

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910788502703321
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Titolo	Intensely human : the health of the Black soldier in the American Civil War // Margaret Humphreys
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Baltimore : , : Johns Hopkins University Press, , 2008
ISBN	1-4214-0238-6
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xx, 197 p.) : ill., map ;
Disciplina	973.7/0896073
Soggetti	African American soldiers - Health and hygiene - History - 19th century African American soldiers - Mortality - History - 19th century Masculinity - United States - History - 19th century Human body - Social aspects - United States - History - 19th century Racism - United States - History - 19th century United States History Civil War, 1861-1865 Participation, African American United States History Civil War, 1861-1865 Health aspects United States History Civil War, 1861-1865 Social aspects United States Race relations History 19th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (pages [161]-190) and index.
Nota di contenuto	The Black body at war -- The pride of true manhood -- Biology and destiny -- Medical care -- Region, disease, and the vulnerable recruit -- Louisiana -- Death on the Rio Grande -- Telling the story.
Sommario/riassunto	Black soldiers in the American Civil War were far more likely to die of disease than were white soldiers. Historian Margaret Humphreys explores why this uneven mortality occurred and how it was interpreted at the time. In doing so, she uncovers the perspectives of mid-nineteenth-century physicians and others who were eager to implicate the so-called innate inferiority of the black body. In the archival collections of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Humphreys found evidence that the high death rate among black soldiers resulted from malnourishment, inadequate shelter and clothing, inferior medical attention, and assignments to hazardous environments. While some

observant physicians of the day attributed the black soldiers' high mortality rate to these circumstances, few medical professionals--on either side of the conflict--were prepared to challenge the "biological evidence" of white superiority. Humphreys shows how, despite sympathetic and responsible physicians' efforts to expose the truth, the stereotype of black biological inferiority prevailed during the war and after.
