

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 Waggons 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 ~~parrot~~ Pea Cock, and just then he gave one of the most unearthly yells I ever heard. I turned to one of my comrads 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

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 MNS [?] 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 the 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

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 ~~Men~~ 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 interfered 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 ~~supper~~ suffered at Chancellorsville and Getteysburgh had lost in those two battles about 400 men ~~and~~ killed and wounded, besides a lot of Prisoners at Getteysburgh and they had not all been returned to us, as they were in the ~~prison~~ 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 Augustus 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 fortunatw, 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 Ishmus 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 ~~hid~~ 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

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^d 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 Getteysburgh 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 ~~\$xx~~
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 ~~flax~~ 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

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

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 ~~thru~~ 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 liv@d 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@d 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 bacame 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 to 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 ^{corn} in 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 δ 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

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 hearty 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

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.