

but it might be seen 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 Delus Darling of Co. K, 154<sup>th</sup> was brought in and in the same Squad. Delus was taken prisoner at Bellefleur but I had never seen him before, he told me where he had been but I have forgotten I think Danville, Va he was in very poor health, weak and emaciated 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 some 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 F. L. Hunt of W. Va, who now lives in Tenn this Company Bob Wauclark of Co. C.



Peter Messenger of Co. A, Eugene Stringham  
 of Co. D, and several others, that have  
 slipped my mind, there were seven or  
 eight fellows in the tent with Woodward  
 and four of them got exchanged, and  
 Delus was exchanged, and that left me  
 all alone. So I went over the other side  
 of the creek and went in with Woodward,  
 his tent was dug out of the bank then  
 built up with pine logs, and covered  
 with 4 Wollens Blankets, with two fire  
 places, the blankets were good water  
 shells, and I tell you were aristocrats,  
 in good earnest, and the envy of the  
 whole neighborhood. I had no use for 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 Cur Insidious at the  
 Erie depot, he had the Scurvy at  
 Andersville so that his teeth were all  
 loose and his legs were drawn up so  
 he could not straighten them, and they  
 were as black as your heart, we saw  
 our meal and saved it and bound it on  
 his legs, then traded off other rations for  
 tobacco and bought 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  
 magnificent 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 William Jay of Great Valley MS in Andersonville, and every one that knows us I think understands that there is more than a Brotherly love between us, Little Bob Woodard & shall speak of latter, also others of our Regt. The tent made Messinger and Stringham a good home, and what Boys there were of the 154<sup>th</sup> in Florence were pretty well fixed, and you just bet we struck together like Brothers.

December 1<sup>st</sup> they took a motion to Commit us so drove them all from one side of the Creek to the other, and Committed 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~~ 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 2<sup>d</sup>, I had what I considered a good offer and I traded my boots off for a good pair of shoes, and got \$3.00 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 blues out and so treated  
 and I was right about it and the men  
 helped us to 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  
 in the Bank and throw out enough dirt  
 so they could lay down their 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 Brown had been  
 sprinkled over them. They would take out  
 all their knives or sticks and scrape them  
 off or shake the clothing. There was not  
 an inch of ground in that prison ~~to~~  
 but had from one to 50 or more lice on  
 and when the poor fellows got so weak  
 they could not get their clothes off to  
 wash them, were soon literally eaten  
 I have seen hundreds of men that within  
 under heaven's was the matter of them but  
 starvation and lice. They would get hungry  
 and discouraged, and in a few days  
 the lice would finish them, a man that  
 had to subsist on what the Kels gave  
 him at Florence was worse off if anything  
 than he was at Andersonville while I was  
 there. There were so many of the Galva-  
 sized Yankees deserting from the Kels  
 down near Charleston, that they sent a



of them back into the prison, and I tell  
 you they had one Picnic, for every ones hand was  
 raised against them, and they could get our  
 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-  
 P. G. Co. Pick and Haight of Co. E. We took them in our  
 tent, and that made a horsefull, 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 lay besides the crew 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 pieces for them, they would bring out 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 Kinks, 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, smoking 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



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 Anders  
mill, or Miller, and I came near starving  
 at Miller. The Officer in charge of this  
 prison was as mean as old Wig, of  
Anders mill burne. There was one thing  
 I always did that was to keep away from  
 the dead line, and never hang around the  
 gate, because it done see good and a fellow  
 run a chance of getting shot, and I was  
 bound that the guard should have the satisfac-  
 tion of shooting me, without I had a show  
 and saw a chance to escape.

They brought in a lot of negro soldiers  
 and they hated the Galvanized Yankees, as they  
 had seen some of them in the works near  
Charleston, and so they pitched into them  
 and fought and flogged them all over  
 the Camp, and no one cared for all the  
 prisoners hated them as well as the negroes  
 did, but the Rebel 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 Buck Bone, and would give a  
 fellow half Columbia if he kindly spoke  
 to one of them. Occasionally a Dog  
 would get in through the Gate or  
 hospital, and was let 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 post back of our tent, have a



Dago Head, he would lay it on the fire and  
 search it a little, and then tear off the meat  
 and dinner with his teeth. The lady of that  
 Dug was being cooked for dinner in one of the  
 most aristocratic tents in that prison,  
 and I know that Dug meat is ~~not~~ not  
 very bad meat to eat especially if one is hungry.  
 On January 9<sup>th</sup> they drove us across  
 the creek, and carried us back, took  
 our names, Co. and Regt. we thought perhaps  
 they were going to parole us, on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 they received a new pack of Hounds to  
 run down escaped prisoners. at this time  
 Spiking, Abe Wright, a fellow named Gary,  
 of a P. A. Co. Lt. Regt. and myself, made up  
 our minds to escape. we had got some poles  
 and made a ladder, and kept it buried  
 in the ground by our tent, and were wait-  
 ing for a dark rainy night to scale the  
 stockade and try for freedom.  
 Some where about the 20<sup>th</sup>, 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 got  
 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 Sherman's advance.  
 The Sentries arrangements are different  
 than at Andersonville or Miller, 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 arrange-  
 ments, to go over the Stockade while  
 the Sentries 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 are  
 going around the Clouds passed away  
 and the Moon shone Bright and Clear,  
 and that stoped 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 P.A. Co. 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 21<sup>st</sup> they brought  
 some Medicine, and gave us \$160 dollars in  
 Comfd, to buy provisions with, and  
 told us they would send a Box of provisions,  
 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> Shermans was reported  
 17 Miles from Blackville, S.C., on the 29<sup>th</sup>  
 they drove us all over the creek and  
 Comtd us again, a few new prisoners  
 came in reported Shermans coming  
 up through South Carolina,  
 about this time Dennis Tucker sick with  
 a fever as was Ambrose Peck and Ayer.



We had a little medicine that Rose sent us and  
 the Boys gave us that, and that was all the  
 one or medicines we had, before this we had  
 been putting up a pole to get out through  
 the Hospital, and Spinkings had get detailed  
 to work there, and on the morning of the  
 10<sup>th</sup> of February he came to me and said the  
 time had come, and that Henry, Height,  
 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 get 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 a  
 sick but Clark Oger as as we called him  
 Sully 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  
 Pick was dead one morning, but was  
 mistaken and Pick finally got home, and  
 now lives in Chant Au, Eugene Davis also  
 come 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,  
 and being sick of course our rations accumulated  
 and when we got up we had a large stack on hand  
 but we were nothing but skeletons, during the winter  
 the handle had get broken off my cup, that I had  
 used to issue rations and do the most of my  
 cooking in at Andersonville so I gave up  
 a great of our surplus, Cow pens, I put in  
 switches, 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 14<sup>th</sup> the 1<sup>st</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> the 2-3 and 9<sup>th</sup> thousands were ordered out and sent off. Pete Bussinger and some of our Boys went with them the fellows being back as sick on the 17<sup>th</sup> all but the sick were taken out, and started for some other Bull pens. We still hung back thinking Sherman might get to us before they could move us, but in the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> they came in and drove us out and it was a hard looking crowd we were. But half of us could walk, but they made them crawl or get along in some shape by knocking them with sticks or picking 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 Deaths 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 Sutter one Lashmore formerly from Baltimore his shanty was built up against the outside of the Stockade, and a fence built from the wall 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 share for  
 a fellow to get out, there were three fellows  
 that were helping the Suttles, that were prisoners  
 but had taken the ~~oath~~ 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  
 Cashmere the Suttles before the war, they  
 had at one time tented and lived with  
 Little Bob Macclard, and he was well acquainted  
 with them. Just before we left Florence  
 the infamous Rebel General Wincker, who  
 had charge of all the Rebel prisons in the  
 South, and who was responsible for all the  
 suffering we underwent, died, and Cashmere  
 the Suttles of the Prison, went in with his  
 body for burial, where I don't know it  
 appeared he was an old friend of the Wincker  
 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,  
 you I tell you there was a great rush to  
 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 Cape Fear river, about  
 noon on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Macclard and I stood in  
 the class 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 cured Chicken.  
 I should have said that Worthington had  
 got permission of the Reb Officer in charge  
 of us and become 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.  
~~So~~ we at once commenced taking care  
 of the goods 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 got 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 matching for the Mulatto,  
 he did not come the river was swarming  
 with Rafts 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 did not see and said nothing, on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 they 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 Malatta and he said it was impossible to set out or cross 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 warehouse or two, so there was no use trying to go down the river, we did not cross in the same place of the night before but with our eyes and ears open, there was a lot of troops crossed the river, Intensely quietly and silently, 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 off and  
 the boys in Blue. I had forgotten to say  
 that the day before the 20<sup>th</sup> the last of  
 the Prisoners from Florence were  
 brought over the river, and out over  
 half of them could walk, they were  
 crawling along on their hands and  
 knees, and being picked and shooed  
 along with the Bayonets of the guards,  
 I stood in 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 Wilton  
 night, came down with ~~provisions~~  
 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  
 fast 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 ~~burnt up~~ burned  
 up a number of the poor fellows  
 that were too weak to get out,  
 on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> we got our  
 Breakfast, and then looked around  
 went out on some of the streets, to  
 see what we could see, I had a Reel over  
 Coat and my hair was long as was my



one  
and  
to buy  
out of  
it over  
near  
and  
homed  
needs  
them  
by Bant  
is I  
at to  
Wilm  
~~is~~  
to  
us do  
the  
its  
us  
sure  
at that  
to break  
it I  
follows  
follows  
skirts  
I can  
it fire  
ned  
lens  
ten  
and  
the  
over  
my

Beard and I looked as nice like a kid as  
could be. and I talked with lots of them  
I thought I was one of them and later in a  
day I claimed to belong to the 18<sup>th</sup> Va  
Cavalry. I got to talking with a couple  
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  
prisoner and they told me to get hid that  
night, as our troops would be in town  
the next morning. They said they were  
of the war, and that the Dumb Confederates  
was gone up. They took me in water  
to a saloon and gave me a drink of beer  
that they had \$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 I would be all right. I have always  
thought those boys in grateful remembrance for  
their kindness. During the forenoon of the 21<sup>st</sup>  
men by the name of J. S. Sanders brought  
worthington. all the goods and took away  
that was of any account, except a lot of boxes  
of biscuits and empty dacks, which we filled up  
and continued to watch. Sanders inquired  
of us if we were not Yankee prisoners, we  
told him we were, he says you message to  
him until after dark, then slide out one  
one come down main street to my house  
I will hide you for your forces will be here  
the morning. So we kept shady, did not  
stand around together but kept good watch  
each other. About four o'clock a train  
came down into the depot, and was soon  
with passengers. Among the rest were



The Rebel General Paragge, 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 beid  
 we had no intention of escaping, he says you  
 had a job the first night we were here, and  
 have had ~~a job~~ 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 see a good way 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  
~~careless~~ quietly, well we stood around  
 until about dark, they were burning Uddells  
 ware houses, piled 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  
 Rebel Officers, came into the depot and  
 lived the duck, I see the fires and I see  
 that all government stores are 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  
 did not, so one by one we slipped out and  
 went down main street, until we came  
 to a large Building known as the  
Hammers 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 kept our hands and passed  
 on. We had to crawl up under the roof  
 through a scuttle or men hole, the rest  
 of the boys got up all right but I had to  
 be helped. was very weak and had on us  
 of my legs to shake 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 the  
 army, but they did not suspect we  
 were up there, and we were not disturbed  
 I duct on a jaice about 8 inches thick and  
 my feet on another, and had to rub them  
 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 morn-  
 ing. Sanders wife came and handed up  
 some biscuit and a coffee pot full of hot  
 Ryd Coffee. That helped us and we were  
 more than contented. Just after day  
 light she came and said James the  
 Genkies are in town, come down,  
 Sanders went down but said to  
 us you stay here awhile she dont  
 know much cant tell a Genkies from  
 anybodies else. in a few minutes he  
 came swimming back telling 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 Varuncas 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 the hall, Sanders took us down stairs and into a room where 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 our troops except a small squad of Cavalry in town yet, and we went up to the depot, got a small and cart and the way we carried stuff down to Sanders was a cart, we must have taken of different articles and packed in his cellar more than a thousand dollars worth, when the Provost Marshall got in and stopped us, after that we broke into a Signer's horse house and rolled out several barrels of Signer's Runkel's the heads in and set them in the middle of the street



And when our Dragoonry began to march  
 in they would open ranks, and each  
 fellow would get a cub pull, it was the  
 22<sup>nd</sup> of February and we thought it would  
 be well enough 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 miser-  
 able starvation and suffering that no tongue  
 can tell, nor can anyone describe it  
 with the pen, I must free once more and  
 knew that I should soon see the hills of old  
 Cullman again, as we stood by the  
 side of the street and our troops were  
 marching along they thought at first  
 that we were Rebels, I had taken off my  
 Rebel arm 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 flock  
 around us, called up four fellows and  
 were so sorry for us, and begged we had  
 got away, that we were really upset for  
 a while. I went into the mess house  
 and got in a set of scales and was weigh-  
 ed at 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 pile  
 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 but I, when I got up the  
 next morning I must be drunk because

it  
 that  
 the  
 that  
 of  
 many  
 we  
 looked  
 and  
 with  
 them,  
 each  
 you  
 leaving  
 and  
 into  
 several  
 some  
 felt  
 about  
 all the  
 down  
 at a  
 it  
 a  
 the  
 the  
 tables  
 a  
 honest  
 were  
 all  
 and  
 out



hardly walk, and my hurt & received  
in getting down out of the Guard 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 Mr Sanders until the  
25<sup>th</sup> when I <sup>took</sup> the first chance, and started  
for Gods Country as we used to call it on  
a small propeller with about 800 other  
sick Ex-prisoners, and arrived at Annapolis  
on the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 in a new suit of clothes, I  
tell you they felt good after wearing our  
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  
knivesack and tin cup, he said all right  
and then and my <sup>dirty</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> got two months pay  
and our return 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 good  
sars, Greenbacks in our pockets, but  
those same Greenbacks were the cause of  
the death of a great many poor fellows,  
they used no more imprisonment than them



they all in prison, but bought all manner  
 of stuff and filled themselves up with it  
 and soon died, hundreds of them went that  
 way. I have had good provisions since  
 the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, but all not care 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 to all in prison,  
 I have forgotten to say that we thought we  
 were the only ones that were hid in Belgium  
 town, but during the day of the 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 Kells got in such  
 a hurry that they abandoned all out and  
 they worked themselves back into our lines,  
 on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March I got a furlough for  
 30 days and I started for home, and  
 arrived in Cattaraugus County on Sunday  
 the 13<sup>th</sup> and I tell you I was a happy  
 fellow; I did not think that any one  
 cared much for me; but in less than half  
 an hour, every man woman and child in  
 the Village of Vidsville, were there to see  
 me. This my friends confirms my  
 Experience in those awful prisons,  
 that is in one sense, I have not told  
 the half, and to copy anyone that was  
 there, to tell or write the half of the  
 suffering and privation that was under-  
 gone by the Prisoners confined there,  
 I have read several years ago McDougals  
 Book on Vidsville, and that does not  
 nor can I 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 Duff. 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 Gods truth every word of it.  
 I had expected when I got home to meet  
 Delia Doring as I thought a great deal of  
 him, but learned with sorrow that he died  
 just as he got into the prisoned land,  
 My tent mate and companion at  
 Florence. Little Bob Woodard as I always  
 call him, lives in the town of Frank Smith,  
 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 truest  
 hearted men I ever knew, and is I am  
 happy to say associated with me as a  
 member of S. C. Mages Post 232 G. A. R. and  
 also in the Expressions of our association  
 of this County.

And now there is scattered  
 over this whole Broad land of ours,  
 several thousand men that were prison-  
 ers of war, and kept in these 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  
 sufferings 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?