



**A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the  
Rebellion 1861-1865: Preceded a Review of the  
Military Services of Negroes in Ancient and  
Modern Times (Classic Reprint)**

*George W. Williams*

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Excerpt from A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1865: Preceded a Review of the Military Services of Negroes in Ancient and Modern Times

I have undertaken to write a military history of Negro troops in the War of the Rebellion. I have written only of the military Services of Negro troops; and I have used the generic word Negro because, while many mulattoes were in the Service, the Negroes preponderated to an overwhelming degree.

In writing of the remote past, the historian has the benefit of the sifting and winnowing to which time subjects historical data; but in writing of events within living memory it requires both fortitude and skill to resist the insidious influence of interested friends and actors, to separate error from truth with an even and steady hand, to master the sources of historical information - to know where the material is, to collect and classify it, although scattered through an almost endless maze of books, news-papers, diaries, pamphlets, etc. - and to avoid partisan feeling and maintain a spirit of judicial candor. How far I have succeeded is left to the considerate judgment of the reader.

Myself a soldier in the volunteer and regular army of the United States, in infantry and cavalry, an officer of artillery in the Republican forces of the Mexican army, and recently an officer of the Sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, I may claim some military experience. I participated in many of the battles herein described, including some of the most severe conflicts of Negro troops with the enemy in Virginia.

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