



NOW HIRING
Warehouse Package Handlers in Williston, VT
Earn up to **\$22.00**/hour

CLICK to APPLY

FedEx Ground is an equal opportunity / affirmative action employer (Minorities/Females/Disability/Veterans) committed to a diverse workforce.

Recent News

Taxes decrease as home prices soar - JULY 22, 2021



Home - News - **Black Vermont Civil War soldier's story encourages reflection on race, history**

NEWS

Black Vermont Civil War soldier's story encourages reflection on race, history

September 17, 2020



By Tyler Lederer

Special to the Observer

Newell Cyrus Langley — a black Civil War veteran and native Vermonter who fought as far south as Florida for the Union — was remembered at a historical presentation last Sunday at Langley's gravesite in Williston's Morse Cemetery.

Dressed in Union Army blue, war re-enactor Reg Melrose spoke about the veteran's life and the hardships faced by him and his fellow soldiers of color. He showed off memorabilia from the day, including bibles and crude cracker rations known as "hardtacks."

He finished by firing a musket blank into the empty cemetery behind him.

A crowd of nearly two dozen people, mostly families with small children, gathered by Langley's tombstone to watch.

The event was hosted by the Williston Federated Church to increase awareness of African-Americans in Vermont, according to its Facebook page. A similar event, a plaque dedication to Langley, which also featured Melrose, was held at this spot two years ago.



A farmer from Ferrisburgh, Langley was one of the 151 men of color from Vermont to enlist in the Union Army, Melrose said. He served in the segregated Massachusetts 54th Regiment, which was led by a white officer.

He was at the Battle of Olustee, the largest battle in Florida during the war.

Melrose told the story of how Langley's regiment roped and pulled a train car full of injured soldiers to safety in Union-controlled Jacksonville after a combined 40 hours of work.

Most of his time, however, was uneventful and would've been spent marching in mud and heat.

"I was just amazed to find out how many African-Americans are from Vermont," said one attendee, a student at Champlain Valley Union High School. "Vermont's not typically known as a, you know, a black state."

Anyone who missed the presentation can find it on Williston Federated Church's Facebook page.

Tyler Lederer is a reporter with the Community News Service, a collaboration with the University of Vermont's Reporting & Documentary Storytelling program.

Previous Article
Voters to receive ballots by mail starting Monday

Next Article
Planners quash development restriction idea

Related Articles



February 12, 2021

Williston hosts soldier sendoff

Guard members head to Europe, Africa BY DON BRANUM Vermont National Guard A sendoff ceremony for the Vermont National Guard's 172nd Law Enforcement&nb

READ MORE



August 20, 2020

Recovery and reciprocity

teen's Eagle Scout garden benches punctuate stroke rehabilitation By Jason Starr Observer staff Out of an extremely rare health emergency came an inspiring recovery and an enduring Eagle Scout project

READ MORE



December 30, 2020

Sterling Students Contribute

Students in Williston Central School's Sterling House have been giving back to their community in a COVID-friendly way this December. Students participated in the Sterling Chore Challenge, compl

READ MORE