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Cattaraugus Freeman - Ellicottville, Cattaraugus Co. N. Y.
Thurs.- Aug. 18, 1864

Letter From Surgeon Van Aernam

We are under many obligations to Mrs. A. M. Van Aernam for the following interesting letter from her husband:

Aug. 3, 1864

We were as much surprised to-day as we should have been had one risen from the dead and appeared among us, by the return of Sidney Moore, of Company D, who was captured at Rocky Faced Ridge, May 8th, and borne on the reports as missing. We all thought that our missing in that engagement were all killed; but "Sid." brings us the welcome news that Corporal Thomas R. Aldrich and private Orzo C. Greely, Company B, (both reported killed,) are (alive?) and well, but prisoners-of-war—and that all our missing of that engagement are alive and well, and in the hands of the "Rebs" at Andersonville, Ga.; to wit: Reuban Ray, Co. F; Russell Lawrence and George Baldwin, Co. C; Jefferson Goodman, Co. A; Charles Whitney, Co. I—and one other whose (name?) he does not recollect—but thinks it is either Charles F. Allen, Co. B, reported missing, or Serg't Thomas S. Willis, Co. H, reported killed. And quite as strange a thing as one could (well?) conceive of, one Hiram Lockwood, Co. I., who was wounded, and his wound dressed at the field hospital after dark, managed some way to get picked up by the "rebs" the next morning, although their lines were full three quarters of a mile from the hospital. He was slightly wounded, and was well when "Sid" left Andersonville. It seems from his account that all our prisoners in rebel hands are (at?) that point now, the ones from the Army of the Potomac, from Banks army, from -----, from Charleston and Florida, -----, N. C., as well as from Sherman's army. He says there are about 27,000 (confined?) there now, and that 3048 had died there since the "institution" opened on the 27th of February last.

He saw our boys who were captured at Gettysburg last (Summer?) -----Serg't A. M. Keller, Loren Phillips, John (Hogg?), John Felch, O. E. Stringham, George (Bassett?), and William Jones, all of Co. D., and many others of other Companies ^{whose names he does not recollect.} They were generally well (though?) somewhat scorbutic and debilitated. And among others from our County, of (recent?) capture, he saw little Gid. Searl. He (Gid?) looked "as tough as a brick," he says, and appeared well and tolerably cheerful. John Hogg was also quite well.

Please have these (facts?) published in our papers at once as it will relieve many a sad heart to hear this glad news. Andersonville is a military prison near (Americus?) ----- about 70 or 80 miles south of ----- (could be Macon, Ga.?)

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"Sid." was detailed to work on a bakery as a carpenter, was (frequently?) outside the stockades, and (escaped?) the night of the 8th of July, and fell in with some of McCook's cavalry on a raid about thirty miles south of Atlanta on the (afternoon?) of the 28th of July. In the twenty days (he?) had traveled in an enemy's country the nearest possible way, 175 miles. He had actually traveled twice that distance, as he had to avoid roads and go round-about-ways to avoid scouts and pickets. He traveled mostly in the night. His story is like a romance. What little food he got was furnished him by the darkies along the way. We are all quite well. Weather warm, but not intolerably so, with frequent showers.

H. Van Aernam