Harrisburg Area Subsidiary Camps

Numerous temporary camps were established around Harrisburg at various times during the Civil War when Camp Curtin became too crowded. Some were in existence for only a short time. Some campsites were used several times and given different names. Some names were official and others were informally named by the troops that occupied the site. Most references to these camps appear in letters, diaries, local newspapers, and post-war regimental histories. Unfortunately, exact locations are not always known because only brief or imprecise descriptions were given in the published sources. Readers who have names of additional camps or more information on any of the camps are invited to send it to campcurtin1861@aol.com.

Camp Cameron – Named for Secretary of War Simon Cameron. Located about 1½ miles east of Harrisburg. Established in July 1861 by Col. Samuel Black of the 62nd Pennsylvania Volunteers. Used by various units during the war.

Camp Couch – Named for Maj. Gen. Darius Couch, commander of the Department of the Susquehanna during the 1863 Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania. Located on the west shore of the Susquehanna River between Wormleysburg and West Fairview. The 20th Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment (181st P.V.) was organized at this camp.

Camp Cox – Named for Lt. Col. James Cox of the 22nd New York State Militia. Located next to entrenchments that guarded the road from New Cumberland to Bridgeport (Lemoyne) during the 1863 Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania. The camp was probably at 16th Street between the Susquehanna River and Bridge Street. It was also known as Camp Russell, named for Pennsylvania's Adjutant General.

Camp Dodge – Named for Captain Richard Dodge, the regular army commandant and chief mustering officer at Camp Curtin. Located on the heights of Bridgeport (Lemoyne). Used by Company A of the 127th Pennsylvania Volunteers (9 month), which remained in Harrisburg as a provost guard when the rest of the regiment was sent to join the Army of the Potomac in the fall of 1862. The camp was renamed Fort Washington when the fortifications were built in June 1863.

Camp Greble – Named for Lieut. John T. Greble of Philadelphia, who was killed at Big Bethel, June 9, 1861, the first officer of the Regular Army to lose his life in the war. Located east of Harrisburg in the Paxton Creek Valley. Used by the 5th U.S. Artillery from the summer of 1861 to the spring of 1862 and possibly at other times.

Camp Hinks – Named for Brig. Gen. Edward Hinks, acting assistant provost marshal for the western division of Pennsylvania. Located just outside the main gate of Camp Curtin, between Ridge Road (present day 6th Street) and the Pennsylvania Canal to the east. It was home to three companies of the 16th Regiment U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps (Invalid Corps).

Camp Keystone – Named for the symbol of the state. Located on Forster's Island (now called City Island) in the Susquehanna River. Used as a mustering-out camp in 1865.

Camp McClellan – Named for Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan by Governor Curtin. Located two miles east of Harrisburg on the Jonestown Road. Used in the late fall of 1862 to organize cavalry regiments.

Camp Return – Used as mustering-out camp in 1865. Described as adjoining Camp Curtin. Probably the same site as Camp Simmons (see below)

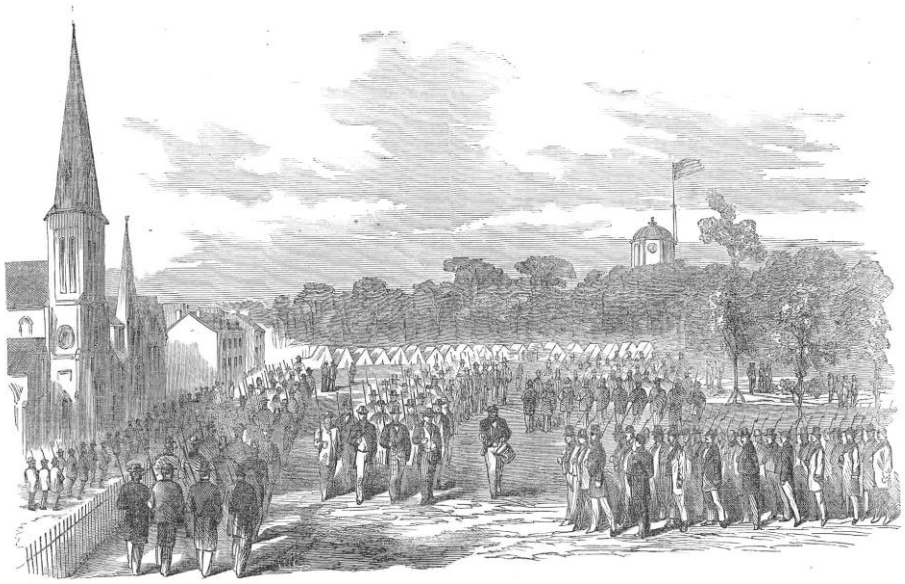
Camp Russell – Named for Pennsylvania Adjutant General A. L. Russell. Located in a field between Camp Curtin and the Pennsylvania Canal. Used by Philadelphia militia during the June 1863 Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania. (See also Camp Cox, above).

Camp Sands – Named for Captain William Sands, 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment (43rd P.V.), commandant and adjutant of Camp Curtin at various times during the war. Located along the Susquehanna River bank between Harrisburg and Camp Curtin. Open from January to March 1862 due to a smallpox outbreak at Camp Curtin.

Camp Simmons – Named for Colonel Seneca Simmons, 5th Regiment of Infantry of the Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps (34th P.V.), who was killed at the Battle of Glendale, Virginia, June 30, 1862. Located at the northwest corner of Camp Curtin. Used primarily by 9 month regiments raised during the late summer and fall of 1862. Seneca Street in Harrisburg is probably named for Col. Simmons.

Capitol Park – The lawn on the south side of the Capitol Building was used several times during the war as a camp. The State Arsenal was located on the eastern side of the park (near present day Fourth Street) and needed to be protected in time of emergency. The camp, with drilling militia, was pictured in Harpers Weekly newspaper in 1862. Apparently, the troops never gave the camp a name.

Fort Yahoo – Camp of 23rd New Jersey Infantry in Harris Park, south of the Camelback Bridge from June 18-20, 1863.



"**THE CAPITOL GROUNDS AT HARRISBURG TURNED INTO A CAMP**" *as sketched by Theodore R. Davis and published in the October 4, 1862, issue of Harpers Weekly. The paper reported, "Camp Curtin is crowded to overflowing; the beautiful grounds of the Capitol is one vast encampment covered with tents: the Senate and House of Representatives turned into barracks as well as every other room in the Capitol not immediately required for executive purposes."*

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