Prisoners-As-Shields and Other Horrors of War as Experienced by James A. Penfield Part II

A Shameful Chapter

The story of the "600"—whether Union or Confederate—has been the subject of innumerable Civil War articles and books, although some postal historians are unaware of this stain on the records of both the Union and Confederate high commands.

BY PATRICIA A. KAUFMANN

The command hung on and harassed the enemy in the vicinity of Gettysburg until, in the early morning of July 3, the regiment took a position supporting Elder's U.S. Battery. Lieutenant Elder wanted to know if, "John Hammond, and his famous New York troopers were with him," to brave the most daring deeds. At the base of Big Round Top, just before Pickett made his famous charge, the 5th New York charged over ground today deemed impassable by horse, desperately assaulted the enemy's infantry and, to a large degree, diverted Lee's forces.

Penfield continued the daily entries in his diary during the Siege of Gettysburg and talks about the rapid cannonading, Rebs falling back, fierce fighting, and more.

The 5th New York made a brief stop in Gettysburg on July 4th for supplies before pursuing Rebel troops headed South. On Saturday, July 4, 1863, Penfield writes in his diary, "Leave Gettysburgh after feeding + move back thru Emmetsburg. Rebs have left & gone to Fairfield. Roads mudy & bad-Chaplain Boudry Captured by Jenkins Cav. Cross South Mt. at Monterey-Overtake Rebs Train & destroy part of it-taking 1,200 prisoners."

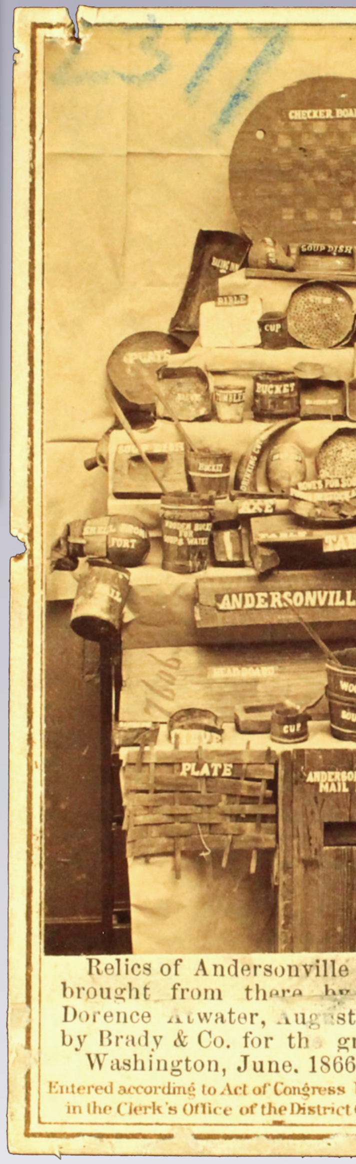
While defending a gun battery on July 6, 1863, Captain Penfield was struck with a saber to the head, which caused severe bleeding and damage to the underlying skull. He would later record that pieces of skull were seeping out of his wounds. He was captured near Hagerstown, Maryland, and after traveling through Martinsburg, West Virginia; (near) Hopewell Church, Winchester, Cedar Creek, New Market, Harrisonburg, and (near) Staunton, Virginia, he was ultimately delivered to Libby Prison in Richmond on July 18, 1863. He would remain there for approximately the next ten months. (Figure 23)

The following is Penfield's entry for the day that forever changed the course of his life, "Monday, July 6, 1863. Move to Hagerstown when we come on the Reb Train & found they occupied the town. Brought our Artillery in position & sent out skirmishers-18th Penn.

(*Turn the page...*)

Figure 23. Libby Prison, a former food warehouse turned Confederate prison that gained an infamous reputation for the overcrowded and harsh conditions.

Figure 24. Richard R. "Dick" Turner, who was universally despised for his cruel treatment of prisoners at Libby Prison.



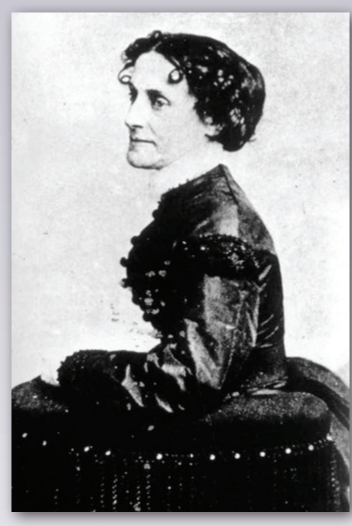


Figure 25. Elizabeth Van Lew, director of a Union spy network in Richmond.

Figure 26. Libby Prison horrors as painted in 1863 by David Gilmour Blythe

"Chd. through the town & nearly a squadron captured. After holding our positions about 2 hours we're ordered to fall back towards Wms Port about 2 miles from Hagerstown. They charged on our gun-Co H charged-we got off with the gun. My horse shot & several others, rec'd saber cuts & made prisoner with Pierce, Baker, Dunlap, Johnson (McGinnis & Winters were killed). We were marched back to rear. 2 Brigades of Stewart (J.E.B. Stuart) Cavalry and 2 Batteries & Longstreet Div. with train."

First Stop, Libby Prison

Penfield, who was obviously mobile in spite of his saber wound, arrived at Libby on July 18, 1863. He had to have had a ferocious "headache" but does not complain in his diary. He logged that they, "Arrive(d) at 5-0-clock p.m. & march(ed) through the city to 'Libby Prison' to the delight of the Citizens-pass the search & all money over 10 or 15 $ taken from us-Also all Haversacks, canteens, Gum Blanket & c. One Lt. struck in the face by an Oficial (D. Turner) for saying he had no right to take a piece of a shell from him-Escorted to our quarters in warehouse."

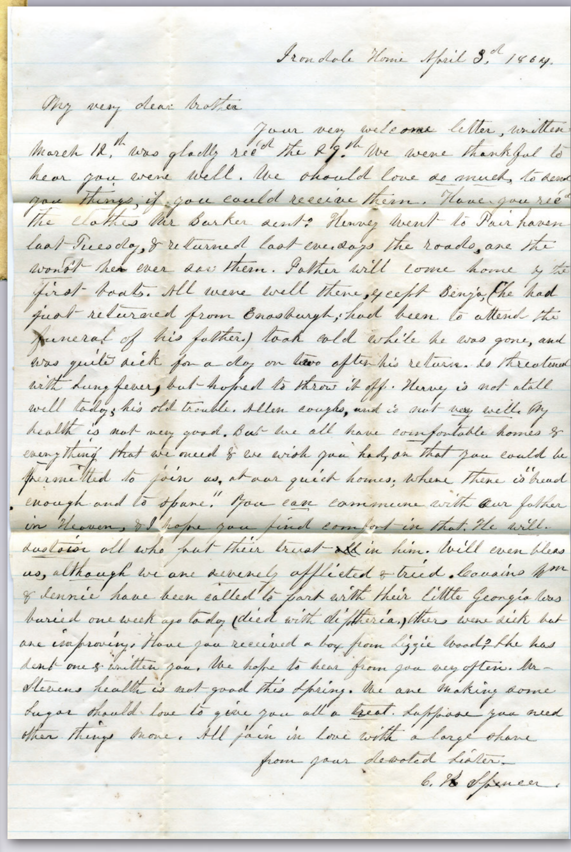
The "D. Turner" noted in Penfield's diary was Richard R. "Dick" Turner, no relation to Libby's prison commandant, Major Thomas Pratt Turner. Dick Turner, shown in Figure 24, was universally despised and singled out by U.S. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, in November 1865, for investigation into the criminal treatment of prisoners.

At Libby, prisoners were quickly punished for any violation of regulations, including standing too close to the windows; some were shot by guards. Elizabeth Van Lew was a Richmond socialite who lived six blocks from the prison and directed the city's Union spy network; she monitored conditions there. "To 'lose prisoners' was an expression much in vogue," Van Lew wrote, "and we all understood that it meant cold blooded murder." (Figure 25)

Because Libby was the headquarters for the CSA Military Prisons, all prisoners were taken there before being transferred to other prisons within the Confederacy. Throughout the war, Libby was plagued by overcrowding, disease, and hunger. Conditions worsened toward the end of 1862, when prisoner exchanges between the Union and Confederate armies slowed and even halted. As the number of inmates increased, so did deprivation and disease. Prisoners were supposed to receive the same rations as Confederate soldiers in the field, but by 1863, rampant inflation and food shortages in the Confederacy made that impossible.

A depiction of conditions at Libby Prison is shown in Figure 26, an oil painting done in 1863 by David Gilmour Blythe. Blythe was a self-taught American artist (1815-1865); this is one of his most well-known paintings. Blythe himself did not serve in the military. He died of complications of alcoholism.

Figure 27. Incoming cover to Capt. James A. Penfield, Prisoner of War in Libby, Richmond, Virginia, from his sister in Crown Point, New York, April 5. [1864]



Irondale Home April 3d 1864.

My very dear brother

Your very welcome letter, written March 12th was gladly rec'd the 29th. We were thankful to hear you were well. We should love so much, to send you things, if you could receive them. Have you rec'd the clothes Mr Barker sent? Henry went to Fairhaven last Tuesday, & returned last eve. says the roads, are the worst he ever saw them. Father will come home by the first boats. All were well there, except Benj'a, (he had just returned from Enosburgh, had been to attend the funeral of his father) took cold while he was gone, and was quite sick for a day or two after his return. Is threatened with lung fever, but hoped to throw it off. Henry is not at all well today; his old trouble. Allen coughs, and is not very well. My health is not very good. But we all have comfortable homes & everything that we need & we wish you had, or that you could be permitted to join us, at our quiet homes, where there is "bread enough and to spare." You can commune with our father in Heaven, & I hope you find comfort in that. He will sustain all who put their trust in him. Will even bless us, although we are severely afflicted & tried. Cousins Wm & Jennie have been called to part with their little Georgia was buried one week ago today (died with diptheria,) others were sick but are improving. Have you received a box from Lizzie Wood? She has sent one & written you. We hope to hear from you very often. Mr Stevens health is not good this Spring. We are making some sugar should love to give you all a treat. Suppose you need other things more. All join in love with a large share

from your devoted sister.

C. H. Spencer.

Figure 28. Letter to Capt. Penfield from one of his sisters, Carrie Spencer.

Figure 29. Outgoing cover from Capt. James A. Penfield, Prisoner of War in Libby Prison at Richmond, Virginia, to his future wife, Elizabeth (Lizzie) Wood, Boston, May 10 [1864].

The conditions at Libby became fodder for outrage and propaganda in the North. On November 28, 1863, the New York Times published a story headlined "Horrors of Richmond Prisons" that contained a statement released by a group of surgeons who, until recently, had been confined at the prison. "The prevailing diseases [at Libby] are diarrhoea, dysentery and typhoid pneumonia," they reported. "Of late the percentage of deaths has greatly increased, the result of causes that have been long at work—such as insufficient food, clothing and shelter, combined with that depression of spirits brought on so often by long confinement."

Despite the hardships, prisoners published for a brief time a sometimes irreverent newsletter called the Libby Chronicle. Written by inmates during the summer of 1863, the Chronicle advertised itself as "Devoted to Facts and Fun" and was read aloud each Friday morning by its editor, Louis N. Beaudry, Chaplain of the 5th New York Cavalry. The publication often interspersed humorous limericks with writing that addressed the prison's harsh conditions. Such poems helped keep up morale among the prisoners.

An ironic ode to lice, printed in the Chronicle's first issue, was titled "Homer Modernized": "Of Libby's rebel lice, to us the direful spring / Of woes and pains unnumbered, O ye muses, sing."

Issue number two included a poem entitled "Castle Thunder," (another Richmond prison) with an amusing perspective on prison life: "We have eighteen kinds of food, though 'twill stagger your belief, Because we have bread, beef and soup, then bread, soup and beef; Then we sep'rate around with 'bout twenty in a group, And thus we get beef, soup and bread, and beef, bread and soup; For dessert we obtain, though it costs us nary red, Soup, bread and beef, (count it well) and beef and soup and bread."

An incoming prison cover to Penfield from his sister, Carrie Spencer, shown in Figure 27, is addressed Care of Maj. Genl. [Benjamin "Beast"] Butler, Fortress Monroe, the flag of truce exchange point. The original enclosure is headed "Irondale Home April 3d, 1864" with news from home. (Figure 28)

An outgoing prison cover and accompanying letter from Penfield to his future wife, Elizabeth Wood, are shown in Figures 29 and 30. The cover is addressed to her at 20 Charles Street, Boston, Mass. It bears both a handstamped encircled DUE 6 rate marking, as well as a manuscript penciled "6 Due."

The matching letter is headed "Richmond, Va, Libby Prison April 2d 1864" in which he states that he received, through the authorities, cranberries, peaches, sardines, turkey, tamarinds, olives, pickles and catsup as well as tea and cakes and two "Atlantics." He also mentions receiving a box of books, which have been a great source of pleasure and enjoyment through the long winter. It is signed simply "From Cousin J. A. Penfield."

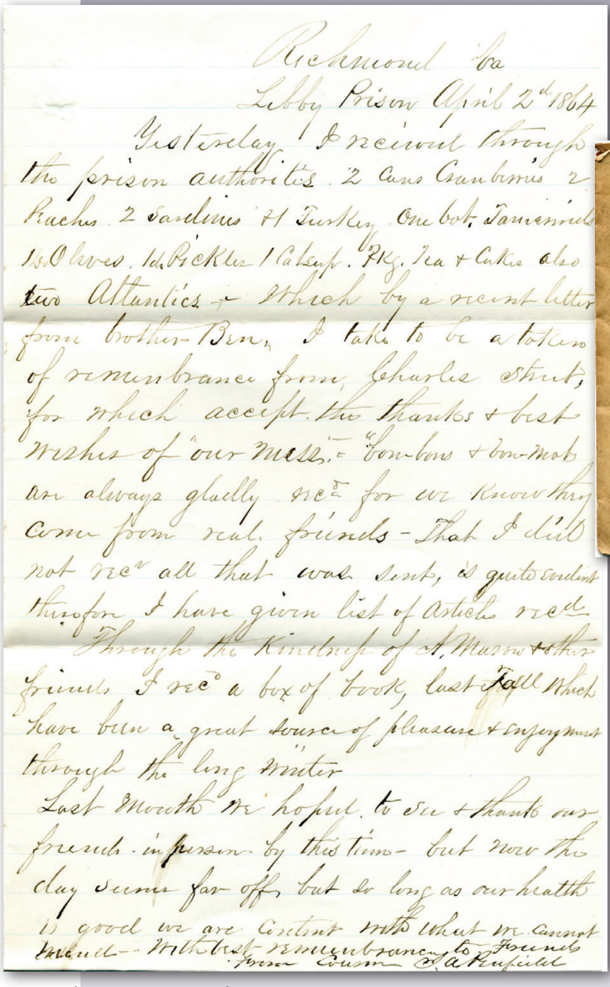

Richmond Va
Libby Prison April 2d 1864
Yesterday I received through the prison authorities 2 Cans Cranberries 2 Peaches 2 Sardines & 1 Turkey One bot. Tamarinds 1 b Olives 1 b Pickles 1 Catsup. Pkg. Tea & Cakes also two Atlantics & which by a recent letter from brother Ben, I take to be a token of remembrance from Charles Street, for which accept the thanks & best wishes of "our mess." Bon-bons & bon-mots are always gladly rec'd for we know they come from real friends - That I did not rec' all that was sent, is quite evident therefore I have given list of Articles rec'd.
Through the kindness of A. Mason & other friends I rec'd a box of books last Fall which have been a great source of pleasure & enjoyment through the long winter
Last Month we hoped to see & thank our friends in person by this time - but now the day seems far off, but so long as our health is good we are content with what we cannot mend -- With best remembrance to friends from cousin J A Penfield

Figure 30. Letter from Penfield to his cousin and future wife, Lizzie. They were married in 1866.

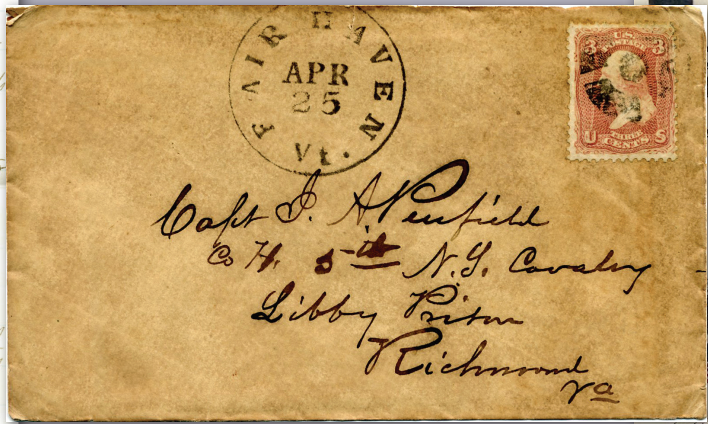

FAIR HAVEN APR 25 Vt.
Capt J. A Penfield
Co H. 5th N.Y. Cavalry
Libby Prison
Richmond
Va

Figure 31. Incoming cover to Capt. James A. Penfield, while at Libby Prison from his brother-in-law, Dr. Benjamin S. Nichols, married to his sister, Lucy.

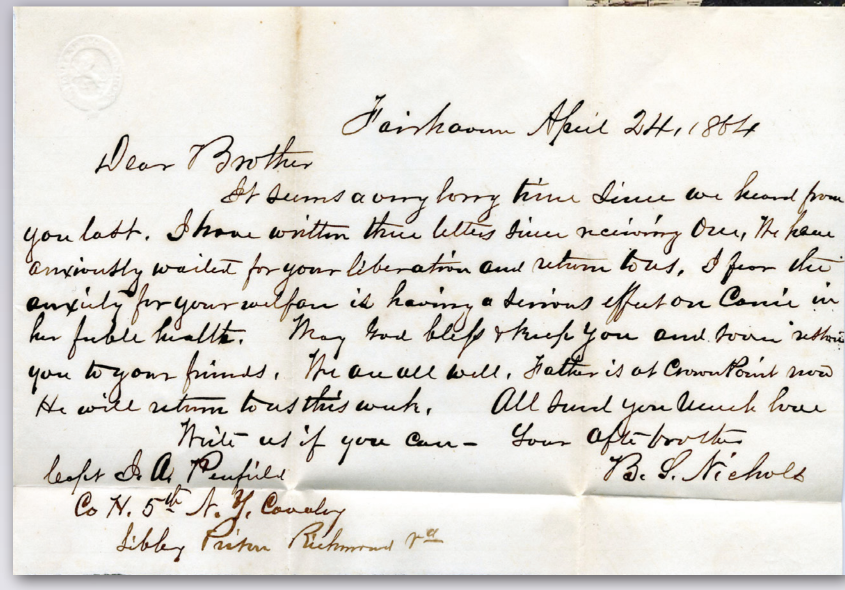

Fairhaven April 24, 1864
Dear Brother
It seems a very long time since we heard from you last. I have written three letters since receiving One, we have anxiously waited for your liberation and return to us, I fear the anxiety for your welfare is having a serious effect on Carrie in her feeble health. May God bless & keep you and soon return you to your friends. We are all well, Father is at Crown Point now He will return to us this week. All send you much love
Write us if you can - Your Affe brother
B. S. Nichols
Capt J. A. Penfield
Co H. 5th N.Y. Cavalry
Libby Prison Richmond Va

Figure 32. Letter to Capt. Penfield from his brother-in-law, Dr. B. S. Nichols.

Another incoming cover and letter from Fair Haven, Vermont, were received shortly thereafter. The letter is dated April 24, 1864, and addressed to "Dear Brother" from B.S. Nichols. Nichols was Dr. Benjamin Smith Nichols, Penfield's brother-in-law who was married to his sister, Lucy.

An earlier diary entry on August 29, 1863, notes that, "My name was called for a letter. It was from B.S.N. with $10 enclosed which is to be deposited with the A.Q.M. (Assistant Quarter Master) Capt. Morfit-with information that it could not come up-The adjutant tells us we are to rec no more "Greenbacks. Wrote to Dr. Nichols." (Figures 31 and 32)

In his diary, although in brief entries, Penfield described prison life in great detail—the boredom, the vermin, the crowded rooms with specific numbers of inhabitants, the harsh conditions, deprivations, and starvation rations in precise detail (there wasn't much to say with so little food), the wounded, the sick and the dead soldiers by name, escape plans with names of specific escapees, incidents with Rebel soldiers, prisoners leaving for "Yankeeland," areas being cleaned by "contrabands" (Negroes), important news events of the day, descriptions of searches, incidents such as the "accidental shooting" of a Confederate officer who got too close to a window inside and was apparently mistaken for a prisoner, arrivals and departures of prisoners, letters sent and received, general health (sick & feverish, feet in hot water, ginger tea, chilly with diarrhea), national news such as the sinking of the CSS Alabama by the USS Kearsage (this news from a train of prisoners passing through town), and so much more.

The Penfield diary is a blessing to historians and postal historians alike. Without access to Penfield's diary, I would not have been able to determine in exactly which prisons Penfield was incarcerated. There were often multiple options such as in Charleston, which had a half-dozen prison camps.

A Tour of the South - Nearly Two Years of Rebel "Hospitality"

Penfield spent a time in the following Southern prisons (in order of incarceration, per his diary entries) – some just "passing through" and others for extended periods of time: Libby, Richmond, Virginia; Danville Prison #1, Virginia; Camp Oglethorpe, Macon, Georgia; City Jail, Charleston, South Carolina; Marine Hospital, Charleston; Camp Sorghum and Camp Asylum, both at Columbia, South Carolina; and ultimately Camp Parole, Annapolis, Maryland, where he was initially stationed at the beginning of the war and from where he was finally discharged from service. Although he was out of pages in his diary by the beginning of 1865, we know from other sources that he passed through Charlotte, Raleigh and Goldsboro, North Carolina, on his way to Camp Parole.

The next portion of our story begins with a slight detour to explain the

Figure 33. Maj. Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore, the Federal commander in the Charleston area during August 1863.

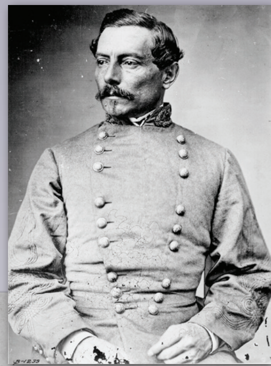


Figure 34. Confederate General Pierre Beauregard.

Figure 38. Fort Sumter.

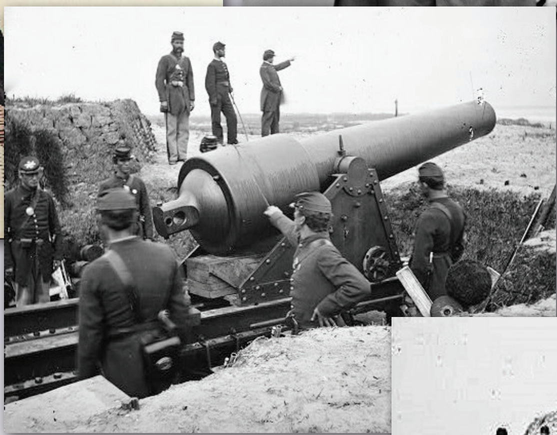


Figure 36. Parrott cannon on Morris Island at Battery Chatfield, aimed at Charleston. The Parrott rifle was patented by Robert Parker Parrott, at the West Point Foundry at Cold Spring, New York, in 1861.

Figure 37. "Swamp Angel," the 300-pound Union rifle of the Marsh Battery on Morris Island. Yes, it is still a "rifle" as is any gun with spiral grooves inside the barrel.

case of Southern prisoners held in Union prisons and their counterparts, the Union prisoners held in Southern prisons (Penfield et al). Penfield would be shuttled from prison to prison throughout the South, the most horrifying experience likely being one of the prisoners kept as human shields under fire of their own guns due to what is still and ever will be a "dirty word" – politics.

"The Immortal 600" – Southern Prisoners

On August 20, 1864, a chosen group of six-hundred Confederate prisoners-of-war, all officers, were transferred from their confinement at Fort Delaware Prison to federally occupied Hilton Head, South Carolina. The number is really closer to 550, but they are still referred to as the "600" in popular lore. The harsh and unusual conditions of their imprisonment inspired one of the captives, John O. Murray, to record his experiences in the 1905 book The Immortal Six-Hundred. The name he gave the group stuck, and today they are still referred to as the "Immortal 600."

The number disparity is because forty of the prisoners were too sick to be placed on Morris Island and were sent to Beaufort Hospital instead. The purpose of the move from Fort Delaware was to place these men in a cramped stockade built on a narrow strip of sand in front of Union artillery positions - to literally use these prisoners as human shields from the bombardment of their own Confederate artillery in Charleston Harbor.

The prisoners were landed on Morris Island at the mouth of Charleston Harbor where they remained in an open 1½ acre pen under the shelling of friendly artillery fire. Three died on the starvation rations issued as retaliation for the dreadful condition of the Union prisoners held at Andersonville, Georgia, and Salisbury, North Carolina. Twenty-one covers are recorded from there and three to there.

"The Union 600" – Union Prisoners

"The Union 600" is also a misnomer. There were two groups of six hundred Union POWs sent from Macon, Georgia. The first six hundred went directly to Charleston; the second group went to Savannah for a short while and was then sent to Charleston. It is virtually impossible to separate the two groups.

Cover totals for the two groups as follows: nine from Charleston City Jail; three from Marine Hospital (used to confine, not to treat the sick); and twenty-three from and six to Roper Hospital. In Charleston, but building unknown, there are fifteen covers from and eight to (the letters to here were probably forwarded to Columbia, but this is not certain); and three from Workhouse.

All figures regarding numbers of covers recorded are from Galen Harrison's 1997 book on American Civil War prison mail, although undoubtedly some numbers have changed in intervening years since the book was written.

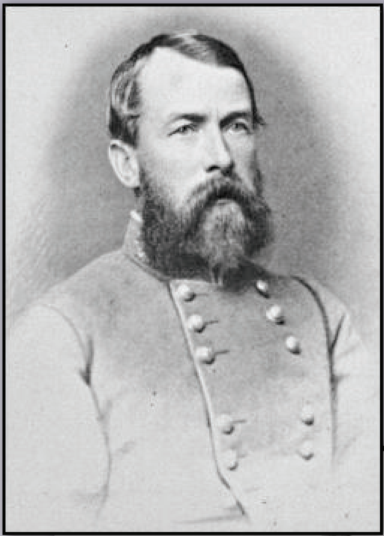


Figure 39. Confederate Army Major General Samuel Jones.

Figure 40. Charleston Battery damaged by shell fire.

Figure 42. Charleston O'Connor House ruins.

Figure 41. St. John and St. Finbar churches in Charleston, damaged by bombardment.

The Origin of Misfortune

The beginning of this deplorable situation began the previous summer. On August 21, 1863, Maj. Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore (Figure 33), the Federal commander in the Charleston area at the time, had sent a message to his Confederate counterpart, General P.G.T. Beauregard, informing him of the Union army's intention to fire into Charleston. He declared the city a military target due to its arsenal, which manufactured artillery shells, and its docks, which received supplies smuggled through the blockade. He informed Beauregard that the shelling would start sometime after midnight, August 22, 1863.

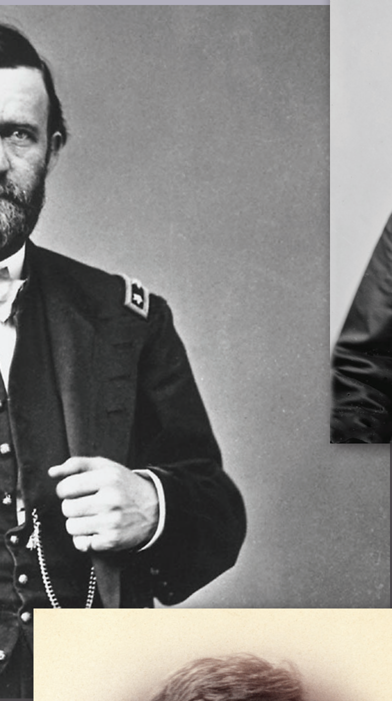
Beauregard (Figure 34) protested that he did not have time to evacuate the city of its non-combatants. Nevertheless, in the early hours the following morning, Federal mortars launched their deadly projectiles into both the residential and business areas of downtown Charleston. Most affluent residents quickly fled the city, but the poorer inhabitants had no choice but to remain to face the onslaught.

Figure 36 shows a Parrott cannon in place on Morris Island at Battery Chatfield, four miles across the harbor from the south end of the city. A giant 300-pound rifle nicknamed the "Swamp Angel," shown in Figure 37, hammered earsplitting shells into Charleston before dawn, signaling the beginning of a siege that would last 567 days. In January 1864 alone, 1,500 mortar shells were fired into the city. Fort Sumter (Figure 38), once the linchpin of the city's defenses, was being pounded into a pile of rubble, on the order of Union General Gillmore.

On April 20, 1864, Maj. Gen. Samuel Jones (Figure 39) arrived in Charleston to take command of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida from Beauregard, who had been reassigned to North Carolina. When Jones arrived in Charleston, the battered city had already endured eight months of bombardment. Though deaths from the shelling were few, the Federal artillery had caused irreparable destruction throughout the city, and very few buildings within Union cannon range escaped damage from shellfire. The streets were pockmarked with craters and littered with the bodies of unburied animals. Only weeds grew in the yards of what had once been lovely homes, and the bastion of Southern antebellum culture had been reduced to a scarred landscape. In a cheerless attempt at humor, remaining residents called the area most damaged by the federal guns the "Gillmore District." (Figures 40-42)

Shortly after the Southern change of command, the Union also assigned a new commander to Charleston. On May 26, 1864, Union Maj. Gen. John Gray Foster (Figure 43) replaced Gillmore as the head of the Department of the South. Foster realized that he lacked the means to successfully assault or outflank the massive defenses of the once charming harbor town, and settled in to continue the bombardment.

Lacking the manpower and resources to drive Foster's Yankees away, Confederate General Jones looked for immediate ways to alleviate the siege. He turned to drastic measures. On June 1, 1864, he requested of



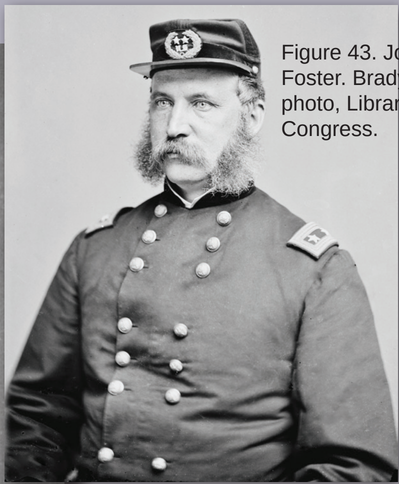


Figure 43. John. G. Foster. Brady-Handy photo, Library of Congress.

Figure 46. Union General William Tecumseh Sherman.

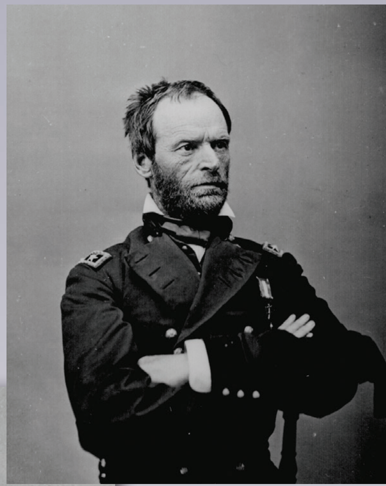


Figure 48. Union General Ulysses S. Grant, 1864.

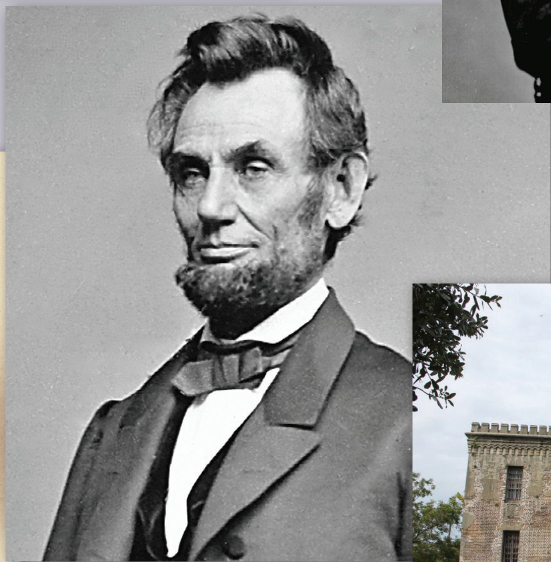


Figure 45. Union President Abraham Lincoln.

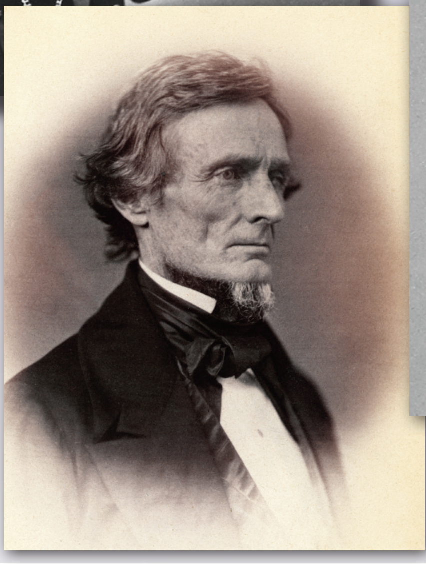


Figure 44. Confederate President Jefferson Davis, by Vannerson, 1859.

Figure 47. Charleston City Jail as it looks today.

General Braxton Bragg that fifty federal prisoners be sent to him to be "confined in parts of the city still occupied by civilians, but under the enemy's fire." President Jefferson Davis (Figure 44) approved his request, and orders were issued to move the ill-fated prisoners from Camp Oglethorpe in Macon, Georgia, to Charleston. There is one cover recorded from a Union General in the O'Connor House in Charleston.

The local newspaper, the Charleston Mercury, ran the following taunt, "For some time it has been known that a batch of Yankee prisoners, comprising the highest in rank now in our hands, were soon to be brought hither to share in the pleasures of the bombardment. These prisoners we understand will be furnished with comfortable quarters in that portion of the city most exposed to enemy fire. The commanding officer on Morris Island will be duly notified of the fact of their presence in the shelled district and if his batteries still continue at their wanton and barbarous work, it will be at the peril of the captive officers."

The fifty ill-fated Union officers, five of whom were brigadier generals, were confined in the south end of Charleston. Jones sent a note to Foster the day after their arrival to tell the Union general of their arrival and that they had been placed in "a part of the city occupied by non-combatants...I should inform you that it is a part of the city...for many months exposed to the fire of your guns."

Foster was furious and, as retaliation, requested that fifty Confederate prisoners, also all officers, be sent from the prison at Fort Delaware to be placed in front of the Union forts on Morris Island. He sent a letter to Jones under flag-of-truce in which he railed in heated terms, "You seek to defeat (our) effort(s), not by honorable means, but by placing unarmed and helpless prisoners under our fire." Of the fifty high ranking officers that preceded the "600," there are five covers recorded from the U.S.S. Dragoon and one to there.

In late June, both generals were under pressure to end the siege, but since they were losing troops to the front in Virginia, the impasse dragged on and the prisoners stayed put. As of April 1863, the federal government discontinued the practice of exchanging prisoners. Prior to that, a formal policy existed that prescribed how prisoner exchanges were to take place. The new uncompromising policy was designed to prevent soldiers from returning to the ranks of the Southern armies, as the Union Army concluded that the Confederates received the greater benefit from the practice. On the other hand, it caused rapid growth in the number of men in prisons of both sides.

President Lincoln (Figure 45) was apprised of the situation in Charleston and gave permission to Foster to make an exception to War Department policy and begin making arrangements for an exchange. On August 3, an agreement was worked out for the one hundred officers.

Just when it seemed that the prisoner dispute had been resolved, things took a turn that would place even more captives in harm's way. Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's (Figure 46) campaign in Georgia was

Figure 49. Andersonville Prison and a prison yard contemporary sketch at far right.

Figure 50. Roper Hospital, Charleston

Figure 51. Marine Hospital, Charleston, 1934. Library of Congress.

getting too close to the overcrowded Southern prison camp at Andersonville, and the Confederate government began to send hundreds of Federal prisoners to Charleston for safekeeping. Jones objected to the situation, arguing to no avail that it was "inconvenient and unsafe." Upon their arrival in Charleston, most of the Federals were confined to the Charleston City Jail (Figure 47) in the southeast part of the city directly in the line of fire from the mortars across the harbor.

Before long, the inmates included nearly six hundred officers and more than three hundred enlisted men, as well as local criminals and deserters from both sides. They arrived in waves. All were jammed into A-frame tents set up in the courtyard.

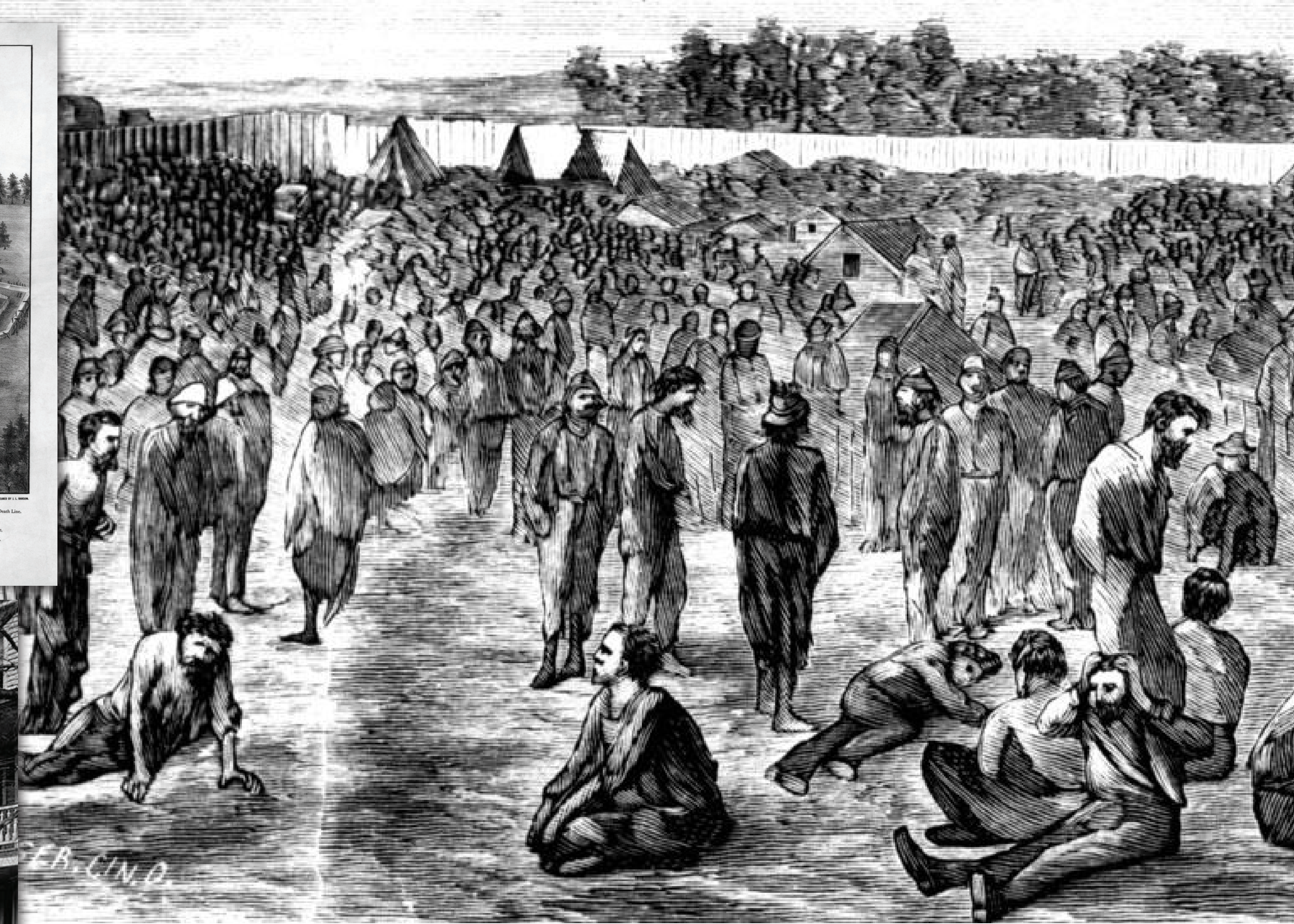
The full heat of high summer made the interior of the jail stifling, and yellow fever began to take a frightening toll. General Jones reacted to the outbreak of disease by issuing orders to his provost marshal to remove all of the sick and wounded prisoners who were able to travel and have them sent back to the prison at Andersonville. Furthermore, Union prisoners was poor and scarce; sanitation was nearly nonexistent. Most of the men were exposed to the elements around the clock under the constant fearsome crash of artillery.

Foster was incensed when he heard of the new prisoner shipments, thinking that they had also been sent to the city to serve as human shields. He wrote Jones that he would place Confederate officers under fire to retaliate. Construction began on a Union stockade in front of Battery Wagner on Morris Island and directly in the path of Southern artillery, and Foster ordered six hundred Confederate officers removed from Fort Delaware to be placed on Morris Island. The response of commanding officers on both sides had deteriorated to the level of a schoolyard squabble.

On August 20, the Federal Steamer Crescent City left Fort Delaware with its cargo of six hundred Confederate officers packed into the putrid hold like cattle and shipped south in the blistering summer sun. The prisoners remained on Crescent City near Hilton Head while the stockade on Morris Island was completed.

No Exchanges! On order of Lt. Gen. U.S. Grant

Jones was now anxious to make exchanges. The news of a pending deal reached the headquarters of Ulysses S. Grant. General Grant was a leading advocate to end exchanges. He fired off a letter to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton on August 21 demanding that Foster cease all dialogue with Confederate authorities, "Please inform General Foster that under no circumstances will he be authorized to exchange prisoners-of-war.



Exchange simply reinforces the enemy at once, whilst we do not get the benefit of those received for two or three months and lose the majority entirely." (Figure 48).

Penfield – From Richmond to Macon to Charleston Prisons

On Saturday, May 7, 1864, wrote in his diary, "Left Libby 1 o'clock am. At 9 ½ were Cared for. Dansville (Danville) 40 in a Close[d] freight Car-As many as could sit-in the car-reached Dansville-Sunday Morning at daylight."

The following day he recorded that they, "Arrived at Danville Va (2 Deep) after a Hard nights ride 500 Put into Prison on three floors-as thick & we can sleep one permitted to go out at a time-rations-corn Bread, Bacon & Soup-Not allowed to take the windows out."

The next few days were days of travel on foot and by rail, moving through Greensboro, "Challotte" (undoubtedly "Charlotte" with a Southern drawl as heard by Penfield's Northern ears), Columbia, Augusta and—ultimately—Macon, Georgia, where he noted they arrived on May 17, 1864, at Camp Oglethorpe (named for the founder of the State of Georgia, James Oglethorpe).

The next three months were spent in balmy Macon. His diary entries including, "escapes en mass." His May 28th entry notes, "At roll call all Squads are ordered into line to be Counted. A hole has been discovered, a spade is Missing & we get no Spade or Axe-Tabb says he shall bring in 20 armed guards & if we do not fall in promptly the stragler will be shot down." Captain W. Kemp Tabb was the commander at Macon.

By May 29, 1,120 officers were at Camp Oglethorpe, according to the diary. There are stories of escapes from there and other places such as Salisbury, or from the train cars. On June 14, he notes that Lt. Col. Hammond was wounded in the leg. His June 21 entry reports, "our men at Andersonville suffering almost beyond belief-60 to 70-dying per day, no blankets, no sinks, bad water & Camp mudy & crowded." (Figure 49)

Obviously some of what Penfield writes was also just rumor. For example, on July 20, 1864, he writes, "Gen. Grant reported dead?" At least he phrased it as a question. From the vantage point of history, we obviously know Grant did not die.

On July 22, 1864, Penfield notes that Lt. [Henry A.D.] Merritt has arrived from Libby Prison with 24 others. Merritt was a friend in the same regiment who was captured March 2, 1864, place not stated.

On July 28, 1864, he writes, "Left Macon 4 A.M.-Cr'd to Savannah think to Charleston." The following day, he records their arrival in Charleston and at daylight they were marched across the river through the city to the City Jail. In early August, Jim begins recording the continual rain of shells screaming and bursting all around them, "Shelling City right lively." One can only imagine what it must have been like to be in fear for your life night and day and helpless to do anything about it. He records those he knows of who were killed by the shelling.

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