

CIVIL WAR – Union Occupation - Trail to Freedom

In the spring and summer of 1862, as many as 10,000 slaves crossed the Rappahannock River to freedom. The Trail to Freedom retraces their route.

Many slaves saw the arrival of the Union army in Stafford, opposite Fredericksburg, in April 1862 as a chance for freedom. During the Union occupation that spring and summer, slaves from Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania, and surrounding counties streamed into Union lines. It was likely the largest single exodus of slaves in America up to that time.

This mass act of self-emancipation launched former slaves on an uncertain journey. Some took paid jobs as camp workers in the Union army. Thousands more moved northward by foot, wagon, and rail, most of them boarding steamboats at Aquia Landing, bound for Alexandria and Washington, D.C.

Follow them, read their words, and hear their stories along their **TRAIL TO FREEDOM** by going to [www.http://trailtofreedom.com](http://trailtofreedom.com).

