

500 DAYS IN WAR PRISONS

(Emmons D. Guild)

Courtesy of the Attleboro Public Library

The narrative of Emmons D. Guild of Attleboro, Massachusetts, who was captured October 12, 1863 in a detachment of First Rhode Island Cavalry and hereafter was a captive in Culpepper, in an adjunct of Libby Prison at Richmond, in Belle Isle, in Andersonville, Millen, and Florence, SC.

Introduction

The Chronicle of 16 months, 14 days, by a Union Veteran in Confederate Prisons is herewith submitted to answer some modern historians who favor forgetting the horrors endured by these Prisoners. (reprinted from the Daily Sun of Attleboro, Mass, July 1935)

CHAPTER ONE

Emmons D. Guild, formerly G.A.R. commander here and one of the organizers of the Ex-Prisoners of War, wrote a most complete account of the 500 days he spent in rebel prisons and this account taken from a safety deposit vault where it has been kept for years has just been made available.

Commander Guild was transferred from prison to prison during his captivity and writes about Culpepper, an adjunct of Libby prison at Richmond, Belle Isle, Andersonville, Millen and Florence, S.C. He was in Anderson during the six months when the deaths totaled 8000.

Of the Attleboro men who were prisoners of war, only one survives. He is Edgar A. Cummings who was also one of the few transferred to the new stockade at Florence, S.C.

Mr. Cummings left Attleboro with Co. H. 40th Mass. Wounded at Gainesville, Fla. and then taken prisoner, he went first to Tallahassee and then to Andersonville, staying 10 months in the latter prison.

Names as a sergeant over 15 prisoners, it was the duty of Mr. Cummings to distribute the daily ration consisting of a pint of corn meal each. The only water available was from a brook which the cook house contaminated. With a rusty hatchet and old canteen, the prisoners slowly dug a well and fortunately hit a spring.

Conditions at the prison became so filthy, however, that a number including Mr. Cummings were sent to the new prison at Florence, S.C. Exchanging his blue coat with a reb, Mr. Cummings and several more made their escape but were captured and returned to prison until the close of the war.

Nor were Mr. Guild and Mr. Cummings the only ones from the Attleboros who were war prisoners. *Daggett's History of Attleborough* gives the list as follows:

Emmons D. guild-Richmond, Belle Isle, Andersonville, Savannah, Millen, Charleston, Florence 16 month, 14 days

George W Horton--Tallahassee, Andersonville, Florence. 12 months, 12 days

Eli Barrett--Libby, Columbia, Castle Thunder, 11 months

John C. Cummings--Andersonville, Florence, 10 months

H.G. Danforth--Danville, Andersonville, Florence. 9 months, 21 days

Everett S. Horton--Petersburg, Libby, Salisbury, Danville. 5 months. Selected as hostage January 1865

Lemuel Gay--Libby, Salisbury, Danville. 5 months

J.C. Wilmarth--Andersonville, Millen, Florence, Savannah. 7 months

George L. Titus--Libby, Belle Isle, Salisbury. 6 months 18 days

Edward C. Martin--Belle Isle. 42 days

Sidney T. Estes, 11 months, 14 days at Libby, Belle Isle and Andersonville

R.J. Bell--Libby, 53 days

C.W. Bowen--Belle Isle 42 days

Silas H. Wilson--Libby, 56 days

Richmond Holley--Castle Thunder, Belle Isle. 12 weeks

Jahiel Jordan--Danville, Libby. 4 months

Died at Andersonville--George P. Johnson, George H. Norton, A. Baylies Cummings

The thought of the modern historians is distinctly in favor of forgetting the horrors of the Confederate prisons. Thus, James Truslow Adams in "American Tragedy", published last year, uses two pages to prove that Northern prisons were worse than Southern!

He explains that sanitary arrangements because of sudden herding of prisoners, change of their diet to prison fare, giving the guard jobs to the least satisfactory officers and soldiers and other causes all helped produce hardships. He admits that 29,000 prisoners were herded at Andersonville with insufficient preparations, housing and guarding and gives the report of Confederate Col. Chandler who found half the prisoners dead or dying.

But he explains that this report did not reach President Davis until after the war ended and that meantime Southern prisoners at Camp Douglas lacked proper beds, change of clothing and freedom from vermin. He adds that 26,000 Southern soldiers died in the north while 24,000 Union soldiers died in the south. Continuing he states that the prison tales were kept alive after the war for the purpose of getting pensions and dubs them "filled with lies and forgeries with pension as the goal."

But the distant and thoroughly neutral Encyclopedia Britannica says this about Andersonville, just one of the rebel prisons:

"ANDERSONVILLE--a village of Sumter county, Georgia, U.S. A. in the S.W. part of the state, about 60 m. S.W. of Macon, on the Central of Georgia railway Pop. (1910) 174. From November 1863 until the close of the Civil War it was the seat of a Confederate Military prison. A tract of 16 1-2 acres of land near the village was cleared of trees and enclosed with a stockade. Prisoners began to arrive in February 1864, before the prison was completed and before adequate supplies had been received, and in May their number amounted to about 12,000. In June the stockade was enlarged so as to include 26 1/2 acres, but the congestion was only temporarily relieved, and in August the number of prisoners exceeded 32,000. No shelter had been provided for the inmates; the first arrivals made rude sheds from the debris of the stockade; the others made tents of blankets and other available pieces of cloth, or dug pits in the ground. Owing to the slender resources of the Confederacy, the prison was frequently short of food, and even when this was sufficient in quantity it was poor quality and poorly prepared on account of the lack of cooking utensils. The water supply, deemed ample when the prison was planned, became polluted under the congested conditions. During the summer of 1864 the prisoners suffered greatly from hunger, exposure and disease, and in seven months about a third of them died. In the autumn, after the capture of Atlanta, all of the prisoners who could be moved were sent to Millen, George and Florence, South Carolina. At Millen better arrangements prevailed, and when after Sherman began his march to the sea, the prisoners were returned to Andersonville the conditions there were somewhat improved.

During the war 49,485 prisoners were received at Andersonville prison, and of these about 13,000 died. The terrible conditions obtaining there were due to the lack of food supplies in the Confederate States, the incompetence of the prison officials, and the refusal of the Federal authorities in 1864 to make exchanges of prisoners, thus filling the stockade with unlooked for the numbers. After the war Henry Wirtz, the superintendent, was tried by a court-martial, and on the 10th of November 1865, was hanged and the revelation of the sufferings of the prisoners was one of the factors that shaped public opinion regarding the South in the Northern states, after the close of the Civil War. The prisoners' burial ground at Andersonville has been made a national cemetery, and contains 13,714 graves of which 921 are marked "unknown".

Jefferson Davis, in a series of articles in Belford's magazine in 1890 tried to excuse the rebel prison death rate by blaming it on acclimation, unsuitable diet and despondency. Much more than this was brought out at the 63 days' trial which condemned Capt. Wirtz, native of Switzerland and commandant at Andersonville.

It was brought out then that some 18 acres were taken for the original prison which was built for 10,000 prisoners. In June 1864, it contained 22,000 and some five more acres were added. By August, over 32,000 were in the stockades.

The badly cured salt meat, the absence of vegetable, the corn bread made out of husks were all part of the cruelties. No shelter of any kind was provided though the mercury ranged from over a hundred to below freezing; the sick lay on bare boards. Battle wounds, gangrene and scurvy accounted for thousands of deaths; Boston Corbett who shot Booth afterwards told of one man eaten alive by vermin.

Meantime at Fort Delaware, a Northern prison, in 11 months only two per cent of the Confederate prisoners died. At Johnson's Island, another Northern prison, in 21 months only 134 died out of 6000. And in spite of the horrors and suffering, only a scattered few of the men accepted the chance to go free if they would join the rebel

army. One survivor writes of a big occasion when all the Irish soldiers in the prison were called together and one Col. O'Neil offered them freedom and jobs behind the firing line if they would join the rebels. But, says this survivor, the Irish unanimously marched back to their dismal stockade.

On Nov. 19, 1909, Attleboro lost one of her best known and beloved citizens by the death of Emmons D. Guild who passed away at his home, 117 Pine Street. Although he had been in failing health for several months, very few of his acquaintances were prepared for the sad news of his death. He had been confined to his bed for three weeks but the day before he died, he sat in his chair in accordance with his daily custom.

He had been a resident of the town nearly all his life, had watched with keen interest its growth from a small community to its present size and taken a leading part in its industry. For years he was associated with Edward A. Sweeney in the W. H. Wilmarth and company corporation, one of Attleboro's oldest jewelry concerns.

He was born in Wrentham, September 11, 1843, the son of Allan D. and Abbie (Taber) Guild. The family traced it lineage back to the early settlers of Massachusetts. When quite young Mr. Guild came to Attleboro with his parents. He attended the public schools and as a young man learned the trade of a jeweler, a vocation he was associated with nearly all his life.

At the age of 12 he secured a position as driver of a milk wagon from Brown D. Claffin, one of the older residents. He was employed in various ways until the outbreak of the Civil War. On Dec. 9, 1861, at the age of 18, Mr. Guild enlisted and a few days later was mustered into service in Troop G of the First Rhode Island cavalry. His company was assigned to the Army of the Potomac and Mr. Guild saw immediate and active service. He was engaged in the following battles:

Columbia Bridge, Mullen Bridge, Cedar Mt. North Rappahannock, Catten Station, Sulphur Springs, Groveton, second Bull Run, Chantilla, White Ford, Mountville, Hazel Run, Fredericksburg, Hartwood Church, Kelly's Ford Rapidan River, Ellis Ford, Brandy Station, Middleburg. Jones Cross roads, Hazel Run second. Rapidan Station and Warrenton, all of which took place in Virginia.

At Kelly's Ford, on March 17, 1863, Mr. Guild, acting corporal was ordered to charge across the Rappahannock river and drive the enemy out of the rifle pits. Lieut. S. E. Brown, two men and Corporal Guild crossed in the face of deadly fire and on April 1, 1863, Corp. Guild was promoted to sergeant for his bravery.

At Warrenton, Va., a detail of 125 men were sent up the Rappahannock river to guard a ford. Lee's army crossed the ford at Sulphur Springs cutting them off. Mr. Guild was taken prisoner and shortly afterwards began a career in Confederate prisons that lasted 16 months and 14 days, over 500 days. During this time he was confined in the following prisons: Richmond Laundry, Pemberton, Belle Island, Andersonville, Savannah, Miller and Florence. He was paroled at Wilmington, N.C. Feb. 26, 1865. He suffered every torture and hardship that history has painted during his imprisonment. A naturally rugged physique enabled him to endure his suffering without serious impairment to his health and his experiences furnished material for many interesting anecdotes in the days following the war.

Returning to Attleboro, Mr. Guild entered the employ of Kingman and Hodges of Mansfield and after two years came back to Attleboro where he was employed in several factories. About 30 years before his death he went to

work at the W.H. Wilmarth company corporation as a foreman and in 1881 became a member of the corporation, being elected as president, a position which he held to his death.

Shortly after the war he joined Prescott Post, No. 1 of the department of Rhode Island, and later became a member of W.A. Streeter post of Attleboro. He served in every office of the local post and seven years before his death he was elected commander, a position which he highly honored and held until he died. He was past commander of the Mass. Ass'n of Ex-Prisoners of War and past aide-de-camp on the staff of Commander-in-chief, Russell A. Alger. He was a member and treasurer of the Attleboro Ass'n. of Ex-prisoners and was connected with several state and county associations of veterans. The Grand Army was his favorite organization and he had hosts of friends and companions among the veterans.

Mr. Guild was also a past grand of Orient Lodge of Odd Fellows, a charter member of Pokanoket Tribe of Red Men; member of the Knights of Malta, Gideon Horton Encampment of Odd Fellows, the Royal Arcanum and Pennington lodge, A.O.U.W., being prominent in all of the organizations which he belonged.

He was married to Miss Ella Josephine Drown who survived him for several years and there was one son, Frank E. Guild, now of Lincoln Ave. At the time of his death he also had two brothers; Edgar W. of New York city and Mortimer A. of 1 Parker St. The funeral services were held Nov. 22, 1909 from Murray Universalist church.

Mr. Guild was universally loved and respected by the younger generation of his time as a splendid type of the men who carried the country through a great crisis and by the older people as a substantial citizen to whom is due respect and esteem for an exemplary life.

CHAPTER TWO

The Capture on October 12, 1863 and the first imprisonment in an old Church at Culpepper, ending in Transfer to Laundry Prison in Richmond

October 12, 1863, a detachment of our regiment, the 1st R.I. cavalry, consisting of about 125 men under Capt. Gould and Allen were detailed to go on picket at a fort on the Rappahannock, about six miles from Sulphur Springs. We were to obstruct, if possible any small force that might try to cross there. On arriving, we discovered the rebel cavalry had crossed at Sulphur Springs and were driving everything before them on the road to Warrington. We knew then we were in a tight place for we were cut off from our whole army with no way to get to them unless we went across country and come out in advance of our army. This we aimed to do and came out on the road about three miles from Sulphur Springs, as we supposed, in advance of all the rebs.

Capt. Gould immediately put out a rear guard, of which I was one, and we started for Warrington about five miles away. We journeyed but a short distance when we heard someone in our rear. As soon as they were close enough we ordered them to halt, which they did. At the same time they asked, "What regiment is that?" and when the reply was given, "the First Rhode Island Cavalry", they immediately opened fire, we returning it.

Capt. Gould thinking his detachment was in advance of all the Rebs gave the order to "trot" but the rear guard did not hear the order and we got left. Finding we could not hold them we made an effort to reach our command.

The first I knew there were Rebs in front of us was on arriving at a small stream that crossed the road between Sulphur Springs and Warrington. I saw quite a number of mounted men. Thinking they were our boys I halted to let my horse drink. While doing so a man near me placed his revolver about two inches from my ear and told me to surrender. Still having the impression that it was one of our men for it was quite dark, it being 10 o'clock p.m. I turned in my saddle and told him to put up his pistol, that he might shoot someone.

His answer was that I should be the one if I did not surrender. I told him that he need not shoot as I would do as he ordered. The next command was to hand over my weapons of war. The carbine in passing to him dropped into the stream. Johnnie said, "Don't do that anymore but give them to me". His manner of speech and the nearness of his revolver led me to think he meant business so I passed him my sabre and revolver to save if possible any unpleasant feeling. I then began to look about to ascertain how many they numbered and there were about fifty. They also informed me that they were the rear guard of the brigade and that was in front of use. I learned that Capt. Gould had left the road before he reached the brook and by so doing had encountered the Rebs while his rear guard had followed the road and were being cared for by the Rebs.

The Confederates who captured me for some reason allowed me to remain mounted, taking me about a quarter of a mile to the rear. On our way we got mixed with the troops coming up. I was a short distance from my captor when a Rebel officer rode up to me and said, "Go to the rear and guard the prisoners." I answered, "all right sir" but before I could execute the order, my captor rode up and put a stop to it. The officer taking in the situation at a glance looked me over and reckoned as I had a good looking horse, he would take him. Had there been a little more distance between us, he would have lost me, for I felt confident I could make my escape with the excellent horse that I had under me and being well acquainted with that portion of the country, but it was not so ordered. I was taken to the rear where I found about 25 of the boys who had been picked up. We were then taken to Sulphur Springs arriving about 1 o'clock in the morning.

At daybreak more of our regiment were brought in, making forty-one of the original one hundred and twenty-five of the detail. At nine o'clock we were started on foot for Culpepper where we met about four hundred of the 4th Penn., 13th Penn. and 8th New York cavalry, they having been captured the day before.

Here we were quartered in an old church drawing for the first time in Dixie, our rations, three hard tack and a small piece of meat. We remained here until the next day when we started for Richmond by rail in freight cars arriving in that city about afternoon. We were escorted through the streets to a large brick building about three stories high called the Laundry prison. After being secured, we were told to take care of ourselves. The next day we drew rations of rice soup and soft bread and as a natural consequence, began to talk of an exchange. On the third day, the officers entered the prison and told us we were to be searched for valuables and money, saying if we would hand over everything, they would not search us and would, the day we were paroled, give back what was taken. I saw one man give up several hundred dollars and before winter was over, he had starved to death. Those who did not give up what they had were placed on one side of the room with a guard to keep there and then everyone was stripped of his clothing and searched. Everything of value was taken.

I had about twenty dollars with me and a silver watch. The money I put in the lining of my jacket. The watch I managed to conceal in a crack in the wall. While they were searching some of the men, I commenced talking with the guard, at the same time edging my way across. When they were nearly through I was almost on the other side when the guard asked "have you been searched?"

I answered, "Yes, sir". "Get back then where you belong, for we have not time to search you twice." And of course I obeyed orders, saving my money by so doing, for the search was thorough.

Sergt. Delanah, Hill, Durrell, and myself formed a mess. We took up our quarters on the first floor near a front window. Having a little of the one thing needful, "money" we got along very nicely as we could trade with the guard on the sly and by so doing, add to our regular rations.

CHAPTER THREE

Out of Landry Prison and Into One Nearby Libby... An Escape Plan that Failed..Off to Belle Island to Live Without Shelter through the Winter.. A Seven Days' Journey to Andersonville

The manner of drawing our rations at the Laundry prison offered an opportunity for some to escape. The sergeant in charge made a detail of ten or twelve men to go with their blankets to the cook-house a quarter of a mile away, the blankets being used to convey the rations in. On the way to the cook house they threw their blankets over their uniforms and after having gone a little way, they would fall behind, and at the first corner they would skip and be off. This worked quite well for a while, several having accomplished the desired end before it was found out. We had a small yard back of the building where we could go and walk but on account of the small space, there being over four hundred prisoners, it was hardly large enough for good healthy exercise as all were anxious to be there as much as possible.

During our stay here we had excellent opportunities to trade with the guards; a "green back dollar" was worth four dollars of Confederate money and they were anxious to buy. When off duty they would fill their haversacks with whatever they thought they could sell, always finding a way to dispose of the goods while on duty. A room next to the prison was used as the guard house. One of the guards cut a hole through the door near the floor large enough to put a loaf of bread through, keeping it covered with a blanket when not in use. At this hole we did a great deal of trading until one day the bread came through but the money failed to go back. Of course that caused an unpleasant feeling and stopped the trade. We remained here until the middle of November. We were then taken out to be paroled, at least we were told so, but to our surprise we were marched to another building on the same street, nearly opposite the famed Libby prison.

This also was of brick, four stories high above the basement, being much larger than the Laundry. Here we found nearly six hundred prisoners.

We were escorted to the third and fourth stories. I was fortunate in getting a good place to bunk, it being near one of the windows. But we were obliged to be very careful not to get our heads too far out of the window, as the Rebs were very careless with their guns and enjoyed firing at us. Every morning we were called into line and counted, to make sure none of us had escaped. After that our rations were given to us, which were disposed of in a very short time. The rest of the day was passed as best we could. On the 17th of November, I received a

letter from home. It was the first and last during my imprisonment. The night before Christmas nearly all the guards (except those on duty) were off in the city. It was proposed we make a break, capture our guard, release the officers in Libby, and other prisoners in the city of whom there were several hundred.

We formed into line at midnight and remained for over an hour but for some reason (that was not explained) did not try. I came to the conclusion that no one wanted to take the responsibility but have always thought that had we tried, we would have come out victorious.

Several of our regiment were sick at this time and Sergt. Barrows of Troop E died.

January 1st, 1864 after a sojourn of three months without going outside the door we again took up our line of march, it being this time to Belle Isle. Here were about four thousand of our boys with about half enough tents for their accommodation. You can imagine our feelings when left with no shelter have been taken from a building at night in the middle of winter.

One morning I counted eleven who had frozen to death the night before and some of them were pretty near me.

As I said in the beginning, no tongue can tell the suffering that was endured especially here. Our rations grew less each day until they were so small body and soul could hardly keep together, it being no uncommon occurrence to miss a day. I think it was the most barbarous place here was. (At least I thought so then.)

The last of February some of our troops made a raid into the city. We could hear the firing and our hearts beat high with the hopes of a speedy release from that horrible place. The regular guard was taken off and in their place put old men and boys. We knew they were pretty well frightened and with our elevated ideas, we waited for what? Disappointment.

The first of March one thousand men were taken from the Island back to Richmond (on the parole business) and placed in the building we had left two months before. Here we stayed one night and the next until two o'clock in the morning when we were called up, given rations of a half a loaf of bread and all the beans we could eat. At first we were surprised at the generous rations but when we began to eat them the mystery was solved. They were sour. They did not want to throw them away so they fed them to us.

Early in the morning we started for the railroad depot and found freight cars awaiting us. Loading us in, fifty to a car with a guard of four, we started again for an exchange and many believed it, although we had been told of a large stockade built in Georgia. We crossed the long bridge at Manchester and by the direction taken, knew we were not going home. The first night we stopped in the woods near Raleigh, N.C. and were allowed to leave the cars under a strong guard so that none of us could escape.

Some of them tried but were restrained. Morning came and again we went on our way stopping at Charlotte, N.C. As night had overtaken us we were allowed the use of an open field near the railroad, our escort always on the lookout for us.

By this time greenbacks were not very plentiful, although there were some to be had. The guard anxious to get hold of them would offer 10 confederate dollars for one of them.

One of the boys had a five dollar greenback note. Knowing how greedy they were he very nicely put a cipher on the right of the five making it a fifty. A reb soon came around and told him in a confidential manner that he would dispose of half of it.

The Reb looked at it and soon brought a friend who examined it and seeming satisfied as to its genuineness, counted out twenty-five dollars in greenbacks and two hundred and fifty in confederate money and went away. Of course many of the boys knew the joke and had considerable fun over it.

While on our journey the next day, the purchaser of the fifty dollar bill came through the train looking for the man who had sold him the note. Although extra rations were offered as an inducement, no one would tell.

Before starting in the morning three men made a break through the guard starting for the woods. The firing of the guard aroused the camp and in an instant all of us were in an uproar. Fearing we might get away an order was given for every man to lie down. One poor boy was deaf and not hearing the command remained standing, and was shot the ball going through his head and killing him instantly.

One man died through the night, so one grave did for both.

Before leaving here, an old citizen appeared with half a dozen dogs to catch the "Yanks" that had escaped but the dogs were not willing to take the track. causing the old man to get angry. The boys began to blackguard him telling him the dogs were for Niggers and not for Yankees.

Again we embarked and were soon on the road to Andersonville remaining on the train at night as they did not care to take the chance on any more escaping.

Notwithstanding their efforts to keep us, two men went to the door while the train was in motion and jumped out; the train was immediately stopped and run back but they were gone. After that they obliged us to lie down at night and the door was shut. For five days we remained on the train in this manner arriving at Andersonville after a seven days journey.

Turning us into line, our name, company, and regiment were taken.

Capt. Wirtz having taken command divided us into squads of two hundred and seventy and each squad into messes of ninety, in charge of a sergeant who received an extra ration for his labors, viz, looking after our rations.

The stockade where we were placed contained nearly eighteen acres. Through the center ran a sluggish stream on each side of which was a marsh of thirty or forty feet wide so soft and muddy that no one could live there. The stockades were built twenty feet long and set in the ground six feet. On the top were the sentry boxes so arranged that the sentinels could see all over the camp.

Twenty feet from the inside was a line of posts on top of which was nailed a strip of board.

This was the "Dead Line." Whoever crossed that live never came back alive, the guard having received orders to shoot all who thus ventured.

At this stockade we found 2500 of our boys. Believing we were to stop a while we prepared a place for shelter. There being plenty of brush and wood we soon had quarters that would accommodate four. Our rations were raw and many of the boys were too weak to get food and cook them so it was no uncommon thing to see them sit down (after drawing a pound of meal, ground cob and all, and a small piece of meat) and eat them raw.

Nearly every day prisoners came from Belle Isle and other places--our family increasing by the first of April to about 10,000.

Our wood by this time was not so plentiful, consequently there was a detail made to go outside for it. I being one of the lucky ones.

April 17th Sergt. Peterson of Troop "D" died, and was followed a few days by Sergt. Delanah of Troop "G".

Sergt. Delanah's death was like parting with a brother. He was in good health and spirits when we left Richmond, confident we were to be exchanged. When he found the falseness of the report, his hopes tumbled to the ground; he seemed to let go of the hold he had on life and in five weeks after our arrival at Andersonville he passed on to that better land, where there are no "guards or Dead Line."

Morning and evening Durrell and myself exercised all we could by walking around the grounds, thinking it is beneficial in regard to good health. Also whenever opportunity afforded us the privilege we went outside to work for an extra ration. Oh, how glad I was at the prospect of getting outside, even to be under guard.

In the afternoon I did a little trading, cutting off the few remaining buttons on my coat, I exchanged them for beans. Returning to the stockade at night with an armful of wood, a quart of beans and some corn bread (the latter I had planned for supper) I felt good.

Hill and Durrell met me at the gate, and taking the wood and beans, soon had the beans ready for eating.

Appropriating one half for our own use, we traded the remainder among our boys for buttons. With these buttons the next day I again bought more beans, and in this way we managed to have extra rations for a while.

For six weeks it was my privilege to work outside and at the end of that time I had improved in health, being relieved of the scurvy which had a strong hold on me, and assisted my comrades so they were feeling much better.

CHAPTER FOUR

Working as Parole Prisoners while Andersonville was Burying Dead Captives, Fifty to a Trench...Again Fooled..This time at Savannah, by the Announcement of a General Exchange...a Tunnel Escape that Failed.

I had always thought if opportunity was offered, I would make my escape but as yet I saw very little opportunity for that business, as the dogs were kept close by to prevent that sort of work. One night about the middle of July Capt. Wirtz informed us if we would give our word of honor not to try to escape he would take us out of the stockade and give us comfortable quarters near the depot. We willingly took him up on the offer.

Next morning bidding my friends good-bye and taking my few belongings with me I started for the gate. Forty of us were taken out here and before Sept. 1 one hundred more.

The building where we went had been used as a carpenter's shop, was two stories high, 6 feet long, and 3 feet wide. On arriving there each man was made to take a separate oath that he would not escape. The captain added, "If you do, by God, I'll hang you."

Part of us went to the burying grounds to work and the remainder to the woods to chop wood for the prisoners. The paroled prisoners were placed in charge of a Mr. Sullivan. He was before the war a citizen of Baltimore, Md. He never joined the army and I could not figure out how he came to be at Andersonville, but supposed that like many others he would rather be at the rear than the front. He was very pleasant and agreeable, trying to make us as comfortable as possible, and allowed us to build bunks filling them with straw from a stack nearby.

He also gave us permission to go a mile in any direction except toward the stockade. We also had a cook detailed to prepare our rations and make himself generally useful. In short Mr. Sullivan was a gentleman and we liked him very much.

At 7 o'clock every morning, we went out to work. Some of the time we spent in the woods and then there would be a change to the burying grounds.

The horrible sights we were compelled to gaze upon, I do not care to dwell on and will be brief. Large strong men reduced to skeletons brought out to be buried with nothing but rags to cover their nakedness and in many cases they were nude, having been relieved of all their clothing.

The cemetery was a mile from the stockade. Those who died through the night were brought to the gate, each man having pinned to him a slip of paper giving his name, company and regiment. They were then loaded into an army wagon. Sometimes there would be as many as 30 piled on top of each other and taken away for burial. There were trenches long enough to lay 50 side by side, three and a half feet deep. A pine slab was put over them and then covered with earth. At the head of each was placed a little stake bearing the number to correspond with that of the body.

When any of our regiment were brought out I took the slip from them and on my return home sent them to their friends to enable them to find their dead if they so desired.

After working three weeks Mr. Sullivan required more men and it was my privilege and pleasure to give him the names of my comrades Hill and Durrell so the next day we were all together again. H. H. Taylor of Co. I came with them.

On the sixth of September we were told there was to be a general exchange and we were to start for Savannah the next day.

Early the next morning we packed what few things we had and about noon were loaded into freight cars.

With those taken from the stockade we numbered about 1000. We were told to ride inside or out as we pleased and only a small guard went with us. As the same story had been told all of us, also that boats were waiting at Savannah, we did not try to escape but preferred to ride into our own lines. Arriving at Savannah we failed to see the boats but saw instead a regiment of rebels who escorted us through the city to a small stockade telling us

"the boats had not yet arrived." Our disappointment was great at finding out that we had been fooled for the sake of saving a strong guard, they knowing the thoughts of our home would keep us.

The prison here was in charge of Lieut. Davis, a very rough and profane man, yet notwithstanding all that, he was much better than Capt. Wirtz. If a man made his escape and was caught he was put back and told to try again. Wirtz would put them back with a ball and chain.

It was here that I had my first experience in tunnel business. Half a dozen of us got disgusted and thought we could dig out. We commenced in an old well as near the stockade as we could get. After several nights, thinking we had burrowed far enough to escape we were just ready to open it. They night was just what we wanted, dark and rainy. At midnight we entered the well one at a time, I being the fourth. The first was to open the hole and get off as soon as possible and the rest to follow suit. The three in front of me passed and it was then my turn. I need not tell you how surprised I was as I left the hole to have a Reb rise up in front of me and command me to halt. You can imagine my feelings. The comrades who had proceeded me stood a few feet away under guard.

The remaining two got wind of what was happening and returned to camp. That was my only attempt at tunneling.

We remained here five weeks, then started by rail to a place called Blackshore, near the Florida line. We camped in the woods three days, surrounded by a strong guard.

Again we went to Savannah and from there to Millen. Here we found another stockade after the style of Andersonville, though not so large. Each day our number increased until we numbered some six thousand.

In one corner of the camp they established a hospital. Their supply of medicine being quite small, a man sick would receive nearly as good care in his own quarters as in that establishment. I had the honor of being detailed for duty there for which I drew an extra ration, always sharing with my friends, Hill and Durrell.

The day soon came when an exchange of the sick was to be made. They took about six hundred of the worst cases and sent them off. I got in with the rest and managed to get outside of the gate when a doctor came along and said, "I guess there are those who are in worse shape than you. You go on back and stay a while longer." I told him I had waited over a year and did not want to wait any longer, but alas it was no go for I was compelled to go back. That morning Sergt. Sweating borrowed my cup to cook his meal in. He being one of the lucky number to be exchanged, forgot to return it. After arriving home the first thing he said when he saw me was, "I did not have time to return your cup."

By the 15th of November we were again under marching orders (the parole business again) although we placed no confidence in what they said. The first night out quite a number jumped from the train and were probably picked up by Sherman as were afterwards informed he was less than a day's march behind us.

Had we only known at that time it would have been impossible to keep us.

CHAPTER FIVE

With 15,000 Prisoners at Florence, S.C....Three Weeks' Illness with Swamp Fever... the Parole Journey to Goldsboro, where Freedom waited for the Four that Survived out of the Forty-two in the Captured Rhode Island Group

From Millen we went to Savannah remaining there two days and from there to Charleston. After a stay of two or three days, we pushed on to Florence, S.C. There has been very little said in regard to the prison there by those who have written upon the subject but in my opinion it was fully as bad as Andersonville, it being about half as large with 15,000 prisoners.

Shortly after my arrival they commenced paroling the sick. I tried my level best to be sick but it was of no use. My two comrades Hill and Durrell were more successful. They were in luck. After watching them depart I returned to my quarters feeling pretty blue. We had been together through 14 months thick and thin and now I was left alone. It would not do to get discouraged for that was the first step to the graveyard so I found new friends, related my story, after which they invited me to share their tent with them (as they only numbered three and had room for one more having an "A" tent.) At this place messes were divided into sections of one thousand. A sergeant having charge of the rations received an extra share for his labor. It was my fortune to have charge of one mess getting my extra share therefore. One other of our quartet was on police duty he also receiving an extra share so we four receiving six rations got along nicely.

Nearly every day a rebel officer came into our camp to get me to take the oath and join the Confederate army. I am sorry to say they got quite a number of recruits that way.

The first of January I was taken sick with what was called "swamp fever" it being my first sickness since I was taken prisoner. For three weeks I was out of my head most of the time.

My comrades would not allow me to be taken to the hospital knowing very well I would never leave it alive but cared for me to the best of their ability (there being no medicine to give) in my tent.

I had been there but a few days when we were ordered to pack up again. I had made up my mind if I ever had a chance to move again I should try my luck in escaping but owing to my weak condition I was fearful of the risk. We were taken to Wilmington, N.C. remaining in an open field two or three days when we at last heard the joyful sounds of the firing of our troops down the river. All at once there was great excitement among the guards. We were at once started on the road as quickly as possible for a distance of ten miles. Here we again took passage on a freight train for Goldsboro. The reason for our sudden exit from Wilmington was that our troops had taken the city but they arrived too late for us. At Goldsboro we tarried three days drawing one day's rations.

February 26, 1865, 16 months and 14 days from the time I was taken prisoner we were called into line again and told we were to be paroled. Could it be possible? Had the joyful day at last dawned? We were in doubt. But at last they had told us the truth. After each man had written his name, company and regiment in a book prepared for that purpose, we again took passage on the freight train. A few miles from Goldsboro, the train was stopped and the white flag flung to the breeze. Then we realized more than ever we were free. Such shouts as

went out from those poor half starved men were near heard before. Within 10 miles of Wilmington the train again stopped at a crossing in the woods and we were told to get off the train and follow the road.

The guards formed a line on each side of us as we passed from the train. Immediately after passing the guard the men commenced running, throwing their hats, cups and everything we had in all directions. We had gone but a short distance when we saw on the other side of the river the Boys in Blue. Across the river were stars and stripes and on each side was a colored regiment with a band to greet us. We did not stand for ceremony but passed to the other side thinking we were not safe until we had crossed the river. Undoubtedly those who awaited us thought we were children--some laughed, some cried, others joining in halloas and songs until they were hoarse, so full of joy were they that they were in God's country.

The first ration we received was whiskey and we all imbibed. Then came good old hard tack, salt horse and coffee. And it was good too. Then those who were able to, walked to Wilmington. The others went by cars and were quartered in the hospital.

March 3rd all who were able started for Annapolis, Md., arriving there the 5th. After remaining there three weeks I received my transportation papers and arrived at "Home Sweet Home" on March 25th.

April 1st, 1865, after having been a prisoner for five hundred days I was mustered out of service, serving nearly four months after my enlistment had expired. Of the forty-two who were taken prisoners at the same time I was, thirty-seven of them lie in southern cemeteries. At least I never had been able to find but four besides myself who came home.

They were W.W. Durrell of Newmarket, N.H., L. Hill of Dover, N.H., H.H. Taylor of Chelsea Vt. and James Cavanaugh of Cumberland, R.I.

When I left Andersonville, Sept. 7th, there were but four of our regiment that I knew of left there. They were George West of Troop A, J. Milligan of Troop A, Robert Leach of Troop F and George Clark of Troop H.

What became of them I do not know but suppose they are with their comrades on the following list in their last resting places.

Andrew Duffy of Troop D lived to get into our lines at Wilmington and was taken to a hospital. As he never came home I suppose he died there.

The number of dead per month at Andersonville, from my arrival, March 11, to the time of my departure, Sept. 7th were as follows:

March 278, April 544, May 699, June 1291, July 1733, August 2990, Sept. 1 to 6 516, making a total of 8051 in six months. One day in August 130 were buried, who had died within 24 hours. This was the largest number that died in any one day. Could the relatives or friends of our dead comrades have seen them as they were brought out to be deposited in the cemetery, they would have imprinted on their minds a sign that time or trouble never could efface. And they would have prayed fervently for the speedy arrival of that important event which was finally consummated by the fall of Richmond and the ending of the war, which for cruelty, exceeded anything in modern history and was excelled by few nations in ancient history.

The following is a list of names and dates of all the deaths that I could get:

Lieut. George Slocum, Troop A
Pvt. William Hunt, Troop A
Pvt. H. West, Troop A
Pvt. P. Smith, Troop A, July 28, 1864
Pvt. J. Rathburn, Troop A, Aug. 30, 1864
Pvt. James Kettle, Troop B.
Pvt. James Burke, Troop C, Aug. 20, 1864
Sergt. John Peterson, Troop D, April 17, 1864
Pvt. S. Minah, Troop D.
Pvt. M. Sweet, Troop D.
Pvt. A. Healey, Troop D.
Pvt. C. Mayne, Troop E, Aug. 25, 1864
Pvt. Pat Carpenter, Troop E
Pvt. Thomas Heniley, Troop F.
Pvt. Isaac Bowditch, Troop F, June 7, 1864
Pvt. R. Duerdon, Troop F, Aug. 5, 1864
Sergt. C.B. Delanah, Troop G, April 19, 1864.
Pvt. John Bidneau, Troop G, June 13, 1864.
Pvt. A Hooker, Troop G, Aug. 27, 1864
Pvt. S.R. Ide, Troop H, June 13, 1864
Pvt. Henry B. Freelove, Troop H, May 6, 1864
Pvt. J. Spink, Troop H, May 27, 1864
Pvt. Edmund Northrop, Troop H, June 11, 1864
Sergt. J.A. Austin, Troop H, July 13, 1864
Sergt. Rolindo V. Barrows, Troop E, died in Richmond, December 1863

These with the excepting of Sergt. Barrows, all lie in Andersonville. Other members of the regiment died in other prisons but I was unable to obtain their names and dates of their deaths.