to Bermuda Hundred, and entered the trenches before Peter-burg, where more than sixty of your number were killed and wounded; you crossed the James and battled the enemies of your country, and lost on the 27th of October, 1864, in killed and wounded, eighty of your comrades.

You have this honorable testimony from your general that "you had done all that he could have asked." Your courage and valor were not abated and you are credited with having been the first infantry that entered Richmond after Lee's army had been driven out. Nor have you of the 31st been less brave and faithful. The 30th of July, 1864, that terrible day on which you entered the exploded mines before Petersburg with 313 officers and men, and came out of the dead struggle with only 163, will ever stand in history as testimony to your courage and fidelity. From Virginia you were ordered to Texas, and having done your duty there have now returned for your last muster. So far as I have been able to learn in every position you have rendered valuable service to your country and won honor for yourselves and your race.

For all these services I tender you, both officers and men, my grateful acknowledgments, and the thanks of my fellow-citizens. In their name I greet you with a cordial welcome. I welcome you from sleepers watchings, from fatiguing marches, from the privations of the camp, and from the dangers of the battle-field, to the rest, the pleasures and the duties which pertain to peace, to home, and civil life. The revolution in which we have been engaged, and in which you have taken an active and interesting part, has removed one of the greatest obstacles to the advancement of liberty, and enables me to welcome you to higher hopes of future good.

And although Connecticut now denies you privileges which it grants to others, for no other apparent reason than because God has made you to differ in complexion, yet justice will not always stand afar off. Be patient; be true to yourselves. Remember that merit consists not in color or in birth, but in habits of industry, in intellectual ability and moral character. Cultivate these characteristics of true worth. Show by your acquirements and your devotion to duty in civil life, that you are as true to virtue and the interests of government and country, as you have been while in the army, and soon the voice of a majority of liberty-loving freemen will be heard demanding for you every right and every privilege to which your intelligence and moral character shall entitle you. Again I ask you to accept my thanks for your patriotic services, and my best wishes for your prosperity and happiness. (Great applause.)

Colonel Wm. B. Wooster, formerly colonel of the 29th, was next introduced, and given three cheers. He testified to the bravery and endurance of colored soldiers, and said they deserved more honor because when they entered the service their pay was but seven dollars a month, and it was known that every black soldier captured by the rebels would suffer punishment by death. His speech was well received.

General Hawley was greeted with three cheers. He spoke of his having commanded the division of black soldiers at the time of the movement on the Darbytown Road, Va., October 26th and 27th, 1864, and by his orders the 29th regiment was thrown out as skirmishers. He told how well the men behaved at that time, and described minutely how they stood in the thick woods, etc., and the soldiers remembering the positions referred to by the general, responded, "That's so," "Shan't forget that," "Guess we was there," etc. General H. then spoke of the wounded, and said he thought then as now, that a black man's blood was worth as much for liberty as anybody's. He continued at some length, and closed by saying substantially: "With the history of the war, and the record of its soldiers before me, I say now, and always shall say, that every man whom the Lord made, irrespective of color, is entitled, not only to his liberty, but, according to his intelligence and moral worth, to all the rights and privileges of a citizen of his country." (Great cheering.)

At the conclusion of the speeches the soldiers, escorted by the City Guard and Buckingham Rifles, headed by Colt's Band, marched through the streets on the route published yesterday, to the camp on Park street. Signs of earnest welcome were manifest on every side. Ladies, from windows, waved their handkerchiefs, and flags were liberally displayed, and crowds on the sidewalks indulged in many favorable remarks relative to the pluck of the black soldiers—something we didn't hear a few years ago. The men having but just left a vessel after a long and tedious sea voyage, and coming too, from Texas, where they have been obliged to lead a rough sort of life, didn't, of course, look as they would to appear on dress parade, but their rough-looking clothing and slouched hats, did not lessen the admiration for their heroism and faithful performance of duty.