

I was born in the town of Massillon, Stark County, State of Ohio; where I experienced all the disadvantages peculiar to my proscribed race. Being born to labor, I was not permitted to enjoy the blessings of a common school education. It is hardly necessary to say that very little can be expected of me, so far as correct composition is concerned.

In 1861, when the whole of the loyal north was aroused by reason of the cowardly assault upon Fort Sumpter, I was very eager to become a soldier, in order to prove by my feeble efforts the black man rights to untrammelled manhood. I was denied admission to the ranks of the loyalists, on account of my color, not being of that kind which is considered standard in this country.

In 1863, however, when the Rebellion which burst out at Sumpter had assumed higher proportions, it was deemed expedient by the Government to enroll the able bodied black men among its defenders.

The Governor of Ohio was very slow in acknowledging this change in public affairs. The Governor of Massachusetts, being of a more human nature enlisted ~~two regiments~~ and equipped two regiments before the Ohio Governor became interested in the matter.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June 1863, - long may it be remembered – a camp was opened near the town of Delaware, Ohio, for the purpose of forming a colored Regiment. In September of the same year at the age of twenty I enlisted and joined the regiment, then forming at Delaware and designated as the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S Colored Troops.

In October I was appointed a sergeant in company "I". My regiment soon after moved to Norfolk, Va.; where I had my first experience in active military life. We left Norfolk, Va. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December on a scouting expedition through North Carolina, and after a long march having been engaged in several skirmishes returned on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the same month. Cold weather having set in, the next duty assigned was the building of quarters; but we had scarcely completed them, when on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January we were ordered to Yorktown, Va. Arriving there on the 20<sup>th</sup> we were brigaded with the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> regiments of the U.S Colored Troops. Here as at Norfolk we built winter quarters. During our stay at Yorktown under the direction of General Wilster we made several marches up the peninsula, a march into King and Queen County in search of the murderers of Colonel Dahlgreen nearly completed our duties for the winter. Preparations had already begun for the historic campaign of 1864; when my regiment was ordered to Old Point Comfort.

In the course of three or four weeks under the direction of General Butler there were assembled at this place nearly fifteen thousand Colored Soldiers; these constituted the brave and

justly celebrated 3<sup>d</sup> Division of the 18<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and were known by the glorious title of Hinks' Old Division.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1864, we went into battle before Petersburg, Va. Of the successes of that day the country is well informed. I have participated in nearly all of the battles in which my regiment has been engaged, and was wounded before Richmond on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1864, from which I am now a sufferer, having lost the use of my right arm.

The above is respectfully submitted.

Robert A. Pinn.

1<sup>st</sup> Sergt. Co. "I."

5<sup>th</sup> U.S Col. Troops

Massillon,

Stark Co., Ohio.