

Biography of Sgt. Edmond Carter, 45th Regiment, U. S. Colored Infantry

Evergreen Cemetery
Richmond, Virginia
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July 6, 2019
[Sacred Ground, Sacred History](#)

Sgt. Edmond Carter served with Company G, 45th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry. According to his military pension record, he was born enslaved on the Allen Estate “in the third week of August,” 1844, near Bowling Green, Caroline County, Virginia. He was the son of Lewis Carter and Mary Jones.

He enlisted under the name “Edmond Allen,” the surname of his last owner, at the age of nineteen on July 28, 1864, at Grafton, West Virginia. He mustered in on July 29, 1864, at Camp William Penn, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Edmond was promoted from Corporal to Sergeant on August 16, 1865, and was discharged nearly three months later at Brownsville, Texas, with the surviving members of his regiment.

I located Edmond’s death certificate at the Library of Virginia in early 2015, and later reviewed his pension file at the National Archives in Washington, D. C. His testimony contains a very detailed description of his military experience, as well as the reason he chose to enlist under his former slave owner’s surname.

Deposition of Edmond Allen (alias Carter), February 13, 1911, Richmond, Virginia. Invalid claim, certificate number 1164987.¹

My age is 66 years, past; residence and post office address, 805 W. Leigh St., Richmond, Va. Occupation, job worker in Mayo Branch, American Tobacco Co’s factory.

I enlisted sometime in July, 1864, in West Virginia, at Parkersburg or Grafton, I don’t remember which, and went with nine others to Wheeling where we were paid \$150 bounty. From there we went together to Camp William Penn, near Philadelphia. In the latter part of August or September, six companies of the regiment went to Baltimore on the train, took the boat from there to City Point, where we took the train and went as near to Petersburg as we could, and went in camp there for several days. Then the six companies were ordered to cross the James River and reinforce the move against Fort Harrison, in Deep Bottom, near Richmond. When Fort Harrison was taken we went into the “trenchments” around the fort on the next day. The Confederate forces attempted to recapture it but they were defeated. We laid in camp around Fort Harrison during the winter of 1864-1865, being called on often “to support the

¹ Edmond Carter (Sgt., Co. G, 45th U. S. Colored Cavalry, Civil War), pension no. 1164.987, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications, 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files’ Record Group 15; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D. C.

extreme right.” Early in April, 1865, when the campaign opened, we were ordered to Hatcher’s Run, near Petersburg, and on the 3rd of April, we went into Petersburg, after a sharp “scrimmage.” From Petersburg we followed Lee’s retreating army to Appomattox. After Lee’s surrender we returned to Petersburg, and stayed in camp there probably two months. Then we took the cars and went to City Point, and embarked from there for Texas. After touching at the mouth of the river at Mobile, Fort Morgan, and at the mouth of the Mississippi, we sailed and landed at San Diego, Texas, on a little island, and stayed there a month, more or less. We then marched up the Rio Grande to Brownsville, Texas, and stayed there a short time, a day or so, and then went a considerable distance up the Rio Grande. Co. G was detailed to guard a ford of the river until the latter part of October, when we got orders to pack up. We took a boat at that place to Brownsville, where we were mustered out. From Brownsville the six companies went together by boat to San Diego, Texas, then on the Galveston, Texas. From there to New Orleans, where we turned in our guns. From there we took a steamer to New York and stayed there several days; then to Philadelphia where we went into camp, a camp occupied by white soldiers, not Camp Wm. Penn. Then we were paid off and I came home here to Richmond.

The four companies of the 45th regiment had been made up before I reached Camp William Penn, and they had gone to Washington on special duty. They joined us later at Deep Bottom, and were with until the six companies of us went to Texas. The four companies did not go to Texas. There were ten companies in the regiment, A B C D were the four companies that were on special duty in Washington and who did not go to Texas. E F G H I & K were the six companies that went to Texas.

There was only one Allen in the company, and that was myself. I enlisted as Edmond Allen because I was a slave owned by John R. Allen, here in Richmond, and had been known and called Edmond Allen up to the time I enlisted, and I thought it would be better to give that name than my father’s name, Carter, because I might not “answer up” right if I tried to go by my right name, Edmond Carter, not being used to it. My father was Lewis Carter, which was his true name and of course my true surname was Carter. Among several men who owned me from time to time before the war was John R. Allen, and he was my owner when I enlisted. That was the reason I used the name Allen, and that is the only reason. I have been known as Edmond Carter which is my name, ever since the war.

When I enlisted I was of gingercake complexion, brown eyes, black wooly hair; height 5 ft 11 inches. They asked my occupation and I told them I was a servant in the 6th West Virginia Cavalry before enlisting. Oh no, I was not enlisted in the 6th W. Va. Cav. I was servant for no particular person in the regiment, but only served for a mess of several men, one of them Captain Hyde on one of company, which company, I don’t remember. They called me by the name Edmond Allen.²

Upon his return to Virginia, Edmond married [Ellen J. Pollard](#), of King George County, Virginia, on February 17, 1869, Richmond. The ceremony was performed in historic [First African Baptist Church](#) by [Rev. James H. Holmes \(1826-1900\)](#).³

The couple resided in the Jackson Ward District, on West Leigh Street. Edmond worked in a tobacco factory, as a “lumper.” while Ellen worked alternately as a nurse and laundress. No children were born to their union.

² “Captain Hyde” refers to Capt. Jacob S. Hyde, Company L, 6th Regiment, West Virginia Cavalry.

³ Edmond Carter Civil War pension no. VA 1164,987, RG 15, NA-Washington D. C.

In later years, Edmond suffered from dementia, and near the end of his life, was placed in the Afro-American Old Folks Home, a charitable institution led by [John C. Randolph \(ca. 1872-1944\)](#), located on West Moore Street. Ellen spent some effort in convincing the pension board that she was never separated from her husband, and that his temporary confinement in the Old Folks Home did not constitute a divorce. To support her claim, she enlisted the help of the director of the Old Folks Home, John C. Randolph, of Richmond, and William H. Chiles, proprietor, and deacon of [Fifth Street Baptist Church](#).

Deposition of Ellen J. Carter, June 13, 1922, Richmond, Virginia. Widow's claim, certificate number 918.958.⁴

Why he was taken to the Home was because I could not control him; I had to go out to work at times and he had a roaming disposition and entered the Home for better protection as some one was there to look after him all the time. His being there was to have been only temporary until I could get some of my people to live with who could look after him while I was away. I works out at times as a nurse of aiding in out support. His going to the Home was not a separation of us. I went there every day and night to see him and all I could for him we never separated from the time we married until he died. I would sit up with him at night when I got from work and was with him the morning when he died. I was sorry he had to go to the home but I could not help it.

Deposition of [William H. Chiles](#), June 14, 1922, Richmond, Virginia. Widow's claim, certificate number 918.958.⁵

(Deponent)...is well acquainted with Edmond Carter deceased and his wife, Ellen Carter and have Edmond Carter before the Civil War about 60 years ago; and have known her every since, her marriage to Edmond . I was present at the marriage. We have been in touch with each other ever since the Civil War and I know they lived together every since they married until he died. I often visited them. They were never Divorced, nor separated. Shortly before his death, he entered the old Folk's Home because she was out days working; so he could be looked after. This was not a separation of them. She went to the home to look after him every day and night. He was at the Home about a month before he died.

Deposition of J. C. Randolph, June 14, 1922, Richmond, Virginia. Widow's claim, certificate number 918.958.⁶

(Deponent)...is acquainted with Ellen J. Carter widow of Edmond Carter deceased and was also acquainted with Edmond Carter and have known both of them for about ten years. That Edmond Carter entered the Home January 10, 1922, and Died February 10, 1922. That Mrs. Carter did not desert her husband; that he was at the Home temporary until she could get some one to look after him while she

⁴ Deposition of Claimant, 13 June 1922, Ellen J. Carter, widow's pension application no. 1185.450, certificate no. 918.958, service of Edmond Carter (Sgt., Co. G, 45th U. S. C. Cav., Civil War); Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁵ Deposition of Claimant, Ellen J. Carter, widow's pension no. 918,958, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington, D.C.

⁶ Deposition of Claimant, Ellen J. Carter, widow's pension no. 918,958, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington, D.C

was out at days work. She came to the Home regularly at night and sat with him and was there when he died.

Sgt. Edmond Carter (alias Allen) was interred in Evergreen Cemetery on February 12, 1922, by undertaker A. D. Price, Jr. His wife, Ellen, passed away three years later, on November 5, 1925, from complications of interstitial nephritis. She too, is interred in Evergreen Cemetery.⁷

Although the graves of Sgt. Edmond Carter and Ellen J. Pollard Carter have not been physically located within the cemetery, their story can now be added to the rich narrative of Evergreen Cemetery and greater Richmond, Virginia's African American history.

⁷ Virginia, Death Records, 1912-2014" database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 4 June 2019), certificate image, Ellen J. Carter, 5 November 1925, no. 25005 , citing "Virginia, Deaths, 1912–2014. Virginia Department of Health, Richmond, Virginia."