

THE EXPERIENCE OF THOMAS R. ALDRICH Late of Co. B. 154th New York Volls. while a prisoner of war from May 8, 1864 until February 22nd, 1865.

The first of May 1864 found the 154th N. Y. encamped at Lookout Valley Tenn. We had been sent South in September 1863. Just after the defeat of Rosecranz at Chicamauga and had participated in the battles of Wauchatchie, Chattanooga and Mission Ridge, had tramped to Knoxville and back about 300 miles in the month of December with Sherman to relieve Burnside, and had spent a very pleasant winter in the Valley. During the Spring the 11th Corps to which we belonged had been consolidated with the 12th and made the 20th with General Hooker to command them. It was a change that pleased us as we all liked Hooker and had great confidence in his fighting qualities. The 154th was in the 2nd Brigade 2nd Division of the Corps, with General Geary, as Commander.

On the 4th day of May 1864 at 2 o'clock in the after noon, the 154th was ordered to strike tents and get ready to march. We fell in line at three with knapsacks packed ready for the Summer campaign. Our camp had been just across the Valley from the point of Lookout Mountain, and about 4 miles from Chattanooga. The order to march came at last, and every man stepped off with the knowledge that there was a long Summer of marching and fighting for him, if his life was spared and he was not wounded or captured, and right here let me say that we knew what it meant to be captured. We had lost a number of our men at Getteysburgh, and they were still in Andersonville, and other prisons in the South. They had been prisoners 10 months, and no man would be captured if in his power to prevent it. We crossed the point of Lookout, and moved up the Chattanooga Valley a mile or so and encamped for the night. The next morning the army moved forward, our Regiment was ordered to remain as rear guard for Waggon train and did not move out until about two o'clock in the afternoon and then followed along in the rear of our emense train of Artillery, Baggage Waggon and ambulances and did not get up with our Brigade so as to go into Camp until 12 o'clock at night, and we were all foot sore and weary, it being the first march of any account we had made since December when we returned from Knoxville.

At daylight on the morning of the 6th we were in line and the order was forward. The march was short that day only 6 or 8 miles. When we halted drew rations ammunition (?) and went into camp for the night appearances indicated that we should soon have hard work to do, and all the Boys felt good, and acted as though they were anxious to do it and go home. On the morning of the 7th we were early in line and the men stepped off Briskly. It was very hot and the Boys commenced throwing away all their Baggage that they could spare. Wm Casten and I lived together and we

reduced our luggage to as small a compass as possible. The road was lined with clothing of all descriptions, including Blankets overcoats tents etc, in fact the only baggage, one of Sherman's men carried was a tent cloth and a rubber poncho, and they were rightly named the flying Infantry. We halted at 12 for dinner, resumed the march crossed a mountain and halted for a rest at Gordon's Springs. Soon the command was forward and we moved on, passed a Brigade of Kill Patricks Cavalry that were resting in a field on our right and entered a piece of woods, the timber of which was the tall Georgia Pine. As we filed around a turn in the road I happened to look up, and on the peak of a very tall pine, sat a large ~~parakeet~~ Pea Cock, and just then he gave one of the most unearthly yells I ever heard. I turned to one of my comrades and said I would like to shoot him, and that that yell was a bad omen. Our Regt. soon filed to the right in a thick piece of woods, where there was a slight depression in the earth and halted in line of Battle, and were ordered to lay on our arms all night, which we did. We were working up close to the enemy and were ready to repel their advance if necessary.

The next morning Sunday May 8th we resumed the march at 11 a.m. with skirmishers ahead, and finally after a short halt, when the Boys dispursed of more of their extra baggage, we advanced in line of Battle and soon after were storming Rocky Face Ridge or as it was called by the Rebels Dug Gap. This was a very steep mountain, and covered with large Rocks and Bolders, and it was impossible to advance in the face of the deadly fire from the Confederates with any degree of safety. The Regt. on our right and also on our left did not come up, and left us exposed to their fire both front and flank. A little more than half way up we laid down behind the bolders for a rest, and the way the bullits did sing around us was a caution. We were soon ordered forward and I never shall forget the order of Col. D. B. Allen. He said I want every man to go to the top of that hill, and they started with that intention and would have succeeded if we had been properly supported on our flanks. My Co. B was color company, and about the time that we halted to rest several of them had been killed and wounded and the rest were somewhat scattered so that there were probably 10 of us around the colors. I got my eye on a large rock about 18 or 20 feet from the top of the mountain and started for it with all my power. Just before I reached it I was hit in the right shoulder with a Reb bullit, and down I went, but kept right on crawling and got under the rock and O.C. Greely, who by the way was a relative of Horace Greely, was down there with me. We stagnated

ourselves at each end and fired a few shots expecting of course that the whole line would soon be up with us. The 28th P.A. a Regiment that had lately been recruited to the maximum number came up on our left just about this time and I saw a few of them at my left and below me behind Rocks and logs. I saw one that was behind a log take a sort of a tumble over and thought he had been shot, but at the same time heard a great rush, and looking around saw our whole line retreating. I says to Greely for Gods Sake let us get back and as we raised up on our feet to retreat a score of Rebs stood on the rock over our heads with their guns leveled at us and ordered us to surrender you ~~dumb~~ Yanks. Some says shoot the dumb Yankeys, and they were not 10 foot from us. I says you would not shoot prisoners would you, and they said then throw down your guns and go to the rear. I slaped my gun down on the rock, and I take it that it was not much good for shooting after that. They marched us up on the top of the mountain and halted us, in the meantime our forces had halted and the bullits began to whistle around us. I says to a Sergeant take us further over the bullits come too close here. One of them made the remark you uns [?] wernt afraid coming up the mountain. I made the reply that I did not want to be killed by my friends. They moved us down a little further and halted us again, there were in the squad by this time myself, O. C. Greely, C. F. Allen of B Co. C. E. Whitney of Co. I, Sid More of Co. D and some others of our Regt. who I do not remember in all 12 or 15. They went through us for our valuables. They took my canteen and a jack knife. My watch I had in a small pocket in my pants and that they did not happen to find. My diary pipe and tobacco I prevailed on them to leave me. The diary had about 10 dollars in bills between the leaves and of course I did not give them that or let them suspect that I had it. I was well dressed new uniform cut over to fit me a new hat, and a new pair of boots sent from home especially for that Summers campaign I pulled the pant legs out of the boots and as we were near a Spring I got my feet as wet as possible and scrubbed along in the dust and it made the boots look like an old pair so that I was lucky enough to keep them. I had an officers belt that my cartridge box was slung on and that took their fancy. I made them believe that my wound was so bad that I could not unbuckle it and when they tried to I would swell out like a toad, finally one fellow says cut it and handed me my old knife to cut it with, and I cut it so that it was not much good after that. A part of us had broken into what cartridges we had and thrown them away so that they should not have much aid from us. Rocky face where we were captured was about four miles from Dalton, G.A. and after giving us a good lunch ordered us to fall in line

and marched us off for Dalton. When we got down the mountain we met Pat. Claiborn's Division of the Rebel Army hurrying to the front to oppose our advance. He stopped us and made the boys give up their canteens, etc. Charley Allen hesitated some about giving his up and Claiborn pulled his revolver to shoot him but Charley's hesitation was gone and so was his canteen and he poor fellow only prolonged his misery by not being shot as he died in Andersonville after terrible suffering. We arrived at Dalton just at night, and were marched into the Guard House, where there was a nondescript lot of fellows deserters conscripts murderers thieves, etc. We being the only Union prisoners, during the night I had Greely take my watch and tie it around my left arm so that it hung just under it and carried it there until our arrival at Andersonville.

They took us out on the morning of the 9th took our names Co. and Regt. and gave us another search to see if they had overlooked anything the day before. There was a sergeant of the Regiment that captured us the 5th Kentucky, that wanted to trade boots with me. He was a fine fellow, and I told him that perhaps the boots would save my life as I had got to go through some hard places before I got out, and he allowed that I might keep them and gave me some advice how to get along with the guard, which I accepted and was very beneficial to me. At last they loaded us on the train and we started for Atlanta. We were in a passenger car and attracted a great deal of attention, especially at the different stations. I told the Boys that we were acting as advance Couriers for Sherman. Just going down to Atlanta to tell them that he was coming, at all the bridges on the road I noticed they had a strong guard, and a sort of Block house. At each end, they had not forgotten Andrews and his attempt to steal their whole Confederacy. We arrived at Atlanta about 4 P.M. The people heard there were some ~~New~~ New York prisoners, and the street where we were unloaded was filled with people, and they were not particular what they said to or called us, As we marched along to the Prison Barracks. Women who I suppose called themselves ladies addressed us with the vilest epithets, threw different articles at us and some that stood on Verandas over our heads spit on us, and as the most of them chewed tobacco or snuff it was not very pleasant. They gave us fair quarters, and some meal and bacon and as we had not been used to meal we were well satisfied with it. I was the only non commissioned officer in the Squad, and drew the rations for the Boys.

The 10th we staid all day in the Barracks and I think must have had a thousand visitors, as we were the first New York men they had seen in Atlanta and they wanted to find out how we felt in regard to the war, and they found out, as we gave it to them right and left. I thought at one time a Reb officer would shoot Sid More. He drew his revolver and ordered Sid to shut up but that was what Sid never was known to do, and I believe he would have shot him if I had not interferred and spoke to the officer. I made up my mind that discretion was the better part of valor, in the conditions we were in and when I got them mad enough kept still until they cooled off, or a new batch came in, but that was not Sids way. All members of the 154th knew Sid. We got through the day quite well. 25 more prisoners were brought in bringing news that Sherman was driving them, and of course that made us feel good, and we laid down to sleep quite content with the understanding that we were to leave for Andersonville in the morning.

Here let me go back a little to the 8th and Rocky Face Ridge. Our Regiment was nothing but a skeleton only about 200 guns all told. We had ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{suffered} at Chancellorsville and Getteysburgh had lost in those two battles about 400 men ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ killed and wounded, besides a lot of Prisoners at Getteysburgh and they had not all been returned to us, as they were in the ~~xxxxxx~~ hospital parole camps and a lot of them in Andersonville, but what there was left were as brave and loyal set of men as ever carried a musket, and many of the Brave Boys fought their last fight at Rocky face.

Thomas Agustus Shippy Sergeant of my co. a better man nor soldier never lived. He was shot through the neck standing by my side. Another Wright of Co. C was shot in the hip. C. W. Hall Corporal of my co. was shot through the lung. He had been badly wounded in the leg at the Battle of Chancellorsville. He now lives in the town of Dayton is not now nor has he been in years able to set up and attend to his business a whole day at a time, and I believe he draws from the Government the paltry sum of \$6.00 per month pension. Such is the gratitude of a grateful country. Our color bearer Arnold orderly sergeant of Co. D were killed. P.A. Markham of Co. B one of the color coporals was wounded and lost his arm that day and many more that want of space forbids to mention. Right here I will copy a letter written by Dr. Henry VanAernam to the Olean Advertiser just after the battle of Rocky face in the summer of 1864. The Editor says we publish a list of the casualties of the 154th New York Vols. Col. P. H. Jones Commanding. Dr. VanAernam who kindly furnished us the list gave a thrilling account of the men, particularly of their devotion to their Colors

at the battle of Rocky face Ridge, G. A. George Bishop of this Village, where he leaves a wife and two or three children was the Regimental Color Bearer, he was ordered to plant the Standard on the crest of a hill in view of the Rebels entrenchments. He had hardly done so when a Rebel sharpshooter sent a Bullet through him. Sargeant Augustus Shippy of Co. B seeing the Colors fall scaled the Ridge and replanted them. He had just accomplished this, when a Rebel Bullet killed him Corporal T. R. Aldrich of the same company then sprang forward and replanted the flag. Standing unmoved amid the whistling messengers of death for some moments but a Rebel Sharp Shooter finally brought him down and he died without a groan. Private Cyrus C. Greely a distant relative of Horace Greely of the Tribune, then seized the colors planting them firmly holding the Staff in his right hand. He occupied his position but a few moments and fell dead at his post. Orderly Sargeant Ambrose F. Arnold of Co. D then rushed forward seized the flag and waved it in defiance at the enemy and continued to do so until ordered away by his Superior Officer.

Dr. VanAernam, says a hundred Bullets whized by Sergt. Arnold while he stood there, not one of which took effect, his four dead comrades lay within four feet of him, while daring and determination marked every feature of his continuance and action. This is heroism of the truest and purest character and it is questionable which of these five Braves four dead and one living displayed the most nobleness daring and courage. It is easy however to decide which was the most fortunats, is this incident of this terrible war paralleled anywhere. We think not.

Olean Advertizer

The Dr. was of course mistaken in regard to Greely and myself, but we were both seen to fall and were supposed to be shot. He also was mistaken in regard to Arnold for his was shot dead at Rocky face, and Allen Williams who now lives in the town of Ishhus in this county, brought off the colors and carried them until the close of the war. By the way Williams was company cook and a fellow by the name of Adams in the same company was Color Corporal the day before Adams offered to trade his Corporal stripes for Williams kettles, and the captain consenting the trade was made. In 1870 Adams was shot and killed in a burning scrap in the town of Lynden. It was a good while before the Boys in the Regt. knew Greely and myself were prisoners. We were both seen to fall and were with the colors, and supposed to be dead. Greely was a prisoner until sometime in November 1864 and was paroled from Millen. Now lives at Ripley Chaut. Co., a perfect wreck has no use of his limbs and I am told only draws a small pension and since the above was written has died.

My tent mate Wm. Custer escaped unhurt at Rocky face and passed through all the fights to Atlanta, Resaca Peach tree Creek Kenasaw New hope Church N.C. and with Sherman to the sea and arrived to the Grand Revue at Washington was discharged came home and died within 10 days after I think. We were tent mates for a year or more and a finer comrade never lived. My other tent mate Shannon has been called, and of the three that lived together at Lookout Valley I am the only one living.

It rained quite hard through the night of the 10th but we were quite fairly protected. They took us out at six in the morning of the 11th and we took cars for Macon. I noticed that it had the appearance of a fine country from Atlanta to Macon. We passed through some fine villages, and we attracted a good deal of attention the negros all looked and acted as though they were sorry for us. Some of us had a little money and trinkets we had kept ~~hidden~~ hid, and we bought and traded for pies, cakes etc. One fellow on train wanted to trade boots with me, offered me \$500 in Confederate money to boot, but I was sharp enough not to take any of my clothing off, and that is one reason that I lived through and am here today. We arrived at Macon just before night, and they marched in squads of 15 into the Jail and locked us in a small room not over 12 x 15 feet. That was the first time I had ever been in Jail, and I disliked it so much that I had been careful to keep from them since. The room had been used for the same purpose before and by those that were not as clean as we were, for the blankets were full of Vermin. They gave us a fairly good supper and we slept what we could. We were viewed by a large number of people through the diamond in the door. The majority of them being women and girls. On the morning of the 12th we were ready for an early start. They gave us some biscuit and rye coffee for breakfast. At that time I was about 21 years old and the picture of health, did not look to be over 18. As we passed out of our room and filed down stairs the Jailors wife and a young lady I took to be her daughter stopped me and said it was too bad I had to go to Andersonville and filled my haversack with Biscuits and cold meat. I have always held them in grateful remembrance for that act of Charity. We took the car and arrived at Andersonville about three or four in the afternoon. The place where they unloaded us was higher than the Stockade and we had a good view of it as we stepped off the train. It is impossible for me to describe my sensations, as I looked over and saw the Prison and the Inmates. They looked like a lot of Colored men, and the stench that arose even at that distance was stifling. We were formed in line and as I was the only non Commissioned Officer in the squad I took my place on the right as I had been in the habit of doing in the Company .

We had stood but a moment when the infamous Wirz marched up and halted right in front of me, looked up and down the line, and finally looked me over and says hello Corp, you wont look as fine as that after you have been over there awhile. You will come out feet first for they are dying off very fast, have got the Small Pox in there like the devil. I could compare him to nothing but the devil, as he stood talking to me and gloating over my misery and the misery of those that had been a long time in that hell hole.

They marched us over by headquarters and took our names Co. and Regiment went through us again to see if there fellows had left anything of Value or use, and then opened the gate to that awful prison and marched us in.

I tell you my heart sank for a moment when those gates closed on us, but I made up my mind that would not do so braced up. Of course our entrance created a great commotion as all the Prisoners rushed around us to see if they knew any of us and the cry was fresh fish.

We were distributed through the different hundreds, and Greely Allen and myself were put in the same division that our Boys were in that had been captured at Gettysburgh, 10 months before 1863. There we found John Haug Lo Phillips Wm. Hawkins Frank Goodrich George Bailey Otherniel Green Peter Bussinger D. Stevens L.Litchfield O. Bronson and several others of our Regt. I shall never forget what Bill Hawkins said to me as his eyes fell on me. My God Tom I am glad to see you but sorry to see you here. The Boys all looked like Skeletons with hardly clothing enough to cover their nakedness, and it was a tough sight for us that had been well fed and well clothed. Frank Goodrich of my Co. B had been a prisoner since Gettysburgh and was sick and very weak. I had some coffee and hard tack in my haversack, and it had been about a year since any of the Boys had had any. I made some coffee for Frank and cooked some hard tack and a little pork. It seemed as though it gave him a new lease of life and he acted better and was better as long as it lasted, but having it seemed to make him homesick after it was gone and the poor boy soon died.

This was the 12th day of May 1864 and they turned me into that pen with a piece of shelter tent a Rubber Poncho haversack tin cup and the clothes on my back, and I was considered lucky and was lucky for there was not one out of the Squad that had as much as I had. I saw hundreds turned in there bare headed bare footed no coat and nothing to shelter them. Hawkins had a blanket stuck up on some poles to keep the sun and dew off, and he was what they called an aristocrat, and there

~~ix~~ lure

were a good many who wanted to ~~xxxx~~ him as the anardrist and so/cialist want to lure the people now, that is to divide up property. He and Goodrich lived together and they wanted Greely Allen and myself to live with them. My piece of tent and rubber came handy for shelter and made quite a shanty, a great deal better than nine tenths of them had. Hawkins had been there 10 months and was fully posted and knew how to work all the cards that could be worked for the benefit of himself or his friends. The most of you know Hawkins. Some of you knew him before the war and when he enlisted, look at him anytime since he came out of that Hell Hole and tell me if he is one half the man he would have been if he had never been there, and he now draws from this Government a pension of ~~\$ix~~ four dollars per month. Here is another example of the Gratitude of a Grateful country.

A large majority of us were young men from 18 to 25 years old. A great many that came in later had not been off the farm out of the store shop or school over two months/^w When they were ushered into that Hole. They had enlisted rushed to the front been captured, and knew nothing about taking care of themselves.

The Boys that had been in the army a year or more had got used to looking out for themselves and there own welfare, and got along a great deal better than the others. During the Summer I saw Boys brought in there that were well dressed, in three days they had traded off everything but their shirt and pants, for something to eat and in another week were dead. They could not stand hunger. When their shoes were gone the hot sun would blister the tops of their feet. The blisters would break and they would get the swamp poison in them and death would ~~fix~~ follow. I went down to the creek one morning after water and saw a fellow laying on the edge of the swamp. The magots were crawling out of his ears and nose. I thought he was dead but discovered that he was still alive. I got him up and out of there and have seen him in Cattaraugus County since I came home.

When we got there the Prison consisted of about 12 or 15 acres with a small stream running through the center of it and a swampy piece of ground of about 5 or 6 acres that no one could live on. there was no shelter of any description furnished nor did they allow anyone to bring in any tents if they could well avoid it, and when we got there there was about 10 or 12 thousand prisoners there, and was then crowded more than it should have been. Shortly after we got there they commenced building an addition to the stockade but did not get it done until there

were more than 25 thousand in that small space and it was impossible after they had got laid down nights to walk around camp without stepping on a sleeping soldier. Many a time have I been cussed and damned when I had to go down to the creek after they had got laid down.

We woke up on the morning of the 13th with a realizing sense of our surroundings. We had been living in winter quarters and were just as neat and clean as we would have been at home with plenty of good food, and just enough exercise to keep us healthy.

In the prison the land on which we lay was full of Vermin, called by us Grey Backs. You could see them crawl through the sand, and the only way a person could keep from being litterly eaten alive was to take his garments off and kill them from two to four times a day. It seemed as though I should go crazy the first few days, in fact had to take my clothes off and stand around with nothing on part of the night.

The 13th being our first full day we gave the stockade a thorough inspection for the reason that we were strong and healthy and thought perhaps we might be the means of delivering ourselves and others from Bandage.

After we had looked it over we made up our minds that if we lived there a month we should be good ones. Alas how little I knew of what I had to undergo and suffer before I again could stand under the Starry Banner free. Still I was not discouraged for a moment for I had been used to looking out for myself since I was a small boy, and knew what it was to shirk for myself and soon adapted myself to circumstances and made up my mind not to be homesick or allow myself to get discouraged. I had my haversack full of coffee hard tack and sugar with a small piece of pork that I would not allow myself to eat but used it for Hawkins and Goodrich, the most of it for Goodrich as he was sick and weak and I knew he was not long for this world.

The water was very bad and that troubled me more than anything else. I drank as little of it as possible. There was a Bridge across the creek and a space of about ten feet between that and the dead line was about ^{all} the place for/the prisoners to get water and there was a Sentry box near there, and if a prisoner reached under the deadline to fill his dish he was liable to be shot. There was a small stream that came out of the bank or had been dug by some of the prisoners that was in a direct line from the Sentry Box beyond the creek and from 8 to 12 foot higher than the creek and there was always someone getting water out of the Spring. There

was so many of us that but a few could get water there and that was the only spring in camp at that time. I have seen several men shot that were getting water from the spring, when the Sentry shot at someone that was dipping water from under the deadline.

You can see what good marksmen they were. There were two Regt. of what they called Home Guards guarding the prisoners, with two full Batteries of Artillery. These Regt. were composed of old men and boys that were not fit for service at the front, and they were encamped just above the Stockade in the creek, and all the dirt and filth from them came down the creek for us to drink, and the cook house where they cooked all the food for the prisoners was on the creek and we got the benefit of that also. So you can imagine whether the water was fit for a beast let alone a man to drink.

The most of the prisoners that were there when we got there had been there during February and March when the prison was established. There had been a Brigade captured at Plimouth the 85th N. Y. 116th Pa. and 16th Conn. who had just reenlisted and had got their bounty, under the terms of their surrender their property was not disturbed, and they brought in all their tents clothes money and trinkets of all descriptions, and Andersonville soon became a gambling place equal to Baden Baden. Greely was quite a hand at poker, but the great game there was what was called Chuck a Luck, bet on a number and throw dice. He and I used to choose a number and stick to it doubling when we lost, so that in a short time we would win from two to four dollars, and then quite until next morning. We could get a pretty fair meal from three or four dollars.

The following is a list of prices at the prison as I find it recorded in my diary during the early Summer of eighteen sixty four.

Flour \$5.00 per lb. Bacon 1.00 Cow peas 40 cts. fresh Eggs \$4.00
per dz. Molasses \$10.00 per gal. Sweet potatoes \$48.00 per Bush.
oranges 50 ct. apiece Soap \$3.00 per bar Tobacco 1.25 plug
Thread 25 cts skein onions 1.00 doz. Turnips 3.00 bush.
Salt 1.00 pint

These prices were of course in ~~Confederate~~ Confederate money, which was at that time worth about \$4.00 ~~in greenbacks~~ for one in greenbacks. Greely and I worked along in this way a good while, the fellows that ran the Gambling Boards would salute me with hello Corp - after breakfast are you? I was never in the habit of gambling before I was a prisoner and have never played for money since, but never had any compunctions of conscience for what I did there in that line. On the 14th two days after our arrival ~~the~~ D. Price of Co. A 154th died. He had the dropsy and was a pitiable sight, with no care but what we could give him and no medicine, with the

bare earth for a bed and an old torn blanket for shelter. It made the Boys of our Regt. feel Blue. They were then dying off at the rate of about 25 daily in the whole prison. The hospital as what was called by that name was then inside the Stockade, but was shortly afterwards moved outside and it was very hard work to get a sick man out, and it was very little use for they could not get much better care there than they could give them inside. On the 14th which was Saturday the women from the Surrounding Country gathered at Andersonville for a ~~picnic~~ picnic and there was a lot of them young and old and they appeared to have a jolly time. The Sentry Boxes were full of them looking over into the Stockade at us. It made us but to think they would come there with their nick Knacks and feast in our sight, and we not having one quarter what we could eat, and that not hardly fit for a Hog. They seemed to take particular pains to show us that they were enjoying themselves, our rations at that time were a little piece of corn bread, ground up cob and all, weighing about 6 ~~oz~~ ounces and a very small piece of Bacon, and spilled at that. This was for 24 hours remember, it was half enough for one meal for a healthy man, say nothing about all day. The most of the men who had been there during the months of February and Spring were nothing but walking Skeletons. A great many so weak that they could not go down to the spring or creek after water, and they used to lay along side the streets and beg of those that were stronger to give them a drink. I am sorry to say that the old prisoners were very apt to refuse, saying that they could not bring water for anyone but themselves, and one prisoner would not let another drink out of his cup for fear of Scurvey without they were friends and lived together. It was everybody for himself and the devil take the hindmost. When I first got there and for days and weeks, and in fact until I got so weak, that I could not get up and down the hill, I always gave every poor fellow when he asked me, and have frequently went up and down the hill five or six times before I got up to my place of abode with my water. You shut up a body of men and use them the way we were used and all the selfish traits of their character will develop themselves, and then again self preservation is the first law of nature.

When I first got there I was surprised and grieved but soon got used to it and became more or less in the same condition myself. On the 15th three days after our arrival the guard shot a prisoner for reaching under the dead line for water,

and the camp was full of rumors of an Exchange, and that our transports were at Savannah to take us north. On the 16th my natural habits of cleanliness led me to wash my shirt and drawers, and I got thoroughly laughed at for it, and I believe that was the last time I attempted it while I was a prisoner for about 10 months, and had the same shirt on when I escaped that I did when I was captured, that is what there was left of it, and if I had washed it often it would have been worn out long before that. On this day the poor devils got into two or three fights. They used to fight more or less every day. When a man got too weak he could hardly stand alone, then he was ready to fight, all the time and at the least provocation, his mental condition being such he did not know half the time what he was about.

On the 17th some new prisoners came in and brought cheering news from our army, which made us feel good for a while, On the 18th we got news that Sherman was at Rome Ga. The 19th 200~~00~~ more prisoners came in reported Sherman advancing on Atlanta, and that Grant was whipping them in V.A. had captured a whole division and 30 pieces of artillery which was true, it being Johnsons division of Longstreets Corps. The whole prison was in an uproar singing patriotic songs and yelling.

On the 21st I wrote in my diary that it was Saturday and Niggers Day with the Rebs, as all the women were having another Picnic and a lot of the old prisoners came in from Dansville V. A. We also took poor Frank Goodrich out to the hospital and never saw him again as he died on the 11th day of July.

For the next five days there was some three thousand prisoners came in bringing good news from both armies. On the 26th a rumor that the Rebs were going to Parole us, for fear SHERMAN would get down there and recapture us. On the 27th what little money I had gave out, and I sold my watch for \$50.00 in Greenbacks and that kept Greely and me going for a good while.

And so it ran along for day to day. Sleep what we could, play cards and checkers, sit around in a circle and read the testament. Everyone was reading a verse, in fact hours at it, and I managed to read it through three or four times while I was there. The prison was filling up very fast and they could not cook the rations for all of us. So they would issue two or three spoons full of cow peas ^{and} a little sorghum for a day, or a little over half a pint of ~~corn~~ ^{corn} meal, and scarcely ever any wood to cook it with. The peas would be full of little black bugs,

put in into water and it would seem as though one third were Bugs. Another day they would give us a pint of cooked peas, pods, dirt and no salt. The meanest hog in the Confederacy could not have eaten it. Camp all that time full of rumors of an Exchange. May 31st I recorded in my diary, all quiet nothing new, the same old thing over and over, hunt lice for employment and eat corn bread and rotten bacon for a living. It had rained occasionally during the month. June 1st clear and bright in the morning but clouded up and rained from 10 o'clock the balance of the day, and it was a rain none of your Cattaraugus showers. It continued to rain for 22 days in succession, and the men were in a fearful condition. The mud was deep, and the ground was covered with men so that a person could not move around after dark. They would lay down and the rain would pour, and the mud three or four inches deep under and around them, and no shelter of any kind, except what old pieces of tent and blankets the Boys had. We would not have found so much fault if the water had only drowned the everlasting lice. I was still quite strong and did not lay down much during the month of June, but stood up and let the rain strike me endways.

On June 1st some prisoners came in from Grant's Army of the Potomac some of them with only one arm or leg. It looked hard to see such men in there. It was bad enough for the others, but they turned those poor fellows in there before their wounds had healed with nothing to dress them and numbers of them soon died. On June 10th the poor fellows fought amongst themselves all day. Everybody was cross, and it seemed as if everyone wanted to fight. If we had a few guns I am sure we should have went at the Rebs. I saw μ men fighting, if they had been in God's Country they could not have stood up alone, and they could not strike hard enough to hurt any and the exertion of striking would frequently make them fall down, and they would fight for the simplest thing. At night we got some cheering news that Atlanta had fallen. At this time I was interested in a tunnel but got very weak so that I could hardly get down the hill and back again, and of course had to give up thinking about going out.

It was just as well for a traitor informed on us for a double ration and they found the tunnel. The Boys found out who informed on a tunnel and captured him. Sheared his head and paddled him with a piece of board, until he could hardly breath, came near killing him in fact, and they would not give us any rations until they found out who done it. So the Boys that done it sent their names out to Wirz so that the rest should not suffer on their account. So you see there was honor

and unselfishness even there. We supposed of course that Wirz would put them in the Chain gang and tie them by their thumbs but for a wonder he commended them for their action, which surprised us all. I think this happened in July. I find under date of June 14th recorded in my diary, rained this morning and continued all day. I am very weak and it is impossible to get any medicine to help me, the continual rain for 14 days with the exposure has about used me up. A great many men have to walk all night to keep alive. I had been doing the same thing, and had to walk all it was possible. I would not give up and lay down and it was a good thing for me that I did not, as I should have surely died. One half of the men did not draw any rations the night of the 13th. They used us like brutes. The Judgment of God ought to rest upon them for their inhumanity.

The 15th I got outside and saw the doctor. He gave me some medicine, and for a wonder it done me a great deal of good. About 1000 new prisoners came in. For rations we had a little rice and rotten bacon. The 16th they found our tunnel. I consoled myself with the thought that I would be strong enough to go out by the time there was another ready. 500 new prisoners came in. You see they were filling up fast. There was quite a lot of the 100th New York in there, and there was one Sergt. Smith from New Albion, that we used to let stay with us part of the time as he had no shelter. He was a fine looking young man, and I thought he would stand it, but he got discouraged and the last I saw of him he lay dead on the ground.

June 20th helped carry a sick man out to the hospital. We would carry over to the South gate two or three hundred sick in blankets. Some of them we would get out but the large majority of them we would have to carry back for another day, and in the meantime a good many of them would die.

The 21st I had a Biscuit and an Egg for Breakfast. Had not been able to eat anything for some days. Got a little medicine and feel better. There is about 300 dead to be buried. It has rained so long and hard that it was impossible to bury them. They lay in a great heap just outside the South gate, where we can stand on our side and look over the stockade and see them. They drive up a wagon, take a corpse by the feet and head, give it a swing and throw it into the wagon, one after the other until the wagon was full. It was a very pleasant sight for us poor devils in there and the poor fellows dying off at the rate of 75 to 100 daily. The 22nd we drew a kind of cob meal mash for all day, and the men that could eat it had an awful stomach.

The 24th I felt quite elated. I was a good deal better, but Greely was quite bad and we were all talking of being exchanged between the 7th and 17th of July. The 25th two men died close to me, and one of them was the largest man I ever saw, and he had been very well and harty went off suddenly. When a man died in our Squad or mess, it seemed worse than if it was some where else in the prison. There was at this time in the prison a number of hard cusses, and they were banded together and they used to rob and kill other prisoners that had good clothing or any other valuable property. It got so that it was not safe for anyone that had anything of value, and the prisoners organized a force and hunted them out. They were called raiders, and there was 50 of them captured and taken outside. Then there was men taken out from the body of prisoners that formed Judge Jury and attorneys. They were duly tried and six of them were found guilty, and they were sentenced to be hung on the 11th of July and the sentence was faithfully carried out. The full account of the trial and execution is in McElroys Book called Andersonville. The leader of the Police force was Sergeant Key and McElroy, both from ~~and~~ an Ill. Regt. It effectually broke up raiding. The police force was kept up and it was a great protection to the prisoners, and there were lots of fellows that were anxious to get on the force, as they got double rations and had a share to trade with the guards. They were like the same class of fellows all over the world, and anxious to show their authority, and would knock a poor weak fellow down without any hesitation. Still we were glad to have them as they kept the more brutal element in subjugation. I had no use for them and kept clear from them, therefore never had any controversy with them.

On July 1th the addition to the stockade was completed and all the detachments above the 49th were moved into that leaving us more room. It had been so crowded that we could hardly turn around. There were a good many getting out one way and another about this time, and on the 3rd of July they called the Roll, and so many were gone that we did not get any rations. That was the way they had of punishing those that were left, as though we could recapture them. On the 4th the Reb Sergeant came in and said if we would Reorganize the different divisions and hundreds, that they would give us double rations. Of course we done as requested and they brought us Maggoty Mush that they made the day before, and would not give us. We still had some spirit left and would not take it as we had got used to starving. So they gave us corn bread and fresh beef and the beef was full of Maggots. I cut mine up in little pieces and boiled it enough to kill them and made a fine 4th of July supper.

As the prison filled up the rations grew smaller if anything. The men were divided off into divisions and hundreds. 90 men were called a hundred and 10 of these were called a division. We were in the first division 6th hundred I believe. The hundreds were divided into about 4 messes and someone of the number was chosen to draw the rations and divide them. The fellow that drew the rations for the hundreds and issued to the mess sergeants got two rations for his work and was generally in rather better condition than the others. I had charge of and drew the rations for a mess ~~though~~ ^{the} most of the time I was in Andersonville. We would divide the rations in 20 piles on an old Rubber Blanket. Every man in the mess was numbered then one of them would turn his back. I would touch a pile and ask whose is this. He would say No. 6 and so on skipping around until they were all taken. In that way all were satisfied and there could be no kicking. If a man thought there was a partiality being used there was trouble at once. I do not remember of ever having any trouble with anyone on account of issuing rations. The following were the names and number of each one of my mess. For a while of course they would die off and others be put in, but ~~we~~ ^{we} used to cheat them some when a man died we used to answer to his name if possible at roll call so as to get his rations.

- | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|--------------|
| No. 1 | J. Cavener. | No. 2 | E. Sargent | No. 3 | D. C. Conoly |
| 4 | T. R. Aldrich | 5. | J. H. Gedding | 6. | A. Apple |
| 7. | J. Russell | 8. | Wilkes J. Miller | 9. | F. Parker |
| 10 | W. H. Decker | 11 | N. Boyce | 12. | Flynn |
| 13 | J. Doud | 14 | C. Goff | 15 | J. Whitford |
| 16 | G. Bentley | 17 | C. Lindsly | 18 | N. Jones |
| 19 | B. C. Andrews | 20 | R. Bevins | | |

A fellow named R. J. Hanley took Andrews place when he died. I. Wheatley. H. Hall. J. Elliott C. B. Hawkins and many others were in the mess.

Wilks J. Miller belonged to Co. A 154th N. Y. V. and is the same fellow that made the false affidavit in the Blind Patterson Pension Case, and now lives at Elmira. He was a tough one and was generally dressed in an old shirt and a pair of drawers, bare headed and bare footed. I never knew him to be sick or off his feet for a single day while in Andersonville. At the cook house they would boil the bacon in large kettles, took it out and empty in sacks of cow peas, pods, dirt and all. Rice in the same way or corse cobs meals and bring that stuff into us without any salt. Half of the time it would be cooked the day before and got full of maggots before we got it. Such was the food that the Southern Chivalery fed prisoners of war on and these same men are in control of this Government today with Cleveland as a dummy in the President's Chair and some of them have positions in the U.S. Pension office to pass on claims of those that suffered worse than death in Andersonville and other Prisons during the war. Old prisoners how do you like it. Do you wonder that I am opposed to an administration that will appoint such people to office.

I find recorded in my diary under date of June 30th great excitement in camp. Have been hunting all through the camp for the raiders and taking them outside to try them. They took large quantities of money watches and other Valuables from them and their tents were piled full of blankets and clothing that they stole from the men. I am glad they have got them but hope our men will not go in for hanging or shooting them but send them to our lines in irons and have them tried and punished by the proper authorities. They killed a man last night and buried him in the Swamp and several have been murdered within a few days. Two or three attacked an Indian but got more than they bargained for. The Indian killed one and came near killing the others. You can see that between the guards shooting someone nearly every day and the Raiders it was a tough place to be in. On the 2nd of July two men I knew Houston and Blaisdell got out and as they were strong hearty fellows we were in hopes they would get through to our lines but they put the Blood hounds on their track and they were brought back on the 5th looked hard I can tell you. The only wonder was that they were not put in the Chain Gang outside as a punishment. They would have been but one or both of them were Masons and that saved them. For a while they took out each day a Squad under guard to cut and bring in wood. Greely and I got on the Squad one day and we filled our haversacks with what food we had and intended to make a run for it, but Old Wirz got scared and would not let us out and I believe there were no more wood squads let out while I was there.

July 11th there were some timbers brought in South Gate and our police force began building a gallows. As soon as it was completed the 6 Raiders were brought inside and delivered over, then led up on the gallows, ropes attached to their necks, and the drop fell. Five of them hung all right but one big fellow by the name Curtis broke his rope and ran across the prison, crossed the creek and was caught at the edge of the Swamp taken back led up by the other five and launched into Eternity. The Gallows was across the creek from where we were and we had a plain view of the whole business. There was great excitement cheering and yelling. I did not feel like cheering or making merry over it for we were dying off fast enough and there ought not to have been any occasion for that kind of work. There was a lot of new prisoners came in five out of the 64th N. Y. I tell you their eyes hung out when they found out we were hanging each other, but the hanging effectually broke up raiding and we were not afraid of being killed for our blanket or coat. I had frequently been cautioned by our Boys about showing my watch or boots and was mighty lucky not to have been robbed of them. And so it ran along through the month of July 75 ^{to} 125 died every day.

Each morning a long string of dead would be carried outside and hundred of sick would be carried in blankets over to the gate to get some medicine or get them out to the hospital and as a general thing they would take none out and they would all have to be carried back. They used to fight over a dead man for his clothes never carried him out with anything of importance on him. They would watch each other and as soon as one was dead he would be stripped and often before he was dead for fear some stronger fellow would come along and get the clothes.

That was one reason why I was bound not to die there for I did not want to be stripped and buried in that kind of fashion We knew all about Stonemans Raid to Macon and there was a lot of happy fellows until we heard of its failure and Stonemans capture when it turned to grief. July 22nd the guard at the creek shot seven or eight times at prisoners and only hit one and he was up on the bank by the Spring I have mentioned before and no where near the creek. I twas getting dangerous to get water at the creek for they had a shooting spell ^{and} on/I got my water at a well. I had forgotten to say that before this we had dug a well in one hundred 75 feet deep but got but little water and there was a poor fellow by the name of Fay that fell into it one night. We had ropes made out of old blankets and we lowered one and he tied it around him and we pulled him up. His leg was broken and he was terribly shaken up besides. He was taken out to the hospital next morning but gangrene set in and he soon died. They used to say that every time a guard shot a prisoner he got a furlough to go home. I recorded in my diary that some of them wanted to go home bad.

Before the Stockade was enlarged the tents were close up to the dead line. One poor fellow being asleep and flies thick in rolling over got his legs under the line and of course the guard shot him through one leg. He might better shot him through the head for he only lived a day or two. There was scarcely a day passed that someone was not shot by the guards.

July 26th they commenced filling up the Swamp with dirt and fixing sinks etc. Old Wirz said they were going to build Barracks for us but we did not believe that. At different times through the month just after we would hear of Shermans whipping them and his near approach to Atlanta we could hear the trains one after the other all night and day passing down the road and we found out they were loaded with people going to the rear as fast and far as possible. I tell you it made us feel good. We had a way of finding out a great many things that has surprised me since. I have got a little ahead of my story, so will have to go back to the 20th of July.

~~There was a great deal of excitement in camp~~

There was a great deal of excitement in camp, there were a lot of refugees camped over by the depot, and the Rebs commenced throwing up fortifications and kept it up two or three days until they had quite a strong line. We prisoners were quick to see that they were afraid our forces were coming and the Boys sang Patriotic Songs and cheered continually, making the Rebs hot and the guards would retaliate by shooting down poor prisoners.

John Brown's Body and we will hang Jeff Davis to a sour apple tree used to make them be hottest.

About this time they came in and put up some poles with flags, and gave us notice that if any crowds gathered between them and the gate they would open fire on us with their artillery. Old Wirz would come in and march around the Camp. The Boys would yell dont hit him with that Beck, dont kill him end so on. He finally quit coming in.

~~July 28th there was a lot of new prisoners outside and in order to scare us and make us~~

July 28th there was a lot of new prisoners outside and in order to scare us and make us keep quiet threw a shell over the camp. They had threatened to shell us, and many of the Boys thought their time had come. The fact was they were afraid of us and that we would make a Rush and Break out and took that way to scare us and keep us quiet.

During this month I was very weak I suffered with what all the others did and going so long without decent food was troubled with Scurvey, and got so weak, that I could not get up off the ground alone. Had a little pole stuck up in the earth and would get hold of that and pull myself up, but not for one moment did I get discouraged as my daily Entries in my diary will show. Things run along about the same Starvation and death staring us in the face. Hawkins was very bad with the dropsy his limbs swelled up, and I thought the poor fellow had got to go, but he was plucky and did not give up. Greely had the Scurvey, and Allen was in very bad condition. He allowed himself to get homesick and discouraged. I believe he was married after he enlisted, and I believe that was the worst thing a young man could do. August 5th all three of them got out to the hospital. Allen soon died. Hawkins got well but I did not see him again until I got home and went home in November.

Amongst the rest of the prisoners who were in Andersonville were Othaniel Green and George Bailey of Mansfield this county. About the first of July they were unable to get up alone or cook their miserable meals. There was a fellow by the name of D. Stevens that belonged to Co. E or F of the 1st Regt. and was captured near the battle of Shiloh.

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Amongst the rest of our Regiment that were in Andersonville were Othaniel Green and George Bailey of Co. G and whose home was in the town of Mansfield this county. About the first of July they both got very bad. So weak that they were unable to get up alone or cook their miserable rations. There was a fellow by the name of D.Stevens that belonged to Co. E or F of our Regt that was captured when they were at Getteysburgh

He had been Seargent of a hundred a long time and drew the rations , and for that he got two rations and was a strong healthy fellow. Green and Baily both lived under the same shelter he did, with an imaginary line and every fellow was supposed to keep in his own ground or there sometimes was trouble.

Greely and I happened to go around there one day, and saw Green and Baily and they told us that they had been unable to c ook anything to eat for days and that Stevens would not assist them in any way or cook anything for them to eat, not even to give them any water. We got some water had them wash and took some of their provisions and Greely went around to our Side to cook them, While I turned my attention to cussing Stevens, some of the other Boys putting in an oar occasionally. He has never liked me since and certainly there is no love lost, but we could do but little for Green or Baily. We got them both outside, and I believe they both died the same day we took them out and where we left them by the Gate on the outside.

With the rest of our Regiment that were there was Leroy Litchfield of Co. H He always kept a stiff upper lip and never got discouraged. I can see him now as he looked then, half of the time clothed with only a shirt and drawers and they in a very d&lapidated condition. Bear headed and bear footed always jovial and never complain- ing ready for any emergency. He now lives in the town of Humphrey this county and has never seen a well day since he came out of that hell hole.

Hawkins, Greely and Allen going out left me all alone. So I took down my piece of tent and moved over on the other street where Pete Messenger and some more of the 154th lived and went in with Bronson of our Regt. I recorded in my diary Aug. 6th that I had the best place I had had since I came in, but was lonesome with the Boys gone. Bronson worked outside part of the time, and when he came in at night would bring in provisions of some kind at least something different than we had inside. I done the cooking and we were quite aristocrats. We lived a great deal better than most of the boys and some of them of course were envious of our good luck. I would have liked to have been able to have given Everyone as good as I had but that was impossible. I used to invite some of the Boys to dine with me as often as possible. Aug. 6th the guards shot several times, hit one poor fellow shot him threw the head. Aug. 9th there was a terrible rain washed out the Stockade on both sides, where it crossed the Creek and there was a flying around amongst the Rebs to keep us from breaking out and our fellows were in the midst of the flood trying to get pieces of the Stockade and timbers for fuel.

It was a great storm and a good one for us. It washed out a well on the side hill near the dead line and made what has been called the Providential Spring, and it was in fact providential for us. The well was on the side hill and as the water run down the well filled and run over on the lower side, and the soil being loose and sandy it soon cut the earth all away below and the water ran out of the bank and made a fine spring of pure water. The Police at once took charge of it and there was always a man on duty there. Every man had to take his turn getting water, and it was kept pure and clean. A great improvement on what we had been in the habit of having. On August 11th Hufburt of the 100th N. Y. died his arm had been hurt and should have been amputated but they did not see fit to do it until it was too late. I think he had been shot by the guard at least I recorded in my diary another victim of Southern Despotism. There were so many fellows getting out in tunnels that they commenced putting up another Stockade about 90 feet from the other and continued it clear around, and also established a picket line outside of that, and every morning we would hear the Blood hounds baying as they took them around the Stockade for exercise and to see if any Yank had got out for if they had they would soon find out and run him down.

During these days I was verry bad off still I kept moving around mornings and evenings, ~~ix~~ laying still through the day. It was awful ^{hot} ~~hot~~ all through the month and the death roll was fearful.

On August 12th Chamberlain of the 154th died and Baldwin of the 112th went out to the hospital, Ray of our Regt. was very low. I said in my diary that he was killing himself laying around and not exercising at all. The Camp was full of rumors of an Exchange all the month, and the excitement was great.

~~Sept. 1st~~ Sept. 1th the whole Camp was in an uproar carried out 125 or 130 dead but the Exchange news offset that. 3000 died during the month of August. It was terrible for us when we got quieted down nights to think of. The Sentries used to pass the hours and half hours during the nights. Sept. 2nd or 3rd the Sentry near the gate called half past eleven and Atlanta has gone to hell. The Camp was in an uproar in five minutes, for we were satisfied it was true, and the guard frequently told us of the Situation of affairs at the front. The Prisoners cheered yelled and sang Patriotic Songs for an hour or two and then it was quiet again and the news was true Sherman took Atlanta Sept. 2nd, 1864. As I said before I was in the first thousand or division and just that night Sept. 6th we were ordered to be ready to leave the Prison during the night, and we were a happy lot of fellows.

I was very weak and could hardly walk alone but the news gave me strength, and I thought of what Wirz said to me when I arrived there five months before, only I did not have to go out feet first. We were ready and marched out on the morning of the 7th and marched over as far as the fort and then they marched us back inside the Stockade again. I tell you it took the Starch out of us and we were terribly discouraged, but in a short time the first five hundred were ordered out, and they marched them over to the depot and we could see them loaded on the cars and start toward Macon. Just about noon the other five detachments were marched out and we also took the cars and started for Macon, and I bid adieu to Andersonville and haven't seen it since. I had been there nearly five months, and had stood it better than the most of them, as I kept my clothes and exercised all that I possibly could and kept myself clean and as free from Vermin as possible.

This my Comrades comprises my experiences in Andersonville Prison that was worse than hell. I have not painted the sufferings that we had to undergo there worse than they were and anyone that was there will tell you that I have not told the half and I will say right here that of all the prisoners that were there is none that can tell or write one half the Suffering that the men had to undergo in that awful hell hole.

The following named members of the 154th N. Y. died in the Andersonville Prison during the time I was there or just before I came in.

D. Price	Co. A	died in May 1864
E. P. Bacon	B	" " April "
F. L. Goodrich	B	" " July 11th, 1864
Chas. Lagler	C	" " May 1864
A. L. Guyle	C	" " July "
E. Myers	D	" " June "
H. Whipple	H	" " July "
W. Ostertuck	I	" " March "
H. Earl	H	" " July "
E. Abba	H	" " July "
Geo. Bailey	G	" " August 1864
O. Green	G	" " " "
L. Robbins	K	and several others died there that I did not get the date of death.

~~The Bricks~~

The Brave at Home

The maid who binds her warrior's sash
 With smile that well her pain dissembles,
 While beneath the dropping lash
 One starry teardrop hangs and trembles,
 Though heaven alone records the tear,
 And fame shall never know her story -
 Her heart has shed a drop as dear
 As e'er bedewed the field of glory.

The wife who girds who husband's sword
 'Mid little ones who weep or wonder,
And bravely speaks the cheering word,
 What tho her heart be rent asunder.
Doomed nightly in her dreams to hear
 The bolts of death around him rattle,
Hath shed as sacred blood as e'er
 Was poured upon the field of battle.

The mother who conceals her grief
 While to her breast her son she presses,
Then breathes a few brave words and brief,
 Kissing the patriot brow she blesses,
With no one but her secret God
 To know the pain that ways upon her,
Sheds holy blood as e'er the sod
 Received on Freedom's field of honor.

By T. Buchanan Read

When we left Andersonville we did not know where they were going to take us, but of one thing were satisfied that we should not go to a worse place, and the change would do us good and we did not know but we should get exchanged. So I left my piece of tent and rubber blanket with Bronson with the understanding that I was to have it again if he came where I was. In a few days he was sent to Savannah where I was. I tried to get my tent and rubber, but was not successful. He and Gid Searle of the 85th N. Y. appropriated them to their own use and would not return them to me. Bronson was a great big strong fellow, had worked outside and was as strong and as healthy as he would have been in our lines. He was paroled at Millen in November and went home. I saw him a few years ago a helpless cripple, and I thought of the miserable mean trick he played me when I was hardly able to stand alone and he was strong and healthy. At that time I did not notice or speak to him, but have since been sorry that I harbored resentment as I have enjoyed fair health, and have been able to get around all right, and he has been paid for his meanness ten fold. In the words of a Townsman of ours, Chickens came home to Roos t. We arrived at Macon just at night the train was sidetracked and we laid there all night. They gave us nothing to eat and we were packed on box cars like a lot of hogs, could not all lay down at once, in fact we were nearly famished. I had about a peck of raw Peanuts when I left Andersonville, and like a fool kept eating them and the consequences were that they made my trouble worse, and I got so weak I could neither sit nor stand and was in a terrible condition. About four o'clock on the 8th our train pulled out and we arrived at Savannah about sundown, where we were ordered off the cars, and they marched us up to the Jail, and into another Bull pen. I was so weak that I could not walk through the sand with my boots on, so carried them in my hand and went Barefoot.

The pen they put us in was made of 12 foot Boards set up endways, and nailed to posts. The earth was loose sand and during the first night lots of the Boys dug out, but were all brought back the next day, as it was impossible to get out of the City on account of the Rivers and Swamps. My being so weak prevented my going. We were crowded in pretty thick and three or four of us got hold of some boards and made quite a shelter for ourselves. They gave us pretty fair rations, and brought water in pipes but it was very poor. Take it all in all it was better than Andersonville and we were pretty well satisfied for a few days. I made a practice of walking around the prison twice or three times a day, was so weak I could not lug my boots and went barefooted. If I had not kept moving and exercising I should have died there, but I made up my mind to live through and would not even think of dying. The 11th was Sunday and the Church Bells rang all over the city. I wanted to go to Church but did not have proper clothing, and I did not want to get any of their religion, if they could enjoy it with 6 or 7 thousand half starved prisoners within their city limits. Sept. 14th we were called out and counted off and our party was put in the 3rd Detachment 3rd hundred. There was a rumor that Sherman had captured Andersonville and 22,000 of our prisoners that were there, and was going to exchange for all the men that belonged to his army. Of course, such rumors kept us excited and feeling that perhaps that there might be some truth in them, and I thought such rumors had a good influence on the Spirits and health of the men, and many that were about giving up and thought they had to die would brace up and take a new lease of life. They still continued to give us pretty fair rations. The water was very poor, but we had a fine sea breeze, and I began to pick up. I kept up my exercise mornings and evenings and that was what saved me. We were pretty well crowded and they built an addition to the Stockade, and on the 17th the first five detachments moved into that. It gave us more room and we had a fine Sea Breeze. We could see quite a number of Buildings from our position, and if we had to stay in prison made up our minds we had rather stay there than anywhere else during this month. Jeff Davis the arch Traitor, and President of the so called Confederacy visited Savannah and mounted the Sentry Box near the gate and looked on and gloated over our misery. Some of the Boys were not very complimentary in their remarks to and about him, and he soon went down. If it had not been for the guards and the officers he would not have stayed there long for someone would have slung something at him.

They took better care of the sick here than at Andersonville and on the whole gave us better rations.

On the 22nd there was heavy cannonading at the mouth of the river and along the Coast, and continued for several days. Of course there were great rumors in camp. The 25th there was a lot of prisoners brought in that said they had been to Atlanta to be exchanged, but there were no Reb prisoners there so had to come back. There was another lot come in on the 26th that told the same story. I have never learned whether there was any truth in it or not. We also this day wrote out a statement and adopted some resolutions to send to our Government in regard to our condition. We had done the same thing at Andersonville and a Delegation of prisoners were sent north with them and they were duly received in Washington, but circumstances were such that they done us no good.

The nights were getting quite cool and there was a good deal of frost, and it was impossible for me to keep warm without walking half the night. The rations began to get smaller and smaller and the boys soon got very hungry and it was back on the Andersonville Basis again and if anything smaller. They see that we were picking up in health and strength and that was what they did not want.

October 2nd the Church Bells did not ring and there was a rumor that Richmond had fallen. On Monday the 3rd they took out a lot of Carpenters and Blacksmiths on parole of honor not to escape, and set them at work. I could have gone out here but I Swore that I would not before I would lift a hand in any way to assist the Dumb Confederacy or anyone connected with it. There was always plenty of ~~mf~~ to go, as they had better quarters got plenty to eat, and could get better clothing, and no one could blame them. They took the names of all the Sailors and took them out and we heard that there were sent to Charleston to be exchanged.

Sunday, Oct. 9th the Bells rang again for Church. It had been terrible cold for several nights and the night before I had to walk most of the night to keep from freezing.

Monday, Oct. 10th we were ordered to pack and be ready to leave, took us outside about noon counted out a thousand, then marched us back in the Stockade, and told us to lay down for the night, and be ready to leave early in the morning. Tuesday routed us out early loaded us on cars for another free ride, and started back toward Macon. Some thought we were going back to Andersonville and some said Millen a new Stockade they were building. Our doubts were set at rest when we arrived at the Junction and branched off to the right, and before sun down we arrived at Millen, and were ushered into another Bull Pen.

than
It was larger ~~and~~ the Stockade at Andersonville, I think about 40 acres and the general lay of the land was better. There was also a fine stream of water running through the center, that came from a Spring just outside the Stockade. I think I never saw a finer Spring nor a larger one. The water was cold and pure, as all the troops were encamped on the other side and we got none of their filth. The Boys of the 154th saw this Spring and the Stockade, as they passed through Millen on the march to the Sea. But we poor fellows had then been removed to another Bull Pen as we called them. They had built several brick ovens to cook the food for us inside the Stockade but they were never used for that purpose. I will speak of them later. ^{Our} ~~Some~~ thousand were the first prisoners there, and they marched us up in the North west corner of the prison, and we formed our different hundreds somewhat as the companies of a Regiment would form for camp, only not as methodical. The land had been a pine forest and they had cut down the trees to build the Stockade, but had left a good many laying around with the limbs, etc. and I tell you it made us feel good to have a good fire to stand around and cook our miserable rations. In this move I had got separated from the fellows I had been living with at Savannah and I was left with nothing but the clothes on my back, and my old haversack, and small tin cup that many of you have seen, and is now hanging in S.C. Mayes post room at Ellicottville, but my usual luck attended me and I got into quite a good tent with two 73rd P.A. fellows that belonged in our Brigade and were captured at Mission Ridge in November before. They had some old Blankets, and I would lay up close to the outside of them and sleep the fore part of the night. When it began to get cool and they would pull the Blankets up over them I would crawl out and walk until morning to keep warm, as I did not dare to pull the Blankets over me for fear they would turn me out of the tent. Thinking of it now I don't think they would have said a word as they were good fellows. One named Crane an Irishman, and the other a German named Jacob Daub and now lives in Philadelphia. On the 13th C.E. Whitney of the 154th who was captured with me came in. I think he had been in Andersonville all the time. The rations got very thin here, and I suffered more from hunger than I ever had before. In fact I thought I should starve. I picked up old Beef Bones and broke them up and stewed them in a little water, and drank the broth, and would scrape the inside of the bones and chew them for a little nourishment. I tell you it was hard Business to keep alive. I was taken sick and had what they call Shingles, that is a raw Sore about 4 to 6 inches wide and reaching nearly around me. They said if they got clear around me that I would die. Well they did not get quite around and after a while I got better. I could not stand up straight nor button my clothes around me for a long time, and had to walk nights to keep from freezing. I tell you it made me think of home. Walking around cold stormy nights holding my clothes clear as possible from my body and about half bent over

for it was impossible for me to straighten up. About this time Greely was brought here from Andersonville and Oct. 25th took parole of honor and went outside as a shoemaker. He did not know anything about making shoes, but got out and was paroled and went home in November. On ~~October~~ Oct. 27th they gave us a lot of molasses, and we three made a lot of candy of ours. They issued the rations about three o'clock in the afternoon, and we were all about half famished. I used to ask Jake Daub if we should cook and eat them all or save some for the next day.

His answer generally was, Eat, Drink and be Merry for tomorrow you may die, and we would cook and eat all we got and not have enough for one meal, and then go until three the next day, and sometimes they forgot to bring us anything and we would have two days of Starvation. Here in Millen was the first I saw of the Rebs trying to enlist the prisoners in their Army. The fellows had been so long confined and starved that they got quite a number. The most of them thought they would have a chance to desert and get to our lines, and amongst the first that went out some succeeded in doing so, but the Rebs soon got on their racket, and they kept them well guarded, or kept them back in the rear doing guard duty. We used to call them all the names we could think of, the most common one was Galvanized Yank. The poor devils had a hard time of it the Rebs had no confidence in them, and if they were sent back in the prison as many of them were the prisoners made life a burden to them.

Well it ran along about the same until November 1st when we drew two days rations, and thought we were going to be treated to another free ride. Some more of the old Andersonville prisoners came in some from our Regt. It was very cold all this time and the men were dying off very fast 7 or 8 had already died out of my mess, and I was but very little better than a dead man. My side and back was very sore and lame could not stand up or lay down with any comfort. Just humped around, had to hold my pants up with my hand as I could not stand it to have anything touch me.

The entries in my diary these days all speak of the severe cold and the hard time I had to keep from freezing. The Rebs were anxious that we should hold an election for President and told us if McClellan was elected the war would close at once and we could all get home. The prisoners concluded to have an election that is a part of them and the rest did not care. We all thought that McClellan would have a majority as the Rebs wanted he should, and the prisoners ~~had~~ ^{that} had much to say about it were for him, and all those that wanted to galvanize and join the Reb army.

So November 8th they had an election and it was conducted same as they conduct elections at the South now or did a few years ago. The most of the McClellan men

were stout healthy fellows and if a fellow did not vote as they wanted him to, he was liable to get thumped and not allowed to vote at all. I kept away from the Polls did not care to exercise that privilege. The whole number of votes cast was 4622 of which Lincoln recd 2778 and McClellan 1844. The majority for Lincoln being 934. It took the wind out of the sails of the Rebs. They thought the prisoners all blamed Lincoln for keeping them there and the fellows had ~~blamed~~ ^{blowed} so far McC that there did not appear to be any Lincoln men in Camp. Nov. 9th the Reb papers stated that there was to be ten thousand sick exchanged it appeared to be official and we had high hopes again. In going down to the Bridge one morning after a cold storm I saw ⁱⁿ a little hollow Bellow in the ground five poor fellows froze to death.

There were several Brick Ovens in the Camp heretofore spoken of but they were never used for Baking purposes, and ten or twelve men could crawl in one of them and lay down for the night spoon fashion. The fellows that lay on the backside were hot enough and in fact sometimes smothered. Used to take three to ten dead out of them every morning. The prisoners were having the fever and dying off very fast, and I have always thought my having the Shingles saved me from the fever and perhaps saved my life. Once in a while the Guards would shoot a poor fellow just to keep his hand in, still there was not as much shooting as at Andersonville. One poor fellow was shot within 10 feet of my tent one night and he was not within 10 feet of the dead line. November 12th they began taking the names Co. and Regt. of all that were sick, and said they were going to be exchanged. They were called out and examined. I was passed with the rest, and I thought I should soon be home again.

On the 15th they were called out but in the meantime there were a great many fellows that had a little money, and they had made good use of their time and had bought their way out, that is to have their name substituted for someone else and these were fellows that were comparatively sound and healthy. Well I was so far down on the list that I was left. The Reb Sergeant told me that my name was the next after they had got their full number, if I had been a little stronger or had had ten dollars I should have got out. I would have liked to have had a gun and seen the fellow that got out in my place, he would never have been home. The next morning the 16th they marched them all back in again. They reported that they were going Friday. On Friday they examined a lot more, and took out and sent off those that went out Wednesday. I got my name down again this day, and my tent mate Crane got out on a dead man's name. Saturday the 19th they took out a thousand more, and again I was left. No luck for me it had deserted me.

They nearly starved us this week, and if it had not been for the excitement I think I should have starved. They only issued rations every other day and mighty slim ones at that. My side and back was still very sore but Daub and Crane my tent mates had got out. They were both a good deal stronger than I was, but they left me all their property, tent old blankets and a cooking utensil, etc., and I was an aristocrat again. I had enough blankets to keep me warm and the old tent would shed rain pretty well. Sunday they took out a lot more sick. It rained very hard all night, ~~and~~ Sunday night and also Monday. They took out during Sunday night the 2nd 3rd and 4th divisions. We were ordered out early Monday morning. I had been fooled several times by leaving my baggage or giving it away, and made up my mind I would take all I had. So packed my tent and blankets and managed to lug them over to the cars, and how it did rain, but I got them on the cars all right and we pulled out for Savannah again. We left Savannah on October 8th and they had kept us in Millen just one month and 13 days, and I never suffered as much in all my life as I suffered while in Millen. Sherman was on the road from Atlanta and we had got to be moved or recaptured. We arrived at Savannah just after dark, and laid on the cars all night, all wet as rats, and no chance to dry anything, and they gave us nothing to eat. I wonder if we should take a hundred men here at home and use them just as they used us for just 48 hours how many would live through I would guarantee that from ten to ~~ten~~ 20 would die in a week.

Tuesday morning Nov. 22nd the train pulled through the city. The colored people tried to give us something to eat, and tobacco but the Guards would not let them. The train stopped just by a Bakery and I had four or five pearl rings that Otis D. Rhodes of my Co. made for me at Lookout Valley. I also had five or six small pictures of my lady friends that I had carried in my pockets, and I traded the rings and pictures for bread except one, and that was ~~the~~ a picture of the lady that I afterwards married. (And who the most of you were well acquainted with) As I said I traded them for bread got 6 or 8 loaves. I tell you I was proud and happy for I was nearly starved and the Bread was fine.

The Rebs issued us a few hard tacks the only ones I saw while I was a prisoner.

After a while the train pulled out and away we went down the coast it looked as though we were going to Florida. The engine that pulled the train was played out and did not get us along more than ten miles an hour, and so we fooled along all day and night. Would get stalled and then they wanted the prisoners to get off and push the cars. I told them I had just as lief starve on the cars as anywhere, and that I was in no hurry to get there, and that I should not push a pound, and I was so weak that I could not have pushed

but little more than a pound. We fooled along all day the 23rd and about 4 o'clock the engine played out or they did not know where they were going to take us, and so we were ordered off the train, and they marched us in to a piece of woods, and we stayed all night. We built fires and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. I dried out my Blankets and tent, so that they would not be so heavy. Of course they did not give us anything to eat, and we were all half yes two-thirds starved. The engine got around in the morning of the 24th and we reloaded and started again. It was hard work to pull the train, and they tried to make the Boys push but they all refused. Finally we got to a place called Blackshire (Blackshear), and they ordered us out of the cars, and marched us out into a piece of thick woods, Georgia pines, gave us plenty of Rations two or three lbs. of beef to a man Rice flour and molasses. I tell you it was fine to be in those woods with a roaring fire and plenty to eat, and we laid down to sleep quite contented. The next morning the 25th I stirred around put up my tent banked it up built a good fire in front of it looked over my garment for the everlasting Grey Backs and thought I was quite a man again. Of course they had a strong guard around us but we were in the woods and the air was pure and our stomachs were full, and we felt as happy as it was possible for a lot of poor devils in our condition to feel. They gave us very good rations again plenty of good Beef, and the boys thought they had repented of the way they had been using us. I had just eat my breakfast on the morning of the 26th when the order came for a thousand to go outside the guard line and be paroled. You bet I was on hand and got out. I took my tent and all my baggage for I had made up my mind that I would not be fooled again. Well we signed the parole not to do any more fighting until we were duly exchanged, and just that night we took the cars for Savannah. There was a happy lot of fellows on that train. After they had signed the parole hundreds of them threw their blankets and cooking utensils in fact everything they had, back over the guard line for the other prisoners that were left behind. I had had my eye teeth cut, and kept my tent and blankets, and the result proved that my judgment was good. They did not send any guards except two or three back with us, and we could have all taken french leave if we had desired, in fact some of the Boys got off the train and went over to a house and stole some chickens. The foraging instinct had not all been starved out of them.

We arrived at Savannah early in the morning of the 27th were ordered off the cars and they marched two lines of guards on each side of us, then we knew that we had been fooled again, and the curses loud and deep could be heard. Soon a train of flat Cars backed down and we ordered to load. We loaded and the train pulled out on the road to Charleston South Carolina. Thus ended my experience of Savannah Millen and Blackshire, and take it all in all it was no better than at Andersonville. I suffered terribly at Millen, and if I had not had an Iron Constitution, and taken an oath that they should not kill me I

should have given up and died, but the thought of getting out and returning to my Regt. and having a chance to get revenge kept up my courage, and I would not give up, but we buried the poor fellows all along our line of travel, and there are hundreds buried that there never was any record or account kept of. They would die in the cars, and as soon as the train stopped they would dig a shallow grave, and that was the last of one of Uncle Sams Brave Boys. In one or two instances I saw dead men thrown off when the train was in motion. The poor devils were so hardened that they did not care what became of one after he was dead and very little before. The 27th the day we arrived at Savannah expecting to be exchanged was Sunday and the Bells were ringing for church as our train pulled out for Charleston. We were bounced along all day on flat cars and just that night arrived at Charleston.

They marched us over to the Burnt district near the Jail Yard. Our forces on Morris Island were shelling the City and how our fellows cheered when they heard our Guns. The shells came over near us but no one cared had rather be killed by one of our Guns than starved to death by the Rebs. After two or three hours we were routed up and loaded on another train and started for we knew not where. Road all night and in the morning found ourselves passing through a barren God foresaken country, where it did not seem as though anything would grow. In looking over the route since I find it was through the region made famous by the exploits of Marion, Sumpter, and others during the war of the Revolution.

They gave us nothing to eat of course and we met a train load of prisoners going to Charleston to be exchanged, and they were exchanged and went North. We arrived at Florence South Carolina about three o'clock. They marched us out in a field and gave us some rations, and told us we would go back in the morning and be exchanged, and we did not know but it might be so, and felt somewhat cheered.

The Pen at Florence was as near like Andersonville as could well be. There was a stream of water run through of about the same size, and a Swamp not as large as at Andersonville, and it was crowded full of Prisoners.

The next morning the 29th we were marched up by the Gate, and called off by letter, and my name beginning with A I was one of the first ones that was ushered inside. We were distributed all over the prison in the different hundreds. So you see we were all broken up and separated, so that there was no chance for us to be exchanged in a body. I was taken over in the South East corner, and did not know a soul there until afternoon when Delos Darling of Co. K 154th was brought in and to the same Squad. Delos was taken prisoner at Gettysburgh but I had never seen him before. He told me where he had been but I have forgotten. I think Dansville V.A. He was in very poor health, weak and ematiated, but

had two or three Blankets and a Camp Kettle. They gave us about a quart of flour and I made a porridge of that so that we had plenty to eat. I put up my tent and his Blankets and mine made us quite Comfortable. The next day I went to work and Built a fire place and chimney so that we could have a little fire when they gave us any wood. There was quite a lot of our Boys here in Florence that I found in a few days. Amongst the rest was L. L. Hunt of my Co. who now lives in Leon this county, Bob Woodard of Co. C, Peter Messenger of Co. A, Eugene Stringham of Co. D, and several others that have slipped my mind. There were seven of eight fellows in the tent with Woodard and four of them got exchanged, and Delos was exchanged, and that left me all alone. So I went over the other side of the creek and went in with Woodard. His tent was dug out of the Bank then built up with pine logs and covered with four woolen Blankets, with two fireplaces. The Blankets were good water Shedders, and I tell you (we) were aristocrats in good earnest, and the envy of the whole neighborhood. I had no use ofr my tent, So gave it to Pete Messenger and Eugene Stringham. By the way Messenger lives at Salamanca, and I never go there that I don't look around the depot for him for there is not many people in this world that I think more of than I do of him. He is Car Inspector at the Erie depot. He had the Scurvy at Andersonville so that his teeth were all loose and his legs were drawn up so he could not strengthen them, and they were as black as your hat. We saved our meal and soured it and bound it on his legs, then traded off other rations for Tobacco and bound that on and finally got him on his feet again. But he has the scurvy to day, and will never get over it, and draws from this Government the munificent sum of \$4.00 per month Pension and was over 20 months a prisoner. Eugene Stringham was a

young Boy but stood it first rate, came home went to Kansas and died there with a disease contracted in Prison. And thus could I go on enumerating the men that were in those Hell holes with me, and do you wonder that those men are a little nearer and dearer to me than any other people in the world. I first got acquainted with Adrian Fay of Great Valley N.Y. in Andersonville, and every one that knows us I think understands that there is more than a Brotherly love between us. Little Bob Woodard I shall speak of later, also others of our Regt. The tent made Messenger and Stringham a good home, and what boys there were of the 154th in Florence were pretty well fixed, and you just bet we stuck together like brothers.

December 1st they took a notion to count us so drove them all from one side of the creek to the other, and counted them all back as they crossed the bridge. It was very cold and froze ice hard enough to hold up a man. Of course the men did not weigh only about 100 lbs apiece. About this time Tom Spikins of our Regt. was captured and he managed to get in with a lot of Confederate money and some extra clothes. We took him in our tent and he was a great acquisition. Abe Wright of my Company also lived in the same tent, he and I lived together at Savannah. He was a half breed Colored man, and one of the best fellows I ever saw.

On December 2nd I had what I considered a good offer and I traded my boots off for a good pair of shoes, and got \$300 in Confed to boot. We could buy a bushel of sweet potatoes for \$20.00 and other provisions in proportion, and I made up my mind that the Confederacy would bust up before I could wear the shoes out, and so traded, and I was right about it and the money helped us get through the winter in good shape. As I said before it was very cold and the different kinds

of habitations there were in camp would have been amusing if it had not been for the suffering they had to undergo. The men would dig holes in the bank and throw out enough dirt so they could lay down. Then with what little wood they got build a fire at the entrance below the surface so as to throw all the heat inside, and when they crawled out of these holes in the morning, it was awful to look at them. They would be as black as any negro you ever saw from the pine pitch smoke, and they would be covered with lice and their clothes would look as though bran had been sprinkled over them. They would take an old case knife or stick and scrape them off or shake the clothing. There was not an inch of ground in that prison but had from one to 50 or more lice and once when the poor fellows got so weak they could not get their clothes off to hunt them, were soon literally eaten alive. I have seen hundreds of men that nothing under the heavens was the matter with them but starvation and lice. They would get hungry and discouraged, and in a few days the lice would finish them. A man who had to subsist on what the Rebs gave him at Florence was worse off if anything than he was at Andersonville while I was there. There were so many of the Galvanized Yankeys deserting from the Rebs down near Charleston, that they sent a lot of them back into the prison, and I tell you they had no picnic, for every ones hand was raised against them and they could get no help from anyone under any consideration. So you see that a large majority of the prisoners were loyal to the Government, if as we thought and perhaps thought rightly the Government was not loyal to us. So it ran along until Christmas, when three more of our Regiment came in captured at Savannah, Clark E. Oyer of Co. G, Peck and Haight of Co. E. We took them in our tent, and that made a houseful. They brought good news, that Sherman had captured

Savannah, and that made us feel good, and we knew that the Confederacy was doomed and all we had to do was to keep up courage and we would all be out in two or three months. I had forgotten to mention that two or three of the Boys in our tent went out every morning to cut wood for the prison, and they had the privilege of bringing in all they could lug besides we drew as much wood as the rest. At night those of us who did not go out would go up to the gate and bring down their loads for them. They would bring full loads and would be all tired out by the time they got to the gate. In that way we had enough wood to keep fire in our two fire places all the time. It was pitch pine and we used to look out for the knots. They gave a good light, and our tent was as light as day most all the time during the night. There was scarcely an hour through any night but some one of us was sitting in front of the fire place with his shirt off hunting and slaying the lice. It was the only way we could keep them down, and we had to do it from two to four times a day in order to live with any kind of comfort. And so it ran along until the New Year. The rations were very short, only a pint of meal for a days ration. We were very careful with what we had, and lived on our rations all we could, but I think we should have all starved if we had depended on them. They were smaller if anything than in Andersonville, or Millen, and I came near starving at Millen. The officer in charge of this prison was as mean as Wirz of Andersonville fame. There was one thing I always did, that was to keep away from the dead line, and never hung around the gate, because it done me good and a fellow ran a chance of getting shot, and I was bound that no guard should have the satisfaction of shooting me, without I had a _____ and saw a chance to escape. They brought in a lot of negro soldiers and they hated the Galvanized

Yanks, as they had seen some of them in the works near Charleston, and so they pitched into them and fought and pounded them all over the camp. And no one cared for all the prisoners hated them as bad as the negros did. But the Reb officers had to step in and stop it, or they would have killed them all. I felt sorry for them, but it would not do to show it, for the prisoners were loyal to the back bone, and would give a fellow hail Columbia if he hardly spoke to one of them. Occasionally a dog would get in through the gate or hospital, and woe be to him, for he was a dead dog you bet, and was soon cooked and eaten. I saw one old fellow on New Years Day that had a little fire just back of our tent, have a dogs head. He would lay it on the fire and scorch it a little, and then tear off the meat and sinews with his teeth. The body of that dog was being cooked for dinner in one of the most aristocratic tents in that prison, and I know that dog meat is not very bad meat to eat especially if one is hungry. On January 9th they drove us across the creek and counted us back, took our names, Co. and Regt. We thought perhaps they were going to parole us. On the 12th they received a new pack of hounds to run down escaped prisoners. At this time Spiking, Abe Wright, a fellow named Geary of a Pa. Cavl. Regt. and myself made up our minds to escape. We had got some rules and made a ladder, and kept it buried in the ground by our tent, and were waiting for a dark rainy night to scale the stockade and try for freedom.

Some where about the 20th it was cloudy and we took our ladder and about eleven O clock, went over to the south east corner of the prison and laid down waiting for the relief guard to go around. We had to get what provisions we could and were going to try to get out. It was a great undertaking but we had made up our minds that we could hide

and work toward Savannah and run into Shermans advance. The sentry arrangements were different then at Andersonville or Millen. There was a bank of earth thrown up on the outside of the stockade, just high enough for a man to walk and have his head and shoulders above the stockade, and the sentry walked a regular distance, then turned and walked back. At regular distances outside there was a picket line, and also a reserve post, with a fire. We had made our arrangements to go over the stockade while the sentrys backs were toward us, and make a rush through the line, and trust to luck about being shot, as we did not have much fears of their marksmanship. While we were waiting Wright concluded he would not go, did not feel like running the risk. Just as the relief guards were going around the clouds passed away and the moon shone bright and clear, and that stopped all idea of our going that night. So we took our ladder back and buried it again and waited for a more propitious time. This fellow Geary of the Pa. Cavl. Regt. had some relatives living in Cheraw by the name of Race. He had written to them and two brothers came to see us on the 21st. They brought some medicine, and gave us \$160 dollars in Confed. to buy provisions with, and told us they would send a box of provision, which they did in a few days, with some hams, flour, butter, syrup, &c, and I tell you we had some good meals out of that box. On the 26th we got a letter from A. Race Cheraw, stating that a friend of his by the name of Parker who was connected with the Hospital Dept. would assist us. On the 28th Sherman was reported 17 miles from Blackville, S.C. On the 29th they drove us all over the creek and counted us again. A few new prisoners came in reported Sherman coming up through South Carolina.

About this time I was taken sick with a fever as was Woodard, Peck

and Oyer. We had a little medicine that Race sent us and the boys gave us that, and that was all the care or medicine we had. Before this we had been putting up a job to get out through the hospital, and Spikings had got detailed to work there, and on the morning of the 10th of February he came to me and said the time had come, and that Geary, Haight, myself and him could get out, but I was sick and unable to lift my head from the ground. And he said shall we go. I says dont wait for me I may never be able to go. So the boys went out that night, and got through to our lines, and told the boys in the Regt. that I was probably dead, that there was no hopes of our getting well. Well we were sick but Clark Oyer or as we called him Salty was the only one able to stand up. He would look us over in the morning to see if we were alive. In fact he thought Peck was dead one morning, but was mistaken and Peck finally got home, and now lives in Chaut. Co. Eugene Davis also came over and helped to care for us. There was not much to do as we could eat nothing and all that was needed was to give us water. Our being sick of course our rations accumulated and when we got up we had a large stock on hand but we were nothing but shadows. During the winter the handle got broken off my cup that I had used to issue rations and do the most of my cooking in at Andersonville so I gave a fellow a quart of our surplus cow peas, to put in another, as I was bound to take that cup home if I ever went home, and I have it now, and money could not buy it. On February 14th the 1st 11th and 10th thousands were ordered out and sent off on the cars for a new bull pen. We knew that Sherman was near us, and they were running us away from him. During the night of the 15th the 2-3 and 9th thousands were ordered out and sent off. Pete Messenger and some of our boys went with them. We fellows hung

back as sick. On the 17th all but the sick were taken out, and started for some other bull pen. We still hung back thinking Sherman might get to us before they could move us. But on the morning of the 18th they came in and drove us out and it was a hard looking crowd we were. Not half of us could walk, but they made them crawl or get along in some shape by knocking them with sticks or pricking them with bayonets. They took us outside, gave us some soup and corn bread and put us on the cars and started us about four o'clock in the afternoon for Wilmington North Carolina, on the road to Salisbury where they had another prison.

I tell you my friends I was near death's door at Florence, as was three or four of my tent mates, and if it had not been for Clark Oyer or Salty as we call him, and Eugene Davis, I think I should have occupied a place in the National Cemetery there now.

There was at Florence a sutler one Cashmire formerly from Baltimore. His shanty was built up against the outside of the stockade, and a fence built from the dead line to the stockade, so we could get up to the window and trade, and a sentry on each side so there could be no show for a fellow to get out. There were three fellows that were helping the sutler, that were prisoners but had taken the parole of honor not to escape, and they lived well and had a passable good time. Two of them were from Baltimore and one from Brooklyn. The two from Baltimore had been acquainted with Cashmire the sutler before the war. They had at one time tented and lived with little Bob Woodard, and he was well acquainted with them. Just before we left Florence the infamous Rebel General Winder, who had charge of all the Rebel prisoners in the South, and who was responsible for all the suffering we underwent, died, and Cashmire the sutler of the prison went in with

his body for burial. Where I dont know. It appeared he was an old friend of the family. He left his goods and the three prisoners I have spoken of in charge of one Worthington, a secret detective of the so-called Confederate Government. And as it happened they were on the same train we were on, for I tell you there was a great rush for the rear, for Sherman was at Columbia only a little ways below us. The train we were on arrived at Wilmington, or rather on the opposite side of the Cape Fear River, about noon of the 19th. Woodard and I stood in the door of the car, and the three boys I have spoken of came along and asked us if we did not want to get out and help unload the goods and get them over the river. I was scarcely able to stand, and allowed that I could not do anything, but Bob wanted to go, and the boys said come on we will give you a good dinner and you will be all right. So we went and got the goods unloaded and loaded on the ferry boat, and they gave us some biscuit and cold chicken. I should have said that Worthington had got permission of the Reb officer in charge of us and became responsible for our return. We crossed over the river, and got the goods off the boat and piled them up in the center of the depot, between the tracks where they backed trains down to the dock or levee, and this man Worthington told us to stay right there with him and watch the goods and that they were going to exchange some prisoners down the river the next day and he would get us in the first batch. We at once commenced taking care of the guards and putting up a job with a smart looking mulatto to take us down the river to our lines that night. He agreed if it was possible to be on hand and help us. By the time we had everything arranged it was dark and we made up some blankets and laid down in the middle of our pile of goods except one that was watching for the mulatto. He did not come. The river

was swarming with boats of all descriptions and troops were crossing all night so that finally we went to sleep. I felt better and more like getting home than I had any time since I had been a prisoner. Everything indicated that the Confederacy was busted. Our forces had taken Fort Fisher at the mouth of Cape Fear River and it was only a few miles to our lines. There was a brigade of Reb troops passed through the depot from the other side of the river. We laid low and said nothing. On the morning of the 20th we got our breakfast and then when the sun got up I placed myself outside next to a brick wall where it was warm, and took off my shirt and gave it good hunt, and I tell you I had a lot of them for I had been unable to hunt them for a day or two, and lice multiply very fast. I was in plain sight of the street and a great many stopped and looked at me, but I kept right on at my work until I got through. There were so many lice on me that the blood ran down my thumbs and over my wrists. I must have killed several thousand, and that was the last time I ever had to hunt that kind of game. We saw our mulatto and he said it was impossible to set out on down the river the night before but if there was a chance he would be on hand that night. We staid around the depot all day. All the afternoon and evening the river was full of boats and vessels of all descriptions, and they burnt a few vessels and a ware house or two so there was no use of trying to get down the river. We laid down in the same place of the night before but with our eyes and ears open. There was a lot of troops crossed the river infantry cavalry and artillery, and they all marched through the depot. We did not show ourselves, but found out by what we overheard that the Rebs were going to evacuate Wilmington, and we made up our minds that we would be left there when they were all gone, to welcome the starry banner and the

boys in blue. I had forgotten to say that the day before the 20th the last of the prisoners from Florence were brought over the river, and not over half of them could walk. They were crawling along on their hands and knees, and being pricked and shoved along with the bayonets of the guards. I stood on the dock and saw them when they landed from the ferry boat. Saw Eugene Davis and some others I knew, gave them a signal not to recognize me. The women of Wilmington came down with baskets of provisions and tried to give it to them, but the guards would not allow it, took some of the baskets and tramped the contents in the dust so that the poor fellows could not get any of it, and they were just starving and that was all that ailed them and made them so weak. If I had had the power wouldnt I have made a scattering of those fellows that were guarding the poor fellows. They took them up on the outskirts of the city to what they called Camp Sands, and the barracks caught fire that night and burned up a number of the poor fellows that were too weak to get out.

On the morning of the 21st we got our breakfast, and then looked around, went out on some of the streets to see what we could see. I had a Reb over coat and my hair was long as was my beard and I looked as near like a Reb as could be, and I talked with lots of them that thought I was one of them and later in the day I claimed to belong to the 18th North Carolina. I got to talking with a couple of fellows one named Campbell and the other I can not make out. I have their names in my diary. They found out I was a Yankee prisoner and they told me to get hid that night, as our troops would be in town the next morning. They said they were tired of the war, and that the dumb Confederacy was gone up. They took me over on Water Street to a saloon and gave me a drink of brandy that they paid \$5.00 for. I told

them that was the highest priced drink I ever took. They said the money was no good that was the reason. They wanted to buy me something to eat, and other stuff, but I had plenty to eat and did not need it. They told me to be sure and hide and I would be all right. I have always held those boys in grateful remembrance for their kindness. During the forenoon of the 21st a man by the name of J S Sanders bought of Worthington all the goods and took away all that was of any account, except a lot of boxes barrels and empty sacks, which we piled up and continued to watch. Sanders inquired of us if we were not Yankee prisoners. We told him we were. He says you manage to stay here until after dark, then slide out one by one come down Water Street to my house and I will hide you for your forces will be here in the morning. So we kept shady. Did not stand around together but kept good watch of each other. About four o'clock a train backed down into the depot, and was soon loaded with passengers. Among the rest was the Rebel General Bragg. I stood close beside him when he got on the train. Our man Worthington was going out on the same train, and he called us up to him and said boys good by, if they capture you again dont tell them I let you go. We said we had no intention of escaping. He says you had a job the first night we were here, and have had one or more put up all the while, and says dont you try to go down the river for they will shoot you, but keep hid here your forces will be here tomorrow, and you will be all right. Good by and God bless you. Perhaps you think I have no kindly feeling for that man. I can tell you if it was in my power to assist him in any way I should go a good ways to do it. You can imagine that we were somewhat excited at the prospect of being free again, and our hearts and pulses were running pretty fast. Still we kept very cool, and conducted ourselves

very quietly. Well we staid around untill about dark. They were burning vessels ware houses filled with cotton and turpentine tobacco and all kinds of goods, and the river for a mile or more up and down presented a magnificent sight. A great many Reb officers came into the depot and lined the dock to see the fires and see that all government stores were burned. We did not like the way they looked at us, and we kept out of sight as much as possible. We wanted to stay and see the fire as it was a grand sight, but dare not, so one by one we slipped out and went down Water Street, until we came to a large building known as the Farmers Hotel, passed by that, turned into a gate just at the corner of the house and were soon up under the roof of a three story building. As we were coming down the street under some awnings it was very dark, and we ran square up against an officer and squad of soldiers. The officer begged our pardon and passed on. We had to crowd up under the roof through a scuttle or man hole. The rest of the boys got up all right but I had to be helped. Was very weak and had no use of my legs to speak of. About midnight Sanders got up with us, and soon after we could hear the soldiers searching the house below us. They were forcing every able bodied man to go with them so as to recruit their army, but they did not mistrust we were up there, and we were not disturbed. I sat on a joist about 3 inches thick with my feet on another, and had to rub them together to keep them from freezing. I would not have cared if they had froze. I was so happy for I knew we were all right, and would be under the banner of the free in the morning. About four o clock in the morning Sanders wife came and handed up some biscuit and a coffee pot full of hot rye coffee. That helped us and we were more than contented. Just after day light she came and said James the Yankees are in town, come

down. Sanders went down but said to us you stay here awhile. She dont know much, cant tell a Yankee from anybody else. In a few minutes he came running back yelling they are here, come down, and we started to obey that order quick. The rest of the boys got down all right, but I could not and they had to help me. I slipped and fell and hurt me in a way that I have never got over and never will, but paid very little attention to it at that particular time as we were all excited of course. There were verandas running around every story of the house and we went out on the highest one and looked up the street toward the depot and there was some of our cavalry with the blue uniforms and the star spangled banner floating over them. We tried to cheer but did not succeed in making much of a noise, but you can imagine our feelings after having been in prison as long as we had and suffered in the way we had.

Sanders took us down stairs and into a room were there was a fire, and several tubs of warm water, furnished us some clean under clothing and we soon felt like new men. Then we got some breakfast and went out to see what we could do toward paying him for what he had done for us. There were no troops except a small squad of cavalry in town yet, and we went up to the depot, got a mule and cart and the way we carted stuff down to Sanders was a caution. We must have taken of different articles and packed in his cellar more than a thousand dollars worth, when the Provost Marshal got in and stopped us. After that we broke into a liquor ware house and rolled out several barrels of liquor, knocked the heads in and set them in the middle of the street and when our infantry began to march in they would open ranks, and each fellow would get a cup full. It was the 22nd of February and we thought it would be well enought to celebrate. The first troops that

marched in were colored troops, and it was the happiest day of my life, for after ten months of misery, starvation and suffering that no tongue can tell, nor can anyone describe it with the pen, I was free once more and knew that I should soon see the hills of old Cattaraugus again. As we stood by the side of the street and our troops were marching along they thought at first that we were Rebs. I had taken off my Reb over coat, and my blue blouse had on corporal stripes. Some of them asked me where I got that blouse. I told them I had been a prisoner ten months and just escaped, and the way they flocked around us, called us poor fellows and were so sorry for us, and so glad we had got away, that we were really upset for a while. I went into the ware house and got on a set of scales and was weighed. Lifted the beam at 112 lbs. It was a day of great excitement for us and I did not realize how weak I was. That night Sanders put three of us in a feather bed, and we could not sleep in that more than we could with a peck of lice on us. So we all laid down on the floor and had a good sleep. Only think, ten months on the ground and then right in a feather bed, who could sleep, not I. When I got up the next morning I was so weak I could hardly walk, and my hurt I received in getting down out of the garret pained me very much. The excitement of escaping and seeing our troops once more had kept me up, but I could scarcely walk across the street that day. We staid in Wilmington and boarded with the Sanders until the 28th when I took the first chance and started for God's country as we used to call it on a small propeller with about 300 other sick ex-prisoners, and arrived at Annapolis on the 5th of March. When we got off the vessel and tried to form a line there was not half of them could stand, and lots of them had to be brought up out of the hold. We had a very rough trip and the most

of the boys were very sick. Our people took us up to the barracks and we all had a nice bath and then put on a new suit of clothes. I tell you they felt good after wearing one suit almost a year. They would not allow us to keep anything we had in prison but I told the officer that I must keep my haversack and tin cup. He said all right and them and my diary and my broken health are what I have as mementoes of my life in those terrible prisons. We were mustered for pay the same afternoon, and on the morning of the 6th got two months pay and our ration money. We were allowed 25 cts a day for every day we were in prison. I tell you it seemed good to have a good clean bunk to sleep in, nice warm blankets, a new suit of clothes and plenty of Uncle Sam's Greenbacks in our pockets, but those same greenbacks were the cause of the death of a great many poor fellows. They used no more judgement there than they did in prison, but bought all manner of stuff and filled themselves up with it and soon died. Hundreds of them went that way. I had had good provisions since the 19th of February, but did not dare to eat half what I wanted yet, and confined myself to bread and coffee, and was very careful about that, and really suffered with hunger there and after I got home, but not in the same way I did in prison.

I had forgotten to say that we thought we were the only ones that were hid in Wilmington, but during the day of the 22nd of Feb. there reported about 200 that had escaped there, and our forces captured a lot more so that there were about a thousand in a day or two, and then the Rebs got in such a hurry that they abandoned a lot and they worked themselves back into our lines. On the 10th of March I got a furlough for 80 days and I started for home, and arrived in Cattaraugus County on Sunday the 13th and I tell you I was a happy fellow.

I did not think that anyone cared much for me, but in less than half an hour, every man woman and child in the village of Versailles were there to see me. This my friends comprises my experience in those awful prisons, that is in one sense. I have not told the half, and I defy anyone that was there to tell or write the half of the suffering and privation that was undergone by the prisoners confined there. I have read several years ago McElroy's book Andersonville, and that does not nor can pen describe it. I have seen men so hungry that they would pick up beans from the ground and eat them that another man had vomited up. I knew a Frenchman at Andersonville that used to catch snakes in the swamp and eat them, and I have told you of my own New Years dinner of dog. I could go on and mention hundreds and thousands of incidents, and you and the good people of this village would more than half think I was lying about it, but it is God's truth, every word of it. I had expected when I got home to meet Delos Darling as I thought a great deal of him, but learned with sorrow that he died just as he got into the promised land. My tent mate and companion at Florence, little Bob Woodard as I always call him lives in the town of Franklinville, and you can imagine that I am always glad to meet him and take him by the hand. He is and was one of the truset hearted men I ever knew, and is I am happy to say associated with me as a member of S. C. Noyes Post 232 GAR, and also in the ex-prisoners of war association of this county.

And now there is scattered over this whole broad land of ours several thousand men that were prisoners of war, and kept in those hell holes from three to 22 months, and they have had the impudence to ask this Government to grant them a special pension for their suffer-

ings there, to keep hundreds of them out of poor houses and from filling pauper graves. What do you think of it my friends, are they entitled to it?