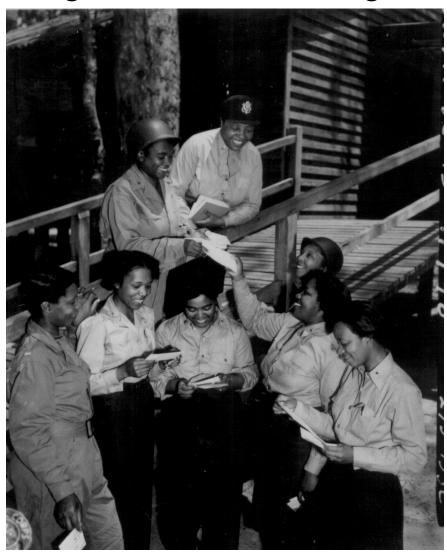# A Fight for Equality

Stratford resident Susan Freeman was a WWII army nurse, an officer and who was also black.

She graduated Stratford High School in 1921 and went on to earn her nursing degree and master's degree. Prior to the United States' entry into WWII she signed up in the Army Nursing Corps as a second lieutenant. She was sent to Camp Livingston, La, where she first encountered segregation. There, with other black nurses and doctors, she was forced to live in separate areas and work in "blacks' only" wards. Despite these obstacles she was the first nurse at the camp to earn the rank of first lieutenant.

In 1942 Freeman was assigned to an American Army hospital in Liberia, where her work earned a unit commendation from the commanding general and a citation as a Knight Official of the Order of African Redemption from the Liberian Government.

She left the Army in 1945, the first black nurse ever to become a captain and commander of the first overseas unit of black nurses.

Returning home to Stratford, she was founding member of Chi Eta Phi nursing sorority and a member of the board of the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre. She died in the VA Hospital in 1979.