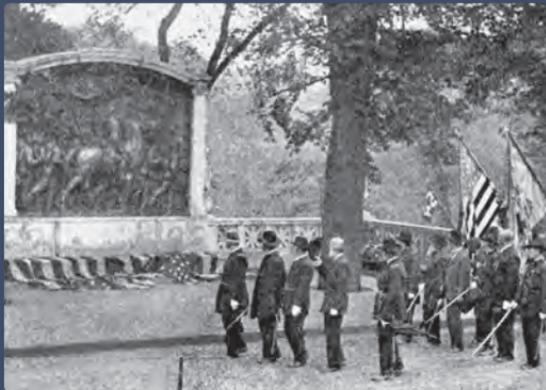


Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site



Consecration & Monument



Col. Robert Gould Shaw



The 54th Massachusetts Regiment



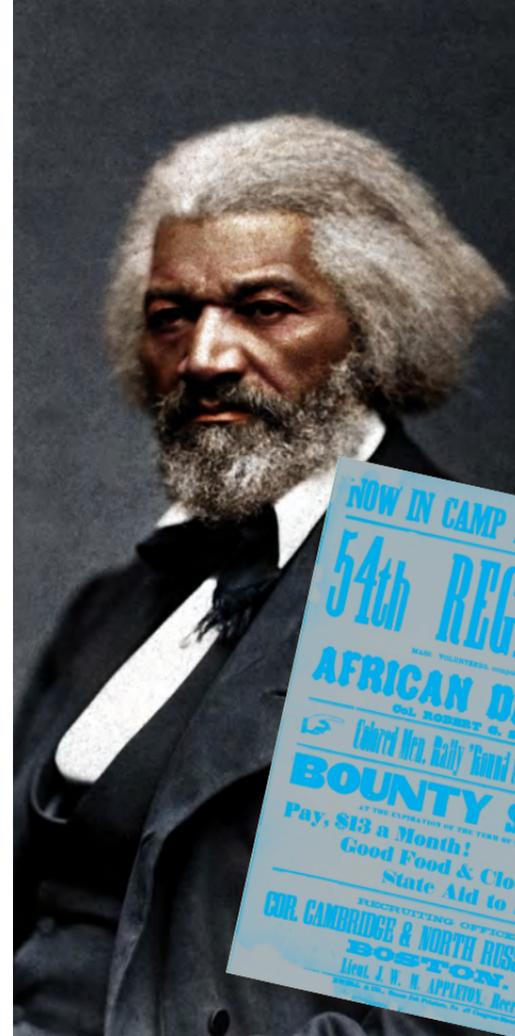
The Shaw Memorial, dedicated on Memorial Day in 1897 on the Common in Boston, Massachusetts was the culmination of a long story of dedicated idealism mixed with the practical necessity of war and politics. In creating this monument the artist Augustus Saint-Gaudens followed a path of self-discovery that mirrored the formation of the Regiment itself in the heart of the Civil War.

Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, Brady Studios, New York, 1861-63
courtesy Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

The creation of the first African-American regiment in the United States Army came from necessity, and the constant lobbying of Massachusetts Governor John Andrew. There were many who doubted the fighting spirit of this untested body of men. Robert Gould Shaw was one of those doubters. Although he came from privilege, his parents Francis and Sara were Abolitionists. Robert grew up with social justice as a constant thread in family talk and action, but life for him was moving in a direction of gentle ease. The Civil War changed that. By the time Governor Andrew asked Shaw to lead his new regiment, Shaw did not see it as a good move for his career. He was convinced otherwise by his mother, and relented, but still worried if he had made the right decision.

The Regiment was composed largely of Freedmen, African-Americans who were not slaves.

*Frederick Douglass
Broadside*



Spurred on by Frederick Douglass, they came from as far away as Ohio to fill the ranks.

The Massachusetts 54th Regiment consisted of free Black individuals. Using the Articles of War to the advantage of the Union, freed slaves were called

“contraband.” It was permitted under the Articles of War for either side to take property that could be useful to the war effort. The policy allowed the Union



to take Southern Blacks out of slavery. They were a diverse people; young and old, educated and not, some left families and thriving businesses, others came for promise of steady pay. A few were Caribbean, some African by birth. They all shared in the ideal of what they were doing.

5

One man later said that he did not come to fight for his country – he didn't feel that he had one – but rather to find his country.

*Contrabands aboard the U.S. Ship "Vermont," Port Royal, South Carolina, Henry P. Moore photo, 1862-63
The Boston Athenaeum (photo courtesy New Hampshire Historical Society)*



SHAW—HAGGERTY—On Saturday, May 2, at the Church of the Ascension, by the Rev. J. Cotton Smith. Colonel Robert G. Shaw, of Boston, and Miss Anna Kneeland Haggerty, daughter of Ogden Haggerty, Esq., of New York. May 1863

Shaw insisted on marrying Annie Haggerty before he left for war. The ceremony took place on May 2, 1863. The couple spent less than a month together before the Regiment left Boston on May 28, 1863. They never saw each other again.

The Regiment's embarkation from Boston drew curious crowds. As the progression continued past the State House, Shaw halted briefly at the sight of his wife and parents on a balcony, and raised his sword to his lips. Sent to the Carolinas, the Regiment saw small skirmishes until July of 1863 when their moment came.

6

Soldiers of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment:

- a) Pvt. Abraham Brown, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site;
- b) Sgt. William Carney, U.S. Military History Institute;
- c) Lt. Peter Vogelsang, Massachusetts Historical Society;
- d) Sgt. Henry F. Steward, Massachusetts Historical Society;
- e) Henry A. Monroe, Massachusetts Historical Society; and
- f) Francis H. Fletcher, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site



A



B



C



D



E

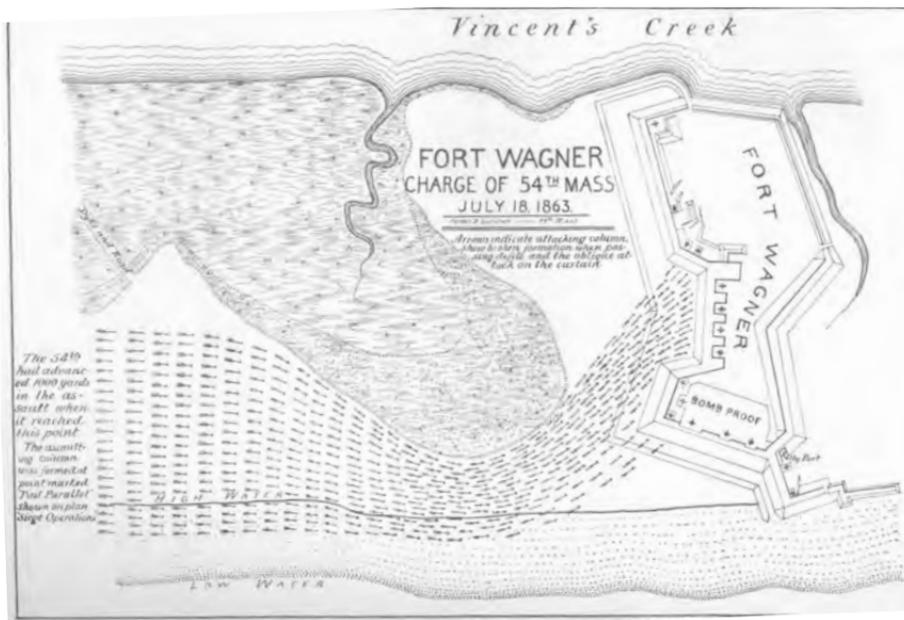


F

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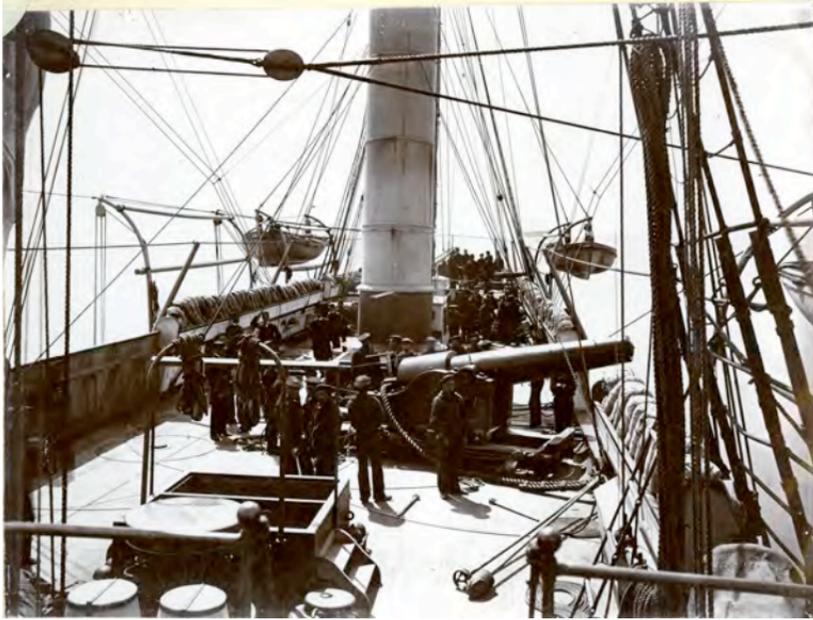
In that month they joined a massive Union buildup that sought to take Charleston Harbor by destroying the powerful fortifications at Fort Sumter and the island batteries on Morris, James and other coastal islands. The focus was Fort Wagner (called Battery Wagner in the South). It was an earthen-walled fortification, surrounded by water, with

8



swamps to the west, sand and beach to the east. Wagner was protected by a trench of seawater like a moat, and sharpened stakes set in and out of the water to further hold back advancing troops. There could be no direct assault; instead one had to come at an angle. Inside a massive pile of sandbags formed a “bombproof” that held most of the defenders.

(left) Plan of the Approach to Fort Wagner, showing order of troops on July 18, 1863, from Luis F. Emilio, “A Brave Black Regiment,” 1891
(above) View of the Bombproof in Fort Wagner, U.S. Military History Institute



U.S.S. Nipsic, Parrott Gun

Henry P. Moore photo, 1862-64, *New Hampshire Historical Society*

Originally, the Union intended to take Charleston Harbor with the infantry pushing into Fort Wagner after a massive bombardment from the ships at sea. This plan was tried once and failed. The second Battle of Fort Wagner came on July 18, 1863, with the 54th

Massachusetts Regiment leading the charge. This was the moment of destiny for Shaw and his men. As they prepared for battle they all knew that this was their time. Shaw declared that he would lead the charge. Uncharacteristically, he relaxed enough to walk among them, speaking freely, sharing flasks, looking at pictures of loved ones, and chatting amicably with them.

The formation came in late afternoon. As they moved up the ranks of supporting regiments, men cheered and urged them on. Men of the 54th remembered that as an affirmation of faith by their white fellow soldiers. The call came as the sun was setting. They trudged up the beach, their ears ringing with the deafening sound of an unprecedented bombardment of the fortifications from the ships at sea. This had begun early and had carried on for hours, hoping to knock out defenses before the land assault began. The troop formation constricted as they reached the marshes, and it was a small group that turned and faced the battlements.

The pace quickened and they rushed for the walls, clamboring through the chilly water of the moat and trying to avoid the sharpened stakes. By now the defenders had opened with artillery and small arms. As the sky darkened the flash of exploding artillery and arms was blinding. The relentless pounding of the artillery and the crash of waves along the sand

JULY.

19.

Sunday

Several Regiments charged on Fort Wagner last night. They got inside the fort but were finally repulsed, our loss is very great. all quiet to day. Co^s S. H. & C. are picketed at Fort Mifflin. I order to camp at 11 o'clock.

20.

Monday

Company I came in from pickets at daylight. all quiet in front until about noon when our Batteries & Gun Boats opened on Fort Wagner & kept up the fire till night. Weather pleasant. We expected an attack to night but they did not come on Fort Hudson. surrendered to Banks & the 11th inst.

21.

Tuesday

All quiet in front. our Batteries sent a few shells into Fort Wagner. ~~2~~ Boys arrived from Bearoff Island with tents & stores &c. Weather pleasant

JULY.

22.

Wednesday

Our men are planting several 200 pounder guns on Morris Island. all quiet along the line. I am in fatigue & leaving off a camping ground. putting up tents &c. Had a heavy shower in morning & evening.

23.

Thursday

Major Lindington & Floyd McCall came over to see us & drop me a heavy shower after dinner. everything quiet in front to day. A great deal of sickness in Co. B. Sixteen men chosen by the Surgeon at Elgin this morning.

24.

Friday

Our monitors opened on the enemies works early this morning & ceased firing at 10 o'clock to exchange prisoners. I went down to the point to day. Weather pleasant

combined, and as the evening began nature joined the dramatic scene with thunder and lightning as well. It was hard going on the sand and earth walls. Hands and feet sank into the surface and made the climb even more difficult. At the crest men began to fall. Colonel Shaw raised his sword, turned and urged the men onward.

Norris Crossman Diary, from the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society



Almost simultaneously he fell, pitching over the wall into the fort. Close by Sergeant William Carney saw the flag fall and grabbed it. He would later fall back, dragging the flag with him until he reached safety. For this he would later become the first African-American to receive the Medal of Honor.

The upturn in the naval bombardment had alerted the Confederate garrison that something was about to happen. The fort proved sturdy. The walls of sand meant that most of the artillery fell harmlessly absorbed into the soft walls.

*Storming Fort Wagner, Kurz & Allison
ca. 1890, Library of Congress*



*Sargent William Carney
shown wearing the Medal of Honor*



Lt. Luis Fenellosa Emilio, who became commander of the 54th Regiment during the Battle of Fort Wagner and later wrote the Regimental history – “A Brave Black Regiment”

The bombproof proved effective. The men here stood their ground; with the exception of the 31st North Carolina Regiment that had been decimated earlier in fighting. Their refusal to leave the bombproof allowed the New York Regiment on the Union side to swarm into the fort. The battle slogged on for several hours. By eleven o'clock the men were exhausted. The carnage had been extreme. Bodies littered the walls, most from the Union. The retreat came more from necessity than general orders. In the 54th Regiment Luis Emilio, a lieutenant, found himself in command as officers dropped around him.

Colonel Haldimand Putnam of Cornish, New Hampshire, leading the New Hampshire 7th Regiment, was cut down. The men fell back and pushed their way through support regiments, some of whom were still advancing. Some fell to friendly fire in the confusion. The battle had been a solid victory for the Confederacy. Their casualties were 181; the Union suffered 1515. The defeat of the 54th nonetheless changed people's perceptions about African-Americans in the military.

Col. Haldimand Putnam of Cornish, NH who died leading the NH 3rd Regiment at Fort Wagner





ugustus Saint-Gaudens received the commission for the monument to Colonel Shaw and his regiment in 1883, with the contract signed the following year. Time had softened, but not forgotten, the tragedy of the loss. From the start there was interest from African-American citizens and organizations. Sara Shaw corrected Augustus Saint-Gaudens when he first proposed an equestrian monument to her son. She wrote back to him that Shaw's fate was joined to that of his men, he was buried with them, and he would want to be memorialized with them. That opened a new world to the artist, who had little previous experience of African-American culture or understanding



Preliminary Sketch of the Shaw Memorial by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College

Photo by DeWitt Clinton Ward
Courtesy Dartmouth College Library



of their situation. His “Reminiscences” show that at first he shared the usual stereotypes and prejudices of his time. In this he was no different from Colonel Shaw. But like the fallen soldier, Saint-Gaudens also quickly understood that the scale and emotional sweep of the story could only be told with a solid depiction of the men involved. He sought a wide variety of interesting portraits – at one time paying an African-American man he met on the street 25 cents a person for every interesting looking person he brought to the studio. In all about 40 portrait heads were made – young men and old, handsome and gnarled. With his characteristic perfectionism, the artist also collected samples of uniform, weapons, etc. to be sure he had the details correct.

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Plaster studies for Soldiers by Augustus Saint-Gaudens
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site



The composition came after a walk through the Louvre in Paris. Saint-Gaudens was struck by a group of walking men in the back of the painting “Campagne de France” by J.-L.E. Meissonier, showing Napoleon and his army. That was the impetus to develop a composition of the equestrian officer carried forward by the steady motion of the marching men behind him. It is like a cinema still, with partial figures at front and back indicating movement. Above he placed a flying figure carrying poppies for sleep and an olive branch for peace. He added the Latin motto of the Society of Cincinnati, of which Shaw was a member. The translation – roughly “He gave his all for his country” applied to officer and soldier alike.

23

J.-L. E. Meissonier “Campagne,” Musee d’Orsay, Paris. The walking soldiers in the back of the picture, seen at middle right inspired Saint-Gaudens for the composition of the Shaw Memorial



Dedication of the Shaw Memorial, Memorial Day, 1897, Boston Common. Members of the Regiment salute their fallen comrades as they process past the monument at its dedication. Photo courtesy The Boston Sunday Journal, June 6, 1897

The dedication of the monument in Boston came after fourteen years of hard work. The day of the dedication saw Saint-Gaudens agitated as was his usual in such times.

He disliked being in the public eye, and remembered afterward all the people in the crowds staring at him. But as the ceremony unfolded he was brought back to the true

meaning of the event when he saw the veterans of the Regiment march past. As they paused in front of the memorial and saluted, he saw in the now-grizzled faces the true humanity of what he had done and of what they had accomplished.

Saint-Gaudens continued to work on the monument even after it was dedicated, creating four versions of the sculpture in all, each refining details of rifles, flags and sword. A full-scale plaster cast was exhibited in the Grand Palais in the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900, and again in 1901 in Buffalo at the Pan-American Exposition, and then slowly forgotten. Covered later with a wall, it was not rediscovered until the 1940s,

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*The Sculpture Court, Fine Arts Building,
Pan American Exposition, Buffalo, NY, June, 1901*



when Homer Saint-Gaudens brought the sculpture to Cornish where it remained at the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site before restoration and loan to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. The bronze sculpture seen today at the park was cast from the plaster in 1996.

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The Shaw Memorial seen at the end of the corridor at the Grand Palais, Exposition Universelle, Paris, France, 1900

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Saint-Gaudens was moved at the dedication by the sight of the surviving veterans of the 54th passing in front of the new monument. He called it a consecration. In this anniversary year we remember again the sacrifice and idealism, the hard necessity and hard work that recalled a seminal event and opened a door to future progress.

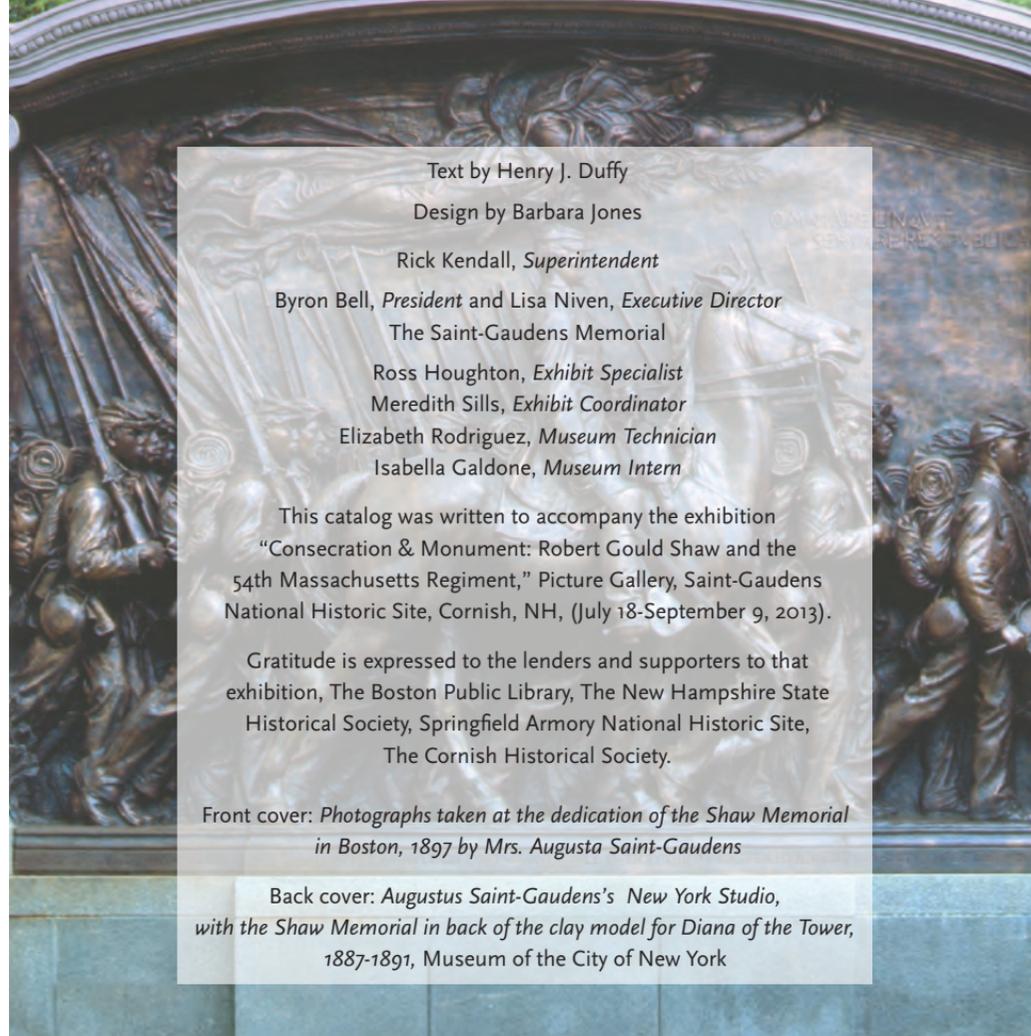


Fourth version in plaster of the Shaw Memorial, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site (currently on loan to the National Gallery, Washington, D.C.)



Augustus Saint-Gaudens
photo courtesy Saint-Gaudens
National Historic Site

Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) is known for iconic Civil War monuments of Lincoln, Farragut and Sherman, low-relief portraiture in bronze, and the design of the 1907 Gold Twenty and Ten Dollar coins. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Saint-Gaudens was brought to New York City as a child, before traveling to Paris and Rome for study in art. He was also known as a teacher, organizer of exhibitions, and a founder of the National Sculpture Society and the American Academy in Rome.



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This catalog was written to accompany the exhibition “Consecration & Monument: Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment,” Picture Gallery, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, NH, (July 18-September 9, 2013).

Gratitude is expressed to the lenders and supporters to that exhibition, The Boston Public Library, The New Hampshire State Historical Society, Springfield Armory National Historic Site, The Cornish Historical Society.

Front cover: *Photographs taken at the dedication of the Shaw Memorial in Boston, 1897 by Mrs. Augusta Saint-Gaudens*

Back cover: *Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s New York Studio, with the Shaw Memorial in back of the clay model for Diana of the Tower, 1887-1891, Museum of the City of New York*

This exhibition is sponsored through the generosity of
The Saint-Gaudens Memorial.



The Saint-Gaudens Memorial is a private, non-profit organization chartered by the State of New Hampshire in 1919, to preserve and exhibit Saint-Gaudens's home and studios. The Memorial operated the site as a museum until 1965, when they donated the property to the National Park Service to become the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. The Memorial continues to play an important role as a park partner and supports the site in a variety of ways including sponsoring programs and activities such as this exhibition, the summer concert series, and other events that increase public awareness of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, his works, and that promote sculpture and the arts in general.

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