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A History of Camp Douglas Illinois, Union Prison, 1861-1865

by
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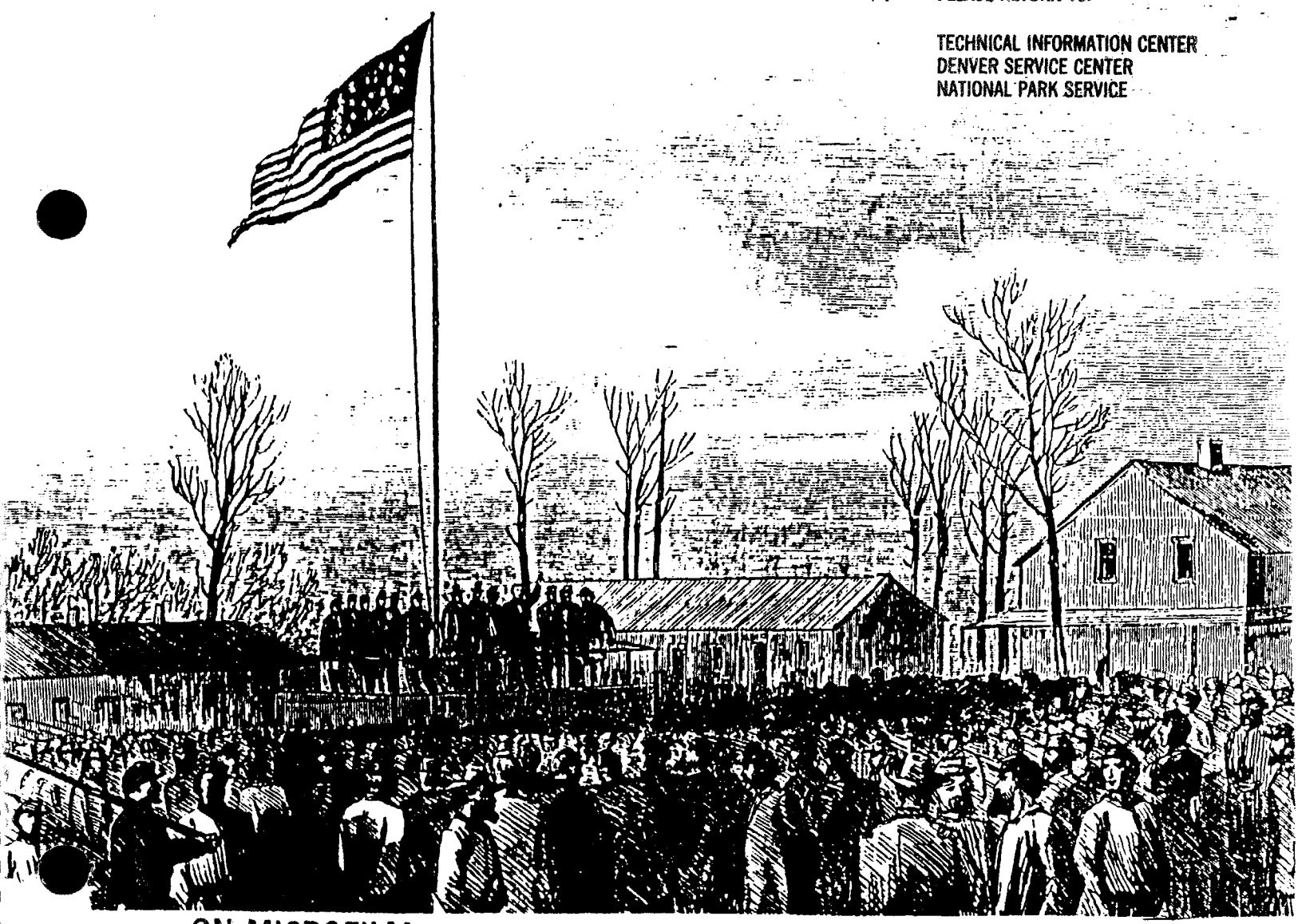

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service, Southeast Region

I. CAMP DOUGLAS AS A CAMP OF INSTRUCTION

A. War Spirit in Illinois

For the people of Chicago, the year 1861 would be an especially momentous one, The State was inflamed with war fever because the seven Southern states which withdrew from the Union and set up a separate, hostile government had now fired on the United States flag. By force, they took Fort Sumter, in Charleston, South Carolina, harbor. The South's response to President Abraham Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to quell the insurrection was the defection of four more Southern states.

In Springfield, Governor Richard Yates on April 16, three days after the Confederacy opened fire, issued his own call for 6,000 volunteers. The Illinois General Assembly exceeded the U.S. War Department's request to recruit six infantry regiments by authorizing the recruitment of ten.[1]

"But one sentiment prevails, and that is for war on traitors," declared The Chicago Tribune. United States flags flew from homes and shops all over the city. Country boys rushing to the city eager with thoughts of punishing the "traitors" by joining the army found highways and trains thronged with others like themselves. Outside the State Street Armory, headquarters for the Ellsworth Zouaves, a crowd was so dense potential enlistees could not get to the door. The first recruiting station opened on April 18 at the corner of Clark and Randolph Streets to raise enough men for a company, and in two days the quota was filled.[2]

In three short weeks 3,500 volunteered in 38 companies. Some elite companies required prospective applicants to obtain a written letter of recommendation.

Recruitment and organization of new troops raised in Chicago, as elsewhere, was inefficient. There existed, however, a tradition and framework to build upon. Moreover, militia companies were established community social organizations in antebellum Chicago. After sweeping all inter-city drill competitions, the Zouave Cadets

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[1] Victor Hicken, Illinois in the Civil War, (Urbana, 1966), pp.1-2. In tribute to the six Illinois regiments that served in the War with Mexico, Illinois began its numbering system by designating the first regiment raised as the 7th Illinois.

[2] The Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1861; John A. Page, "A University Volunteer," in Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War (New York, 1967), pp. 71-77, 79085; Harry M. Karlem, "Postal History of Camp Douglas, 1861-1865," The American Philatelist, Sept., 1979, p. 815.

of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth made a sensational nation-wide tour in 1859. Of the city's young men, most of the relocated New England "Yankee" portion belonged to the Chicago Light Artillery. There were many immigrants in Chicago then. The Scots made up the Highland Guard. The German community had founded several existing organizations, plus the newly-formed Union rifles, which advertised to recruits the opportunity of becoming sharpshooters with new British Enfield rifles. While many flocked there, the married and older Germans between 25 and 45 organized a reserve battalion of four companies.[3]

The Irish, meantime, held a mass meeting at North Market Hall on April 20, where the principle speaker was James A. Mulligan, an American-born Irishman who was captain of the Shields Guards. A notable city attorney and leader in the Irish community, Mulligan was destined to be a commandant at Camp Douglas. This night he spoke of an opportunity to unite the independent Irish volunteer companies into an "Irish Brigade." He needed recruits, he shouted. Three-hundred signed the enrollment list in the first hour and a half; 1,200 by the end of the week.[4]

It was not long before Chicago recruiting stations bore placards with rejection notices: "No more men wanted." Some would not be denied and left the state to enlist in outfits being raised in Kentucky or Missouri. In fact, the entire 9th Missouri was recruited from Illinois men. Following the rejection of Mulligan's Irish outfit because of full quotas, Mulligan went to Senator Stephen A. Douglas, on his death bed in the Fremont House, got a letter of recommendation and went to Washington personally, returning with an official order of acceptance.[5]

Union reverses in the summer of 1861 at Bull Run, and closer to home at Wilson's Creek in Missouri, seemed to increase the war enthusiasm. Massac County enlisted five-sixths of its voting population that summer; " Little Egypt" counties in the south of the state exceeded their recruitment quotas by fifty percent. President Lincoln made his call for 500,000 men on July 22, immediately following the Bull Run defeat, and by August, Illinois was organizing its 55th Regiment.[6]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] James A. Mulligan papers, Chicago Historical Society.

[5] Page, "University Volunteer Reminiscences of Chicago, p. 84; Hicken, Illinois in the Civil War, p.3; Mulligan Papers, CHS.

[6] Hicken, Illinois in the Civil War, pp. 5-6.

B. Governor Yates Establishes Camp Douglas

1. Authority

Not only was Illinois expected to raise and organize troops, the state was also expected to quarter, subsist, equip, and train them before making them available to the federal government for mustering into the service as part of the volunteer force. Accommodations were an important issue. At first, Chicago enlistees were quartered in armories, public buildings, even a large beer brewery. Entire regiments at a time were temporarily sheltered in the "Wigwam", Chicago's spacious convention hall where the Republicans had met the year before to nominate Abraham Lincoln for president. In and outside the city, on the prairie lands, sprouted a number of makeshift camps. Camp Fry was the largest on the north side; other camps were Camp Long, Camp Mulligan, Camp Fremont, Camp Mather, Camp Webb, Camp Ellsworth and a camp named Douglas, south of where the future Camp Douglas would be sited.[7]

Recognizing the obvious need for coordination in the Illinois effort, the General Assembly in an extra session authorized legislation whereby Governor Yates, in September, established from twenty-five counties the Northern Military District of the State of Illinois. Yates further directed that the Northern District have a single camp for assembly and training. Given its growing size and population--109,260 reported in the 1860 census--and its convenient transportation system, Chicago was the natural location.[8]

2. Site Selection

Acting under Governor Yate's authority, Judge Allan C. Fuller, of Belvedere, carefully inspected several Chicago localities for the most suitable site. In mind he had four general criteria. First, the site had to be easily accessible. It had to be a

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[7]Karlen, "Postal History of Camp Douglas" American Philatelist, pp. 815-16; Camp Douglas file, CHS.

[8]The Northern District was composed of the following counties: Cook, Lake, Boone, McHenry, Winnebago, Stephenson, Joe Davies, Carrol, Ogie, Kane, De Kalb, Will, La Salle, Lee, Bureau, Whiteside, Rock Island, Henry, Kankakee, Grundy, Putman, Iroquois, and Livingston. A similar district and post, Camp Butler, at Springfield, was established for Southern Illinois. Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois, (Springfield, 1886), p. 112; Karlen, "Postal History" American Philatelist, p. 818. Chicago's population nearly tripled to 298,977 in the 1860s.

pleasant area overall. It had to have sufficient acreage. And it had to have an abundant supply of water.

There was no conflict in Judge Fuller's mind, no secondary choices. The site selected was just across the Chicago boundary in the southern suburbs, next to the lake front three and a half miles from city hall. To Chicagoans then it was next to the old fair grounds where the seventh annual U.S. Agricultural Society exhibition had been held September 13-17, 1859.[9]

3. The Site

For a temporary assembly and training facility at the outset of what was envisioned to be a brief conflict, Judge Fuller's site was satisfactory. Neither he nor anyone could have foreseen how the Civil War would escalate or that there would ever be a need to confine masses of prisoners in Chicago.

The most striking feature of the land bordering the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan was that it is near perfectly flat. The level of the ground is scarcely fifteen feet above the lake. Chicago's southern suburbs were sparsely spreading across an open prairie, a few groves of trees, some modest dairy agriculture dotting an otherwise dull landscape. The ground was sandy loam on a substratum of blue clay. Later, this composition would be ideal for prisoner escape tunnels, and improper land drainage would cause sanitation difficulties. But, again, that remained unforeseeable in 1861. "In fact", the Tribune praised, "we see nothing left to be desired but that the boys fall in as rapidly as possible."[10]

Composing 60 to 70 acres, Judge Fuller's site was large but not immense. It lay west of Cottage Grove Avenue, a residential northeast-southwest street paralleling the lake, a quarter mile west of the shoreline.

The site was also west of the Central Illinois Railroad tracks along the lake front, for evidences of Chicago's future growth were noticeable even then. There were tracks, too, laid on Cottage Grove Avenue: a horse-drawn trolley line of the Chicago City Railway Company. The line ran down State Street, east on 22nd Street, then south again to a place called Cottage Grove, which an old Union veteran who served seven months at Camp Douglas described as "a number of beer gardens, bowling alleys, etc., scattered among

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[9] The Chicago Tribune, undated clipping in Camp Douglas clipping file, CHS.

[10] The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion, (Washington, 1888), pt. III, Vol. 1, p. 48, The Chicago Tribune, September 30, 1861.

clumps of scrub oak timber." Immediately south of the site stood several tall brick buildings of the Baptist Chicago University. The northern boundary of the camp site was Ridgley Avenue, a cross street.[11]

Drawings and maps of Camp Douglas in its haeday show an awkward, irregular shaped boundary, because the camp was erected on two adjoining property tracts. One tract was a portion of the estate of the camp's namesake, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, the Democrat's "Little Giant", who had passed away on June 4 at the age of 48 in the Fremont House. Douglas, to finance his extensive political campaigns, had engaged in many speculative enterprises, including major real estate holdings in and around Chicago. One of these was a 160-acre tract he called "Oakenwald," where he built a modest house, and where he was buried.

Henry Graves a resident on Cottage Grove Avenue, owned another, a 31-acre tract. He leased his land for $1,200 per annum but did not relinquish hold of his house and yard, which measured 300 feet in frontage by 200 feet in depth. When Camp Douglas eventually became a walled enclosure, Graves' property became a private nitch surrounded on three sides by a high government-built wooden fence.[12]

These two tracts were leased by the State of Illinois, rent free, till May 1, 1862. In February of 1862 Capt. John Christopher, U.S. Army recruiting officer in Chicago, took over for the federal government, which assumed all costs, although the state had paid a number of bills.[13]

4. A Staff is Appointed

At the same time Governor Yates directed Judge Fuller to choose a location for the new camp, he also named a commandant and staff. Joseph H. Tucker, recently made a colonel in the state volunteer force, was the first of ten officers who would command Camp Douglas for variable periods of time. He was not so much a

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[11] Julian Buckbee Collection, CHS.

[12] Karlen, "Postal History of Camp Douglas", American Philatelist pp. 815-16; William Boss, "History of Camp Douglas," Reminiscences of Chicago, pp. 164-66; Graves to Secretary of War, March 10, 1865, Consolidated Quartermaster Records, Record Group 92. National Archives.

[13] The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, (128 vols., Washington 1891-1901), Series II, Vol.3, p. 279, cited hereafter as O.R.; Karlen, "Postal History of Camp Douglas," The American Philatelist, p. 817.

soldier as a patriotic citizen caught up in the war tide. Before relocating in 1858, Tucker had been a bank president in Cumberland, Maryland. In Chicago, he rapidly rose into the cream of the business community and by 1861 was a respected member of the Board of Trade. Together with his brother, Hyram, they formed the firm of Tucker & Randolph and made money in banking, selling certificates and speculating on the board. He was also partner in another concern entitled Tucker & Company. Energetic and wise in business acumen, he nevertheless possessed no military training or experience.[14]

Appointed post adjutant was Milton O. Higgins. Another civilian, Henry M. Hunter, of nearby Rockford, was named quartermaster. A U.S. regular, presumably, found only in the records as Colonel Webb, was in charge of subsistence. Yates did not appoint a post surgeon but Tucker later took care of that when he designated surgeon J.V.Z. Blaney temporarily to the duty. In October, Yates also appointed two camp instructors, Lts. John C. Long and Samuel S. Boone.[15]

C. Camp Douglas is Constructed - An Overview

Among Colonel Tucker's initial responsibilities was to supervise construction of the new facility. He planned to accommodate 8,000 troops and 2,000 animals. The carpentry work was done by an independent regiment of volunteer engineers calling themselves the First Regiment, Mechanic Fusileers. This colorful outfit was one of four scattered regiments being organized in Chicago, called together to make up the initial garrison.

Work on the camp progressed rapidly in September and early October. By October 8 the barracks were half completed and a cavalry drill field was laid out. On October 23 Tucker called for assembly of the four regiments-- the Mechanic Fusileers, Yates Phalanx, the so-called Douglas Brigade, and Brackett's Cavalry-- for a ceremonial flag raising. At 3:00 p.m. the senior officers formed their commands on the parade ground; regimental colonels and their field grade subalterns joined the "colonel commanding mounted and in full uniform" in front of post headquarters. Amid much

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[14] The Chicago Tribune, Oct. 24, 1894, clipping in Order Book, CHS. Hyram Tucker did not share his brother's patriotism, for, in 1862 after the prisoners of war arrived, he sneeringly referred to Camp Douglas as "the jail" and his brother the commandant as "the Jailer."

[15] The Chicago Tribune, undated clipping in clipping file, CHS.

fanfare up to the top of a 100-foot flagstaff went the stars and stripes.[16]

During its existence Camp Douglas underwent many physical alterations but its basic plan did not change much. The main gate fronted east toward Lake Michigan. It was located on Cottage Grove Avenue a little to the right of the Graves' residence. It was made to resemble a medieval castle, constructed of wood, guarded always by six sentries. There was also a secondary, south gate entering the rear of the camp from the Chicago University side. A carriage way from the main entrance intersected with the one from the south, thereby dividing the camp into three unequal-sized rectangles.

The largest of these was a parade ground and post headquarters area. This was located to the right upon entering the main gate. Later this would be known as Garrison Square. The parade ground was surrounded by the post headquarters buildings and officers' quarters on the east; and by long, narrow bunkhouse-looking wooden barracks on the north, west, and south sides. In back behind of the barracks were similar-looking elongated buildings, but not so large, built as combined mess halls and kitchens.

At the rear of the camp, or west, was another rectangular area which would come to be known as Prison Square. When Douglas became a temporary, then a permanent military prison, here was where most Confederate prisoners of war were confined. More than any other area in the compound, it would undergo extensive alteration. For now it was subdivided into two alike squares. Each square had a parade ground surrounded on four sides by enlisted men's barracks like those in the headquarters area, with mess halls and kitchens out back.

The south portion of the camp was the third rectangle. Impacted partly by the Grave's property, it contained the post hospital, quartermaster and commissary buildings, a post sutler, surgeon's quarters, and stables. The camp water hydrant was at the northeast corner of this division, not far from the guard house and main gate. Also in this area, next to Cottage Grove Avenue, was a cluster of buildings later called White Oak Square. It would serve as the post stockade.

Surrounding and enclosing the camp perimeter was a 10-foot-high wooden fence. Behind the post was an open 80-acre cavalry

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[16] The Chicago Tribune, Oct. 8, 10, 14, 1861; Special Order #2, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS.

camp and drill field, which functioned intermittently and was little used.[17]

D. Training the Illinois Recruits

New troops from the several smaller camps around Chicago were moved to Camp Douglas. In November a reported 4,222 were present. Soldiers who arrived before the barracks were finished were sheltered under canvas: Sibley tents for enlisted men, wall tents for officers. In the autumn and winter months of 1861, the recruits spent the greater portion of their wakening hours learning to execute mid-nineteenth century close order drill tactics spelled out in the Army's manuals. First there was squad drill, then company drill, and finally they all learned together how to march and countermarch by battalion or regiment. "The early reveille, the roll call, the details for guard duty, the fatigue duties about the camp, the restrictions to the limits of the camp, the men's monotonous meals at the military mess hall were novelties which soon became more arduous than pleasing", remarked a captain. Inspections, too, became a way of life. Among the new officers this captain noticed how it became "a sort of traditional belief that rough and boisterous language and much swearing were absolutely necessary...." He added, though, by keeping his temper under control he achieved superior results.[18]

Camp Douglas, however, was not a training base in the modern sense that its primary mission was to furnish cadre and facilities to prepare men for combat. Training in those days was a function of regimental commanders and their subalterns; no itinerary was issued by Colonel Tucker at post headquarters in this regard.

Day-to-day routine apparently did not impress reporters as being newsworthy. A private wrote home to his parents only that he was "as comfortably situated as could be expected, and we have enough to eat but our living is quite course." A month later, he mentioned that health in camp was good, about 200 were sick in the hospital, but most of them had measles, which was not at all unusual.[19]

1. Discipline Problems

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[17] Joseph E. Eisendrath, Jr. "Camp Douglas, 1861-1865" Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, Vol. III pp. 87-99.

[18] The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 19, 1861; Alexander C. McClurg, "American Volunteer Soldier", in Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War, pp. 115, 127-29.

[19] William H. Tibbetts, "The Story of an Ordinary Man," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, (June 1940) pp 230, 231)

What did make newspaper columns become a source of concern for Chicagoans and an embarrassment to Colonel Tucker was a laxity of discipline and good behavior displayed by the soldiers. Only three days following the flag raising, Tucker, "to avoid misunderstanding," had to have everyone familiarized with Article 22 of the Articles of War. Apparently some shoddy recruiting was being practiced; Article 22 stipulated that no one could enlist in two units at once, and if any officer knowingly enlisted a bogus recruit he could be court martialed and cashiered.

The chief cause of trouble, as might be expected, was alcohol. "Disorderly and riotous conduct" by soldiers on pass in Chicago was reported to Tucker. One typical case was that of Pvt. James Wells, who pleaded guilty in Chicago civil court to drunkenly entering a saloon and attempting to set up business behind the bar for himself. More serious was the incident of a soldier recorded only as named Dorman. Private Dorman returned from town fighting drunk a day late and bayonetted his sergeant before being subdued. A group of 18 to 20 soldiers together got themselves arrested for drunk and drunken disorderly conduct. Tucker uncovered that liquor was being sold clandestinely in camp. Some of Mulligan's Irishmen during a barracks party made an assault on the guardhouse to release one of their drinking buddies but themselves were put in irons and locked in their objective. Exasperated, a Tribune editorial suggested that if the Camp Douglas commander could not take charge of his disorderly men, perhaps the Chicago city authorities would.[20]

Tucker tried. First he issued a warning: if misconduct continued he would place restrictions on passes. He seemed to believe civilian visitors to the camp were partly at fault, for although he said he had learned "with great regret" that visitors were treated by soldiers disrespectfully, henceforeward none but the "peaceable and orderly" would be allowed to enter the camp. Civilians would use only the front gate, and keep their horses and carriages off the parade ground; the side gate was for use only by wagons, carts, or drays. Gate sentinels were to keep a watchful eye for anyone attempting to smuggle in liquor-- especially officers' servants.[21]

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[20] Order #6. Oct. 26, 1861, and Order # 19, Nov. 16, 1861, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS; Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861. (Washington, 1863) p. 489; Mc Clurg, "American Volunteer Soldier," Reminiscences of Chicago, pp. 118-120; The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 15, 1862.

[21] Order # 19, Nov. 16, 1861, Order # 21, Nov. 16, 1861, Order # 29, Nov. 25, 1861, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS.

The principal troublemakers, Tucker came to believe, were the commissioned officers, for when they were not into mischief themselves, they set a very poor example for the troops. Only sentries were authorized among the rank and file to know the daily countersign, and it was reported that some officers (who were authorized, on request, to know the word) were telling the countersigns to enlisted men so they could get back into camp after a night on the town. Some officers wore enlisted men's uniforms because they had not purchased the prescribed tunic. Some were even lodging in the enlisted men's barracks. If these practices continued, warned Tucker, a man was going to be treated according to the uniform he wore instead of his commission. Public stores were discovered in the officers' quarters long after they were supposed to have been placed in the newly built supply buildings. Said Tucker in an admonishing order: "...much of the difficulty in bringing the men under discipline is owing to the utter incompetency or entire negligence of company officers." If the bad ones did not shape up and set a good example, Tucker threatened to throw them out of camp.

Steadily, Tucker's clampdown continued. No one was to loiter around the main gate or harass civilians. No one was allowed in or out except for drill. Field grade officers could enter or leave with the countersign but all others must produce a valid pass. The countersign would be given only to the officer-of-the-guard and sergeant-of-the-guard. If an enlisted man were caught with the countersign he would be arrested until it was ascertained how he acquired it. When a soldier was placed in arrest his commander would be immediately notified and he could not be released except by order of the officer-of-the-day or post commanding officer. If written charges were preferred, only the post commander could order his release. Guardhouse prisoners were to clean and repair the guardhouse. All drivers or riders were to keep behind the barracks and stay off the parade ground. No unauthorized sutlers were allowed in the camp. Guard reliefs were made systematic. Barracks, mess halls, and kitchens were to be carefully watched for fire; any negligence was to be reported to post headquarters. Long hooks were placed in the guardhouse to pull down a building which might catch fire. When Tucker learned that men were running the guard under pretext of using the sinks, instead of moving the guard posts outward, he ordered the sinks re-dug inside their line.[22]

Another problem: some recruits in camp were "utterly unfit" to be mustered into the federal service and would obviously be rejected. This was the officers' fault for enlisting them; the government would not clothe or feed them, and regimental and

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[22]Order #20, Nov. 16, 1861, Order # 25, 1861, Order # 31, Dec. 3, 1861 Order # 32, Dec. 4, 1861, Order # 36, Dec. 11, 1861, Ibid.

company officers must attend to their duties more carefully or Colonel Tucker would attend to them.[23]

Also, some routine administrative changes and improvements were made. A third drill master was appointed, Lt. Henry V. Morris, and detailed to assist the officers, non-coms, and sentinels on guard duty details. Moses W. Lester was appointed the camp's sutler, William H. Monroe named postmaster, and Dr. Edmund Andrews replaced Dr. Blaney as Surgeon. The state Adjutant General's Office appointed Dr. Brock McVicker as Assistant Surgeon.[24]

Tucker's actions, however, did not much improve the troops' inclination for drinking and acting rowdy. On January 19, 1862 Tucker called the regimental commanders attention to "the gross abuse by the men" of pass privileges. Some of their behavior on street cars and in saloons he called "disgraceful". Henceforth, commanders should permit passes only when a soldier claimed he needed one. Tucker also authorized Chicago police to arrest and confine soldiers; 25 were caught on one day alone, arrested in the city without a valid pass.[25]

Then in February came an incident staged by the Mechanic Fusileers Regiment, the builders of Camp Douglas. It seems their recruiter had falsely promised that their skills and labor entitled them to be paid an extra fifty cents per day, but the government was not bound nor had any intention of paying such a sum. Attempting legal action to no avail, finally it was decided the regiment would be mustered out of service. On the day that happened, the regiment marched into Chicago with colors flying to a Randolph Street saloon, broke ranks for refreshment, then marched back in teetering step to Camp Douglas and were officially disbanded. Another incident to make the newspapers involved Colonel Mulligan's adjutant, arrested and sent to Detroit to face charges of seducing a girl of "respectable connections." Bemoaning the bad ones, the Tribune commented," the quicker they are called into the service the better it will be for them and the community."[26]

E. The Troops Depart

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[23]Order # 33, Dec. 4, 1861, Ibid.

[24]Order # 23, Nov. 19, 1861, Order # 27, Nov. 25, 1861. Order # 35, Dec. 3, 1861, Order # 36, Dec. 1, 1861, Order # 37, Dec. 14, 1861, Camp Douglas Order Book, Ibid.

[25]Order # 53, Jan. 19, 1862, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS; The Chicago Tribune Feb. 23, 1862.

[26]The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 9, 17, Feb. 6,11, 1862.

In fairness it should be noted that the vast majority of Camp Douglas' trainees took their instruction seriously, stayed sober and did not create unnecessary problems; and later they performed heroicly on battlefield after battlefield in Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky, Alabama, and Georgia, vindicating a somewhat shaky start. On January 25 a total 5,874 were at the post.[27]

In early February 1862, travel orders directed the remaining regiments to join the Union armies in the field. The 58th Illinois, on February 6, was directed to proceed by rail to St. Louis, the 51st Illinois to follow in two days. Shortly thereafter the others received marching orders also. In all, from April 18, 1861 to January 25, 1862 a recorded 13,027 troops were stationed at Camp Douglas. During these same nine months nearly 45,000 had passed through Chicago enroute to the field.[28]

Chicago's loyal population normally turned out for a rousing farewell send off whenever a departing regiment paraded up Michigan Avenue to the railway stations. Women waved their handkerchiefs, children cheered. Sidewalks and windows were packed with well wishers. The ranks of tramping men bound for war returned their shouts and waves. But at the Illinois Central Depot, said a company commander, instead of comfortable passenger coaches, his 88th Illinois was herded aboard a lot of flat cars, empty box cars, and coal cars filthy and foul from previous use. Glory could be fleeting.[29]

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[27] Ibid., The regiments were the 51st, 56th, 57th, 58th and 23rd Illinois Infantry, 9th, 12th and 13th Illinois Cavalry, and detachment of artillery.

[28] Special Order No. 27, Feb. 6, 1862, Special Order No. 29, Feb. 9, 1862, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS; The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 8,11,17,19, 1862.

[29] McClurg, "American Volunteer Soldier,: Reminiscences of Chicago, pp. 130-32

II CAMP DOUGLAS AS A TEMPORARY PRISONER DEPOT

A. Antecedents

1. The War of 1812 and War with Mexico

The Civil War gave America its first large scale experience with custody and administration of prisoners of war. At the outbreak of war in April 1861, neither side made preparations or even expected to handle enemy captives in substantial numbers. In the North it was taken for granted that past limited experiences in the War of 1812 and War with Mexico would again suffice.

When enemy prisoners were taken in the War of 1812, after removal to safe areas, they were quartered in private homes, the United States assuming costs for lodging and board, or placed in temporary prisoner of war camps set aside in forts. A Commissary General of Prisoners was appointed to supervise prisoner activities. Both the United States and Great Britain maintained a commission in the other's land to aid their own and negotiate an exchange. Battlefield exchanges took place between commanders in the field before November 1812, when agents of the United States and Great Britain met in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to consent on a provisional agreement to exchange naval captives. A more formal agreement called the Washington Cartel was concluded on May 14, 1813. Other agreements for prisoner exchange were also made during the war. Following the cessation of hostilities both sides released their captives upon payment of debts contracted by the prisoners during captivity.[1]

Numerous prisoners were taken by the United States Army during the War with Mexico. Because of complicated problems of holding Mexicans in their own country, or removing them far away to the United States for internment, most prisoners, both officers and enlisted men, were released on parole and allowed to return home, provided they would not again take up arms. This liberal policy adopted by field commanders received approval by President James K. Polk until the Battle of Cerro Gordo, May 1847, when he directed Mexican officers be detained. At the war's end all prisoners were released following the ratification of a peace treaty.[2]

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[1] Lt. Colonel George C. Lewis and Captain John Mewah, History of Prisoner of War Utilization by the United States Army 1776-1945 (Department of the Army, 1955) pp. 22-25.

[2] Ibid, pp. 25-26.

But in the Civil War the situation differed and politically was more difficult. America was not fighting a foreign power but struggling within itself. A fundamental problem confronting U.S. authorities in the Civil War simulated the one confronting Great Britain in the American Revolution of 1776, in that the general government maintained its opponent, acting with no legal status, was in rebellion against constituted authority. The enemy were held to be subversives, traitors, and if apprehended could be treated according to the penalties of civil law. Such a concept, however, could only be applied if the rebellion were crushed in a short time, and this did not happen. Confederate battlefield victories in the summer of 1861 gave the South more prisoners than were in the hands of the Union. So the Confederates were in a position to retaliate to any extreme Union acts.[3]

Confederate officials, aware of their deficient resources and eager to escape the involvement in caring for prisoners of war, were glad to release captives they held or might take in the future, through parole or formal exchange. The Federals on the other hand were troubled that any formal agreement on the subject of exchanging prisoners might constitute de facto recognition for the Confederacy as a belligerent sovereign power, a circumstance to be avoided at all cost. Thus in the opening months of the war, exchanges were unofficially made by commanding officers in the field with the knowledge and tacit consent of Washington.[4]

2. The Commissary General of Prisoners

Since Congressional legislation rarely extended to prisoner of war matters, the U.S. government's policies were set by the War Department. In 1861, Army Regulations provided for the care of war captives only in a general way. The first person to recognize the inadequacy of the regulations and the pending importance of the prisoner of war question was Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. On July 12, 1861, nine days before the Union defeat at Bull Run, Meigs wrote to Secretary of War Simon Cameron recommending the appointment of a Commissary General of Prisoners and the establishment of a depot for prisoner internment.[5]

General Meigs believed the officer selected should be "an accomplished gentleman" because the position possessed "high power and importance". In general, the duties of this officer entitled

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[3] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[4] Ibid., p. 27-28; Holland Thompson, "Exchange of Prisoners", Photographic History of the Civil War, Vol. 7, p. 97.

[5] Revised Regulations for the Armies of the United States, 1861 (Philadelphia, 1861), pp. 71, 107, 108, 110; O.R. Series II, Vol. 3, p. 8.

those of a coordinator. All information relating to prisoners of war passed through him. The "depots for prisoners", or prison camps, were to be selected by the Secretary of War; further details would be left to the judgement of the Commissary General of Prisoners. He was empowered to establish regulations with respect to clothing; he would direct how funds were to be acquired, accounted for, and disbursed by subordinates; and it was he who was responsible for "providing such articles as he may deem absolutely necessary for the welfare of the prisoners". He was authorized, with the recommendation of a medical officer, to grant medical paroles, but under no other circumstances. Paroles were the jurisdiction of the President and Secretary of War. The Commissary General of Prisoners was responsible for reports submitted by prison camp officers under him, which information had to be analyzed, compiled, and available upon call by the Adjutant General. A complete and up-to-date record of each prisoner would be kept in books in his office. Accountability was fundamental. He was authorized to travel to prison camps and had the authority to inspect and make recommendations to a camp commander, reporting the same to the War Department. Finally, the Commissary General of Prisoners had additional responsibility for all matters concerning U.S. soldiers released on parole by the enemy.[6]

During the first year of the war the office of the Commissary General of Prisoners was a function of the Quartermaster General's department. But a reorganization on June 17, 1862 placed the post directly under the jurisdiction of the War Department and subject only to the orders of the Secretary of War.[7]

3. Lt. Colonel William Hoffman Appointed

On October 7, 1861, three months after General Meigs' recommendation, Lt. Colonel William Hoffman, 8th U.S. Infantry, received appointment as Commissary General of Prisoners. The fact Hoffman was at the time a paroled prisoner of war, himself, probably had much to do with his assignment. Eight months earlier, on February 18, he was one of 2,684 soldiers surrendered to the State of Texas without resistance by Brigadier General David E. Twiggs. Ineligible for field service, Hoffman since then had served on courts martial and performed various administrative duties. His career to date had been solid if not particularly distinguished. A New Yorker by birth, he graduated about the middle of the West Point Class of 1829. Thereafter he was not in the army but of it. He served in the Black Hawk War, the Florida War, was awarded two brevet promotions for "gallant and meritorious service" at the battles of Conteras, Churabusco and Molino del Rey

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[6] Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861, (Washington, 1863) pp. 523-24.

[7] O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, p.30.

as a company commander in the 6th U.S. Infantry in the War with Mexico; and in the 1850's he was stationed at frontier posts in Kansas and Nebraska territories. He was returning from California, where he was transferred in 1858, with his regiment when it surrendered. During his career he remained a bachelor[8]

a. Johnson's Island

On October 7, even before official notification of his appointment as Commissary General of Prisoners, Hoffman got orders from Quartermaster General Meigs to proceed to the islands in western Lake Erie, inspect them, and submit a report detailing their suitability for a federal prisoner of war depot. He could examine islands other than those located in Put-in-Bay, allowed Meigs, but not farther north in latitude "to avoid too rigorous a climate." On October 22 Colonel Hoffman recommended in favor of Johnson's Island. This island was a mile long and from one quarter to one third of a mile wide, about two and a half miles offshore from the city of Sandusky, Ohio. Water and fuel were plentiful, transportation was available, the land could be leased cheaply, and a fenced prison enclosing two-story barracks for 1000 prisoners and 100-150 guards could be erected for an estimated $ 26,000.[9]

A satisfied Meigs, after securing approval from Secretary of War Cameron, through Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, directed Hoffman to proceed with his plans. Also, in his October 26 endorsement, Meigs laid out some guidelines to serve as a foundation for Hoffman's future guidance: "In all that is done, the strictest economy consistent with security and proper welfare of the prisoners must be observed." Frugality would be the watchword. Keeping prisoners of war would not be high priority on the government's agenda, and Meigs was directing Hoffman to spend as little money as possible on prisoners so as to release as much money as possible for the government's chief goal of defeating the Confederacy. Furthermore, the prisoners should contribute to the extent possible to defray the cost of their confinement. They should supply their own clothing and, rather than sit idle, should be "permitted to engage in any occupation which can be made profitable."[10]

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[8]William Hoffman Pension File, RG 15, National Archives. Hoffman in 1871, after he retired, married Mary C. DeWolf.

[9]O.R., Series II Vol. 3, pp. 54-58, 121.

[10]Ibid., p. 123.

For the next four months Colonel Hoffman worked on the details of establishing the new depot. Although his headquarters officially remained in New York, most of his time he spent at the Johnson's Island site. In early December, before repairing to Sandusky, he visited Washington and consulted with Adjutant General Thomas about administrative functions connected with the new position. On December 7, to head off possible future friction between his office and field commands, and between himself and officials who currently held Confederate prisoners, Hoffman requested Thomas to announce to the service at large the creation of the Office of Commissary General of Prisoners and his appointment as its commander. But this Thomas failed to do. Consequently, at least one commander began to act on his own. Preparing for a mid-winter offensive, Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, commander of the Department of Missouri, issued his own regulations governing the care and handling of prisoners. Halleck additionally established his own prisoner depot by reactivating the abandoned state penitentiary at Alton, Illinois.[11]

By the last of January the government facility on Johnson's Island was completed but difficulties in organizing the guards postponed the date it would be ready to receive prisoners until mid-February. Union officials expected that Johnson's Island with its thousand-man capacity, combined with a number of eastern coastal forts and converted government buildings, would adequately shelter all captives that the Union army might take in battle. The paucity of federal planning and efforts became painfully obvious on February 16, 1862, when a subordinate of General Halleck's, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, captured an entire Confederate army at Fort Donelson, Tennessee.[12]

B. Prisoners Arrive from Fort Donelson

1. General Halleck Distributes the Prisoners

General Grant captured so many Confederates he was unsure how many there were. He was more positive about one thing: he wanted to be quickly rid of them. Said Grant: "It is a much less job to take them than to keep them". To Halleck's chief of staff, Brig. Gen. George W. Cullum, he predicted, "they will prove an elephant," and suggested a future policy of parole without detention any longer than to do the necessary paperwork. Grant on February 17 and 18, after issuing two days' rations, crammed the lot of prisoners on a flotilla of rickety transport steamers and started

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[11] Ibid, pp. 150, 156, 236-38.

[12] Ibid, p. 221.

them upriver for Cairo, Illinois, there-by passing off the problem of what to do with them to department commander Halleck.[13]

General Halleck, in St. Louis, had meanwhile ordered the captives sent there, planning to forward them to Springfield and Chicago. Then Governor Oliver Perry Morton of Indiana volunteered that 3000 could be handled at Indianapolis, Colonel Tucker, in Springfield, writing for Allan C. Fuller, Camp Douglas' site selector, and now state adjutant general, telegraphed Governors Morton and Yates that he was dispatching 3000 prisoners to Indianapolis, 3000 to Springfield, and the rest to Chicago.[14]

But Yates immediately wired back that so many secessionist sympathizers at Springfield made that place unsafe. By now, four days had elapsed since the surrender, 11,000 prisoners were reported by General Cullum to be offshore at Cairo, and Halleck had to quickly decide. Governor David Tod of Ohio was contacted asking how many could be interned at Columbus. The next day, February 20, Tod replied that, if given three days to prepare, Camp Chase could handle 1000. Halleck then wired adjutant Fuller that 3000 prisoners would have to go to Springfield; guards should be prepared to receive them. The sick and wounded of both armies were sent to Cincinnati, Paducah, and Mound City. General Halleck, whose knowledge of the rules of nineteenth century warfare probably exceeded any soldier on either side, enjoined all authorities to treat friend and foe equally.[15]

No prisoners were sent to Colonel Hoffman's U. S. facility on Johnson's Island. Due to Adjutant General Thomas' failure to act on Hoffman's recommendation, apparently neither Halleck nor Grant nor even the Governor of Ohio possessed any knowledge that a prisoner of war depot was available or that a Commissary General of Prisoners had been designated. The Fort Donelson prisoners were therefore parcelled out to four ad hoc state training camps where little or no preparations had been made to accommodate them.

2. <u>The Prisoner's Condition</u>

In the first two weeks of February, nearly all Union troops at Camp Douglas had been moved either toward the front or to St. Louis. Left was a skeleton force to literally "hold the fort." Purely by coincidence, a rumor on Chicago's streets prophesied that Confederate war prisoners would soon come to Camp Douglas. The <u>Tribune</u> pooh-poohed what it called "<u>An Absurd Rumor</u>". It scoffed on February 14, two days before Fort Donelson fell: "This is

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[13] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 271-272.

[14] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 274-277.

[15] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 277,278,280,281, 282.

decidedly the joke of the season. The idea of keeping five-thousand Rebel prisoners in a camp, where the strongest guard couldn't keep a drunken corporal, is rich."[16]

But this baseless rumor turned out to be true. Exactly a week following the Tribune editorial, the first trains chugged into the Illinois Central station pulling box-cars teeming with captured Confederates bound for Camp Douglas. On the first day 3,200 piled off the trains, another 1,259 on the following day.[17]

Though it was popularly believed that Chicago's share of the Fort Donelson garrison was 7,000 the actual figure was more like 4500. There were 13 Confederate infantry regiments or parts of regiments, part of an infantry battalion, and artillerists from five batteries. The majority of the units were from Tennessee or Mississippi, two from Alabama, and one each from Texas, Kentucky, and Virginia. Despite General Halleck's orders that commissioned officers be segregated from the ranks, in the bustle and confusion of movement this had not been done.[18]

So many arriving in a helter-skelter manner caused fear among city officials that the Rebels might break loose and sack Chicago. A panicky Mayor Julian S. Ramsey, backed by several prominent Chicagoans, telegraphed Halleck that there were so few accompanying guards that city police had to lend a hand moving prisoners from the railroad station to the camp; only the prisoners' collective ignorance of the touchy state of affairs was keeping them in check. Even Colonel Tucker, who arrived to take charge from Springfield the same day as the first trains was worried. The train guards--the 52nd Illinois and 20th Ohio--were under orders to immediately return, and Tucker harbored doubts whether the Camp Douglas garrison was sufficient, given the extent of the camp, to provide adequate security. Halleck directed the mayor to detain the guard regiments in his name and urged him to create a special police organization. "I have taken these Confederates in arms behind their entrenchments," scolded Halleck; "it is a great pity Chicago can not guard them unarmed for a few days." So, for a while, Confederate soldiers were in part guarded by local policemen.[19]

Quite apparently the mid-winter campaign had sapped their strength. Following the fighting had come the shock of the surrender announcement, the numbness of defeat, deprivation of food and rest, and a crowded journey to the unknown. The dejected

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[16] The Chicago Tribune, Feb. 14, 1862.

[17] Illinois Adjutant General's Report, pp. 123-24.

[18] Ibid.; O.R.. Series II, Vol. 3 pp. 335.

[19] Ibid., pp. 315, 316.

Confederates presented onlookers with a piteous image of defeat. "A more motley looking crowd was never seen in Chicago," declared one woman. She noted how they "had evidently suffered severely in the terrible three days' fight at Donelson" and noticed many covering themselves with bed quilts and pieces of rug in lieu of blankets. Another woman observed some Southerners wearing straw hats in February, and she glimpsed toes sticking out from shoes on a wintery Chicago morning with two inches of snow on the ground. Colonel Tucker in his report to Halleck told of many Confederates wearing light-weight uniforms, some obviously sick, and knew of no medical officers accompanying them.[20]

Within a week of their arrival, more than 200 prisoners were in the hospital, with 300 or 400 more being treated outside. Diseases reported as being prevalent were diarrhea, bronchitis, inflammatory rheumatism, jaundice, neuralgia, measles, and mumps. Then occurred a sudden upsurge in the number of cases of pneumonia. By March 12, 1862, 61 prisoners had died, 179 by April 15, 308 by May 20, and 497 by June 9. Camp Douglas' ugly reputation as a death camp had begun.[21]

C. Administrative Beginnings

1. Early Command Turbulence

The Fort Donelson prisoners arrived while the camp command was in a state of flux. Beginning on January 28, when Colonel Tucker was ordered to duty in Springfield with Adjutant Fuller, Col. Albert G. Brackett, 9th Illinois Cavalry, was named Aide-de-Camp to the Governor (an honorary post) and Commandant of Camp Douglas, but he was at the helm only two weeks before his regiment was ordered to St. Louis. Colonel Mulligan, the local Irish hero returned from Missouri, declined the command on one day and was absent on the next, February 14, when he was named post commander. The next senior officer, Col. Joseph W. Bell, 13th Illinois Cavalry, also was under marching orders, so temporarily Col. Arnold Voss, 12th Illinois Cavalry, took charge on February 18th. He and Lt. James Cristopher, U.S. Army recruiting officer in Chicago, made what few preparations could be made before the prisoners arrived. In absence of Mulligan, Colonel Tucker, the businessman turned

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[20] Mary A. Livermore, My Story of the War, (Hartford, 1888) p. 32; O.R. Series, II, Vol.3, p. 297.

[21] The Chicago Tribune, Feb. 26, March 12, April 15, May 10, June 9, 1862.

soldier, returned from Springfield for temporary duty on February 21.[22]

Tucker, who was empowered only with Governor Yates' authority, organized the prisoners and got them situated. Free access to Camp Douglas by civilians ceased; hereafter a pass from post headquarters would be required. Prisoners were grouped into companies and assigned to barracks. The senior prisoner non-commissioned officer of each company was placed in command, responsible also for requisitions to fill supply needs from the post commissary and post quartermaster. Prisoner NCOs would also each day furnish a police detail to clean up in and around the barracks. Prisoner mail would be handled at Colonel Mulligan's headquarters.[23]

As might be expected, a conflict arose between state and and federal authority, for Camp Douglas by now was under federal jurisdiction. Tucker therefore turned over the command to Colonel Mulligan, thereby releasing both himself and Illinois from further responsibilities. Tucker would return, however, as camp commander in June, three months later.[24]

a. Colonel Mulligan

James A. Mulligan commanded from early March to mid-June 1862, the first of several reluctant Camp Douglas commanders. He and his "Irish Brigade", since officially redesignated the 23rd Illinois Infantry, returned to Chicago in September for reorganization as a three-year regiment following the battle and siege of Lexington, Missouri. With Mulligan in command of 3,000 U.S. troops, they had been surrounded by triple their numbers and forced to capitulate on September 20, 1861. Officers and men were released on parole, except for Mulligan, who refused the terms and was exchanged two months to the day after the surrender.[25]

Possessed of a type of tactful, charismatic personality that made men respond to him, Mulligan as a commandant was reputed to

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[22]Order No. 29, Jan. 25, Order No. 1, Feb. 1, Telegram, Yates to Brackett, Feb. 12, Orders No. 4, Feb. 13, General Order No. 24, Feb. 14, Order No. 1, Feb. 18, Special Order No. 36, Feb. 20, 1862, Camp Douglas Order Book CHS; The Chicago Tribune, Feb. 21 and 22, 1862).

[23]Orders No.2, Feb.22, Orders No.3, Feb. 22, Orders No.4, Feb. 23, 1862, Camp Douglas Order Book CHS.

[24]Tucker to Mulligan, March 2, 1862, Mulligan Papers, CHS.

[25]James A. McMullen, MS read to CHS, Dec. 17, 1878, Mulligan Papers, CHS.

be "strict but fair". Once when Parson Brownlow, an important and ardent Tennessee Unionist, who was permitted to address the inmates began to get carried away with himself, Mulligan adroitly ended the proceedings by ordering the prisoners back to their barracks, saying to himself aloud (but within earshot of Brownlow), "I must remember I am guarding unarmed prisoners of war". He was a good showman. After escorting members of the Chicago Board of Supervisors around the hospital, commissary and barracks, they responded with a letter of appreciation and support for the camp's orderly and cleanly appearance." Colonel Hoffman expressed satisfaction on a March inspection tour. The Confederate prisoners also seemed to have thought rather highly of Mulligan.[26]

In spite of his popularity, Colonel Mulligan on the other hand proved himself a bureaucrat's anathema. Adjutant Fuller complained in mid-April that he had been recently "mortified" by being unable to respond to a U.S. War Department request because he had heard nothing from Camp Douglas for three weeks. One of the incarcerated Confederate regiments, the 10th Tennessee, was composed largely of Irishmen from Nashville, more Celtic than Confederate. Without authority or approval from Washington, Mulligan persuaded 228 members they were on the wrong side and facilitated their enlistment into the Union ranks of his own outfit and the then-forming 65th Illinois.[27] Discipline grew slack. There were brawls between guards and prisoners; careless handling of weapons wounded one civilian and put a bullet through a neighborhood schoolhouse; citizens were robbed and their hen-houses burglarized by Union guards.

It was not until after Mulligan with his regiment were later transferred to West Virginia in early June that it became obvious what a negligent administrator he had been. Colonel Hoffman visited Camp Douglas about three weeks after Mulligan departed, and he was furious at what he discovered. To Adjutant General Thomas he reported: "There has been the greatest carelessness and willful neglect in the management of the affairs of the camp, and everything was left by Colonel Mulligan in a shameful state of confusion". Hoffman's preliminary inquiries revealed that Mulligan took nearly all the post headquarters records with him, leaving nothing at all relating to prison matters. Nor did he explain to Colonel Daniel Cameron, 65th Illinois, temporary successor for a few days, about his duties or about anything; so Cameron was able

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[26] McMullen claimed the Confederate prisoners cheered Mulligan when he departed. Ibid.; Edwin P. Hilliard to Mulligan, March 10, 1862, Mulligan Papers, CHS; O.R., Series II, Vol. 3, p. 549.

[27] Fuller to Mulligan, April 14, 1862, Mulligan Papers, CHS; Hoffman to Tucker Sept. 14, 1862, Hoffman to Thomas, Oct. 11, 1862 R.G. 249, N.A.

to pass on the very little information to Colonel Tucker when he resumed command after three months absence. Hoffman observed that the camp was filthy and showed signs of decay. He ordered Tucker to conduct a full investigation.[28] In his reports, Tucker explained an inability to locate any meaningful papers at post headquarters; Mulligan had taken nearly everything with him. To compile prisoner rolls Tucker had to start from scratch[29] with two men writing constantly while another called out names.

And not only were records missing, there was also an incident involving missing money entrusted to Colonel Mulligan. Among a commandant's duties was responsibility for prisoners' money to enable them to make purchases from the post sutler; receipts were issued to the prisoners and accounts kept in a ledger at headquarters, one of the few records Mulligan had left behind. This ledger showed a balance of $4,017.75. But Mulligan had turned over to Colonel Cameron only $3,310.25, some of it worthless Southern bank notes. Cameron had collected some prisoners' money, too, but a large deficiency remained, $707.50. To buy time, distribute the losses to the inmates equally, and keep from compromising Colonel Mulligan, Tucker paid back half their claims, not to exceed $5.00. Nothing meanwhile was heard from Colonel Mulligan.[30]

Hoffman turned the matter over to the Secretary of War, who on July 19 directed the Adjutant General to order Mulligan to report promptly and directly to the War Department. Mulligan failed to report. On July 28 he was ordered placed in arrest. Mulligan indigently stated in his defense that he had no knowledge of an order to account for Camp Douglas funds, claiming innocence to any charges of wrong doing. He professed a willingness to make good the account and an eagerness to prove his honesty. "My character, sir, has never been sullied, and I am impatient of the undeserved reproach of this arrest...."

In the end, the Army took Mulligan at his word, deciding he had not been criminally dishonest so much as irresponsible. On October 28 Hoffman accepted $1,384.21 from Mulligan as full settlement, and the incident was closed.[31]

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[28] O.R., Series II, Vol.4, p. 111.

[29] Ibid., p.111.

[30] Ibid.,pp. 166-167.

[31] Hoffman to Thomas, Oct. 28, 1862, R.G. 249 N.A. Colonel Mulligan spent the rest of his service in the Department of West Virginia. He was mortally wounded in an engagement at Kernstown, Virginia, July 24, 1864, dying two days later. His remains were returned to Chicago where they received a hero's funeral. Mulligan

b. Colonel Tucker

When Colonel Tucker resumed command after twelve weeks absence on June 19, 1862, the problems confronting him might have taxed the abilities of Lincoln himself. The camp during Mulligan's tenure had deteriorated in several respects.

It was overly crowded. The prison population swelled now to 8,900. Added to the Fort Donelson prisoners were 736 captured by General Grant at the battle of Shiloh, and another 1,709 had been captured at Island No.10 in the Mississippi River. Smaller lots trickled in now and then, also. Close to 600 were sick in the hospital and in the barracks, and some sheltered in the chapel. Nearly 500 prisoners had died; 30 Union soldiers were also dead. A Fort Donelson captive, observed when he arrived that Camp Douglas looked new, fresh and clean. By now the barracks looked dilapidated, the parade grounds were constantly muddy, and the whole camp stank to high heavens.[32]

Not totally irresponsible, Mulligan had set the prisoners to work in a futile attempt to drain the camp, and Chicago individuals and civic groups, like the YMCA and crisis-formed Camp Douglas Citizens Relief Committee, provided what aid they could to relieve the suffering of the sick. But quite obviously not nearly enough was being done.[33]

A letter of general instructions and duties arrived at headquarters from Colonel Hoffman two weeks after Tucker's retaking command replaced one which either had become lost or Mulligan had taken with him. As commandant, Tucker was responsible for security of the prison and disposition of the force to guard it. How to organize them into companies or divisions was the commandant's discretion. Again, accountability was fundamental. Every morning a roll call would be made and a written morning report compiled, giving the number of inmates present, sick, discharged, escaped, and died, showing names and particulars under the last three headings.

He was responsible for three funds. Two were hospital funds: one for the prisoners and one for the guards. Disbursements would be made on recommendation of the chief surgeon, subject to the commandant's approval. A third, general fund was created to

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Papers, CHS.

[32] O.R. Series II, Vol. 8, pp. 987 - 1003; The Chicago Tribune, April 15, June 9, 1862; Illinois Adjutant Generals Report, p. 124.

[33] The Chicago Tribune March 12, 29, 1862; Title, History, p. 15.

provide articles of health and comfort for the prisoners. Purchases would be made by the post quartermaster, again approved by the commandant. The post commissary would keep account of this fund. Additional revenue would come by taxing sutlers. Except for loyal relatives of sick prisoners, visitors would be prohibited. Prisoners would be permitted to receive mail and packages.[34]

If Colonel Hoffman hoped Tucker would prove a panacea for Camp Douglas' woes, he would be severely disappointed. Tucker was an improvement over Mulligan, but he was not whom Hoffman would have chosen had the Commissary General of Prisoners a voice in the matter. Tucker was tardy and imprecise with his reports. Hoffman caught many errors and on more than one occasion accused Tucker of neglecting his duties.

Nor was Tucker a popular figure at Camp Douglas, especially in the wake of a free-and-easy commander like Mulligan. One of his first acts was to have Confederates and their barracks searched for contraband, which led to some prisoners being robbed of personal belongings by the guards. Few orders emanated from post headquarters during Tucker's three and a half months in command, and what general orders there were usually restricted his own men's freedom.

His primary target, as before when he was commandant, was his officers. Camp Douglas had not ceased to function as a camp of instruction for Illinois recruits. As additions to the 23rd Illinois and 65th Illinois, on duty as prison guards, five regiments of infantry and several batteries of artillery were organized and trained during this time. In his first general announcement Tucker grumbled that he was "daily burdened with complaints of neglect of duty on the part of officers." No one therefore was allowed out of camp. Passes would be restricted to necessity and no longer issued on a quota basis. All communication with Colonel Tucker must pass through regimental commanders of post headquarters' staff. Two weeks later he forbade all communication with the prisoners, a rule applicable to soldiers, sutlers, contractors, and the few allowed visitors. A week following, soldiers were restricted from purchasing articles from the post sutler and must do business exclusively with their own regimental sutlers. Then, every Sunday at company inspection selections from the Articles of War would be read to the troops.[35]

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[34] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 102-03. A more detailed set of instructions circulated by Hoffman to all commandants is in Ibid., pp. 151-53

[35] General Orders No. 7, July 5, General Orders No. 9, July 19, General Orders No. 12 Aug. 6, General Orders No. 15, Aug. 27, 1862, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS

2. Sanitation Problems

a. A Sewer is not built

From a hygienic standpoint, by the end of June the camp was intolerable. Chief medical officer Brock McVicker wrote to Colonel Tucker calling his attention to the urgent necessity of ground drainage and sewage. "The surface of the ground is becoming saturated with the filth and slop from the privies, kitchens and quarters and must produce serious results as soon as the hot weather sets in." He reported 326 prisoners in the hospital and more sick men in the barracks. Sixteen Confederate surgeons who had been attending to their own had, by a War Department order, been recently discharged, and a minimum of five surgeons and four assistants were urgently needed to replace them. Tucker endorsed the report, forwarding it to Hoffman with an "earnest request" that he be given authority to take action.[36] Colonel Hoffman, however, approved the employment of only four surgeons and four assistants.[37]

The same day McVicker wrote, June 30, a hypercritical report was addressed to Hoffman by Henry W. Bellows, president of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, a civilian watchdog organization whose primary mission was to raise the Army's hygienic standards. Camp Douglas, Doctor Bellows believed, was "as desperately circumscribed as any camp ever was, and nothing but a special providence or some peculiar efficacy of the lake winds can prevent it from becoming a source of pestilence before another month. The amount of standing water, of unpoliced grounds, of foul sinks, of unventilated and crowded barracks, of general disorder, of soil reeking with miasmatic accretions of rotten bones and emptying of camp kettles is enough to drive a sanitarian to despair." He urged that Camp Douglas be abandoned, believing the site gone past remedy. "I do not believe that any amount of drainage would purge that soil loaded with accumulated filth, or those barracks fetid with two stories of vermin and animal exhalations. Nothing but fire can cleanse them." He offered any and all help the Sanitary Commission could provide in drawing up plans for a new camp. Bellows, with Hoffman's permission under a restriction not to release any findings before communicating with the Commissary General of Prisoners, promised silence, thereby hoping to stimulate action.[38]

Colonel Hoffman was acquainted with Camp Douglas' troubles, because he had not long before returned to his Detroit headquarters

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[36] O.R., Series II, vol. 4, pp. 107-08.

[37] Ibid., p. 151.

[38] Ibid., p. 106.

after a visit to Chicago. Even before he received McVickers' and Bellow's reports, he composed a report of his own to his superior, Quartermaster General Meigs. Hoffman's pronouncement was similar to Bellows'. Drainage was so poor there was mud in the camp in July, latrines were overflowing, barracks were overcrowded, and the whole prison was in foul straits. Like Bellows, he felt the best thing to do would be to relocate the prison elsewhere. But he apparently suspected Meigs would never approve such a proposal, so he added, "there seems no alternative but to make the best of what we have." As a partial remedy he recommended constructing a sewer to run around the interior edges of the camp and empty into Lake Michigan. The sewer, he proposed, would be dug below the frost line and connected by large pipes to a flow of water forceful enough to flush out the offal, thereby releasing the camp and neighborhood "from the stench which now pollutes the air."

Additionally, Hoffman recommended more barracks be built. The two guard regiments were quartered in old, worn out tents outside the fence. If barracks for one regiment were located outside the fence, while the other regiment were inside, such a layout would offer greater security, he reasoned. The cost of new barracks and refurnishing existing ones he estimated between $5,000 and $8,000. The sewer and water system would cost about as much more.[39]

Meigs rendered his decision on July 5, brief, blunt, to the point: "I cannot approve the expenditure involved in the improvements suggested in your letter. Ten thousand men should certainly be able to keep the camp clean, and the United States has other uses for its money then to build waterworks and save them the labor necessary to their health."[40]

Hoffman relayed Meigs' verdict to Tucker and reemphasized his orders to institute a thorough system of police as he had orally directed two weeks earlier, while he was inspecting the post. Prisoner work details were to cover the old pit latrines, dig new ones and erect sheds over them, carry off all refuse in carts, and spread lime plentifully.[41]

To General Meigs, on July 10, he back-pedaled, saying he felt relieved to be out from under the responsibility of deciding on such a large expenditure of money for Camp Douglas because he really did not believe that conditions were all that bad. However, he did think that some improvements were indispensable. Some roofs on the stables converted into barracks leaked or were

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39 Ibid., p. 110

40 Ibid., p.129.

41 Ibid., p. 162.

illing in and should be fixed. The fence surrounding the camp needed repair because it was becoming dilapidated and did not do enough to deter Rebels from escaping. These repairs need not be expensive, he injected, because lumber could be had by tearing down unused stables. Prisoners could do the labor. He forwarded, as an enclosure, the Sanitary Commission report, adding his opinion that it was exaggerated. To Bellows he wrote that since General Meigs had taken responsibility for not making any sweeping changes, Bellows was released from his silence pledge.[42]

Meanwhile, Colonel Tucker's impression was that he was left holding the bag without authority to make purchases or improvements, and he wrote to Hoffman requesting approval in writing. In ignorance that General Meigs had already turned Hoffman down, Tucker urged building a sewer. He also mentioned that backwater was damaging a camp neighbor's house foundation, a problem brought to Hoffman's attention when he was at the camp in June.[43]

Hoffman answered that sufficient authority would be found in a letter penned by him the night before. "In the matter of furnishing horse carts and other articles for policing purposes I thought it is so well understood when I was at the camp that until now I had felt sure they had all been provided and the work... was by this time well in progress if not already completed." Irritably, he said he had also previously given orders to correct the matter concerning Mrs. Bradley. That settled, he requested Tucker to get estimates for water lines and bake ovens, indicating an intention to bring up the sewer issue again with Meigs. But the newspapers, he mentioned, were talking of a general exchange of captives with the Confederacy, and if that took place many repairs would be unnecessary.[44]

Twelve days passed, and it was July 24 before Tucker submitted a set of sewer estimates drawn up by Samuel S. Greeley, a Chicago civil engineer. But Colonel Hoffman did not again approach General Meigs about any sewer. A week earlier Meigs had written Hoffman concerning his July 10 request for barrack repairs: "Whilst the expensive, not to say extravagant, arrangements for sewage, water supply, etc. could not be authorized, for reasons sufficiently set forth, the department will approve the reasonable repair of the sheds to make them waterproof." Hoffman most likely never forwarded the estimate because he felt further effort would be futile or counterproductive. The bottom line on Greeley's estimate

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42 Ibid., pp. 166, 178-79.

43 Ibid., pp. 172-73.

44 Ibid., pp. 185-86.

was $ 8,257.18.[45]

Included among a number of papers sent by Tucker to Hoffman on July 21 was a statement by Chief Surgeon McVicker relating to the camp's health condition. On the whole, in McVicker's opinion the state of health was good, considering only four physicians were employed when five, with "extraordinary exertion", should be on duty. Understaffing was responsible for voiced complaints of neglect, he told Tucker. Admitted to the hospitals recently were 75 Rebels and 57 U.S. soldiers brought down by ailments of the lungs and bowels, but he had observed complications "a tendency toward scurvy." In the barracks were between 200 and 300 attended by four assistant surgeons aided by a few qualified prisoners found in the ranks, and there too a scurvy trend seemed on the rise, which if not quickly checked, warned McVicker, would "give a fatal character to all forms of disease whatever their original character."[46]

Two days later, along with the sewer estimate, Tucker sent Hoffman a request for a clothing issue. "Many of the prisoners are entirely destitute and without a change," he stated, but did not say how many.[47] Hoffman responded, on August 1, refusing to authorize any additional doctors, repeating the prospect of an exchange. "The presence of scurvy among men where there is an abundance of vegetables and antiscorbutics is a novel state of things to me," he chided. As to McVicker's reporting that the camp was less than wholesome: "There is no excuse for this, as I have given positive and specific orders in relation to this matter." In Hoffman's judgement everything required for health and comfort was being provided for by his headquarters and if any problems remained at Camp Douglas, "it must be owing to great neglect."

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[45] Ibid., pp. 279-81

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid

Ibid., pp. 324-25; Another doctor, Medical Inspector Christopher C. Keeney in a September 1862 report, noted the presence of scurvy. Said Keeney, "I am inclined to believe the prisoners have been stinted in vegetable matter. The best indication of this is the appearance of scurvy lurking about the command. There are many cases of incipient scurvy in camp." (This report was apparently filed through other channels and went unseen by Colonel Hoffman. It is in Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion. Part III, Vol. 1, p. 49).

Tucker's rebuttal to this was that the first authorization for issuing vegetables was not until July 22, the day after the McVicker report. Doctor McVicker in an enclosure assured Hoffman that the scurvy tendency was now on the decline. "As regards to sanitary matters connected with the introduction of water into and the proper drainage of the camp I merely meant to say that the sanitary condition was inherently bad owing to the want of these two improvements." In other words, clean-up could not solve everything.

On August 13 a confounded Hoffman, having no quartermaster estimates and apparently unable to get any from Camp Douglas, ordered 3,000 coats, pants shirts, hats, and shoes issued to the prisoners. This was nearly the last invective exchange between Hoffman and Tucker. For a little over two weeks later a directive arrived at post headquarters for Tucker to prepare a duplicate set of rolls for the prisoners; they were to be transferred to Vicksburg, Mississippi, for exchange.

b. Other Matters

In addition to sanitation, administration, morale, discipline, and other kindred topics, Camp Douglas officials between February and September were also occupied with adjunct problems.

Escapes were frequent during this period, for the guards were lax and susceptible to tricks and bribes. Some Rebels went over the fence using crude ladders, some went under it by burrowing holes, and others went through it. On July 21, 103 got out, followed three nights later by another 21. Most escapees were quickly recaptured, a few were shot. Incomplete though they are, Camp Douglas records show 48 prisoners successfully got away, although the actual number was undoubtably much greater.

The appearance of the camp had changed slightly. Illinois volunteers who continued to organize and train at Camp Douglas were sheltered in tents around the outside, which increased the total area to 114 acres. The wooden fence along the south boundary was moved outward a bit, and all around it was repaired, strengthened, and a guard walk added. Plans for further camp expansion and

O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 263, 353.

Ibid., p. 385; Hoffman to Tucker Aug. 28, 1862, RG 393 N.A.

O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 62, 86, 241, 247, 278-79, 293-94, 323-24; Vol. 8, p. 987.

repairs were cancelled when it was learned the Rebels would be exchanged.

Rebel officers were supposed to have been separated from the other ranks immediately after capture but this was not done until June 21, when they were transferred to Johnson's Island. Hoffman's initial prison site selection, was now a prisoner depot exclusively for officers. Also, a War Department general order discharged Confederate medical officers attending prisoners. On July 31 all Confederate chaplains were released.

Martial law was declared in effect commencing July 8. This act plus other restrictions caused Tucker to bear the brunt of allegations of despotism in the Chicago newspapers.

On August 4 Tucker arrested Dr. L.D. Boone, a wealthy, prominent Chicago citizen and president of the Citizens Relief Committee. Boone was allowed free access to the prisoner's area by Colonel Mulligan in violation of Hoffman's visitor ban, to which Boone took advantage by distributing money. Several prisoners used the cash to bribe a guard and escape. Recaptured, they confessed that the money came from Dr. Boone. But Boone, it turned out, was a loyal, upstanding if somewhat gullible Unionist with a son in the Union army. Tucker recommended to Hoffman that he be dealt with leniently, and Hoffman dutifully turned the matter over to Secretary of War Stanton, supporting both Tucker and Boone and recommending Boone's release. The matter was dropped, and in all likelihood Boone was set free in mid-September when the Rebels were exchanged.

D. Exchange: The Dix-Hill Cartel

The Dix-Hill Cartel was an agreement for the exchange and parole of all prisoners of war. Negotiations opened in June 1862 and concluded when the document's signing on July 22 by Major General John A. Dix, representing the Union forces, and Major General D.H. Hill for the Confederates. The agreement consisted of a brief preamble, seven articles, and three supplemental articles. The preamble skirted the touchy issue of Confederate recognition thustly: "The undersigned having been commissioned by

Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 247; E.A. Colbert, Chicago, Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Garden City, (Chicago, 1868) p. 94.

O.R., Series II, Vol. 3

Ibid., pp. 192-95, 223.

Ibid., pp. 503-04.

the authorities they respectfully represent to make arrangements...."

Article I contained a scale of equivalents to be the basis for all exchanges. Private soldiers and common seamen would be exchanged with each other man for man. A sergeant or petty officer would be exchanged for two privates or seamen, a general or admiral was worth sixty, and so on.

The second and third articles dealt with local, state and militia ranks, and civilians. Militiamen could not become prisoners unless they were on active duty at the time of capture; civilians such as sutlers, teamsters, and government workers or contractors would be exchanged man for man with other civilians. The remaining articles dealt with the actual mechanics of exchange and the effect parole would restrict the availability of released prisoners for military duty. Two exchange points would be: Aiken's Landing on the James River, Virginia, Vicksburg, and Mississippi. The character of parole was in the nature of a quasi-exchange, to be effected by a tally system with conversion to actual exchange. Since it was not therefore expected that either side would accumulate large numbers of prisoners or hold them longer than briefly, no provisions were made to govern the uniform treatment of captives. Two "agents for exchange" would be appointed to attend to details. Article 8, a supplemental article, stipulated that both sides should "carry out promptly,... and in good faith all the details and provisions" of the cartel.

At the time it was signed, the Union had 11 prisoner depots of varying sizes containing 20,500 prisoners. Camp Douglas, with 7,800, was by far the largest. Camp Morton, at Indianapolis, Indiana, was second with 4,000, Camp Butler at Springfield third with 2,000. No other camp contained more than 1,500. The other camps and their prisoners were: Camp Chase, 1,500; Johnson's Island, 1,300; Ft. Monroe, 1,000; Ft. Delaware, 1,000; Ft. McHenry, 500; Ft. Warren, 500; Alton Prison, 500; St. louis Prison, 400.

Colonel Hoffman began to effect the exchange of Camp Douglas' prisoners on July 31, when he instructed Colonel Tucker to detail extra headquarters clerks to complete an extra set of rolls in four

56. Ibid., p. 278. Thr Virginia exchange point was later relocated to Harrison's Landing. The Dix-Hill Cartel text is in O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 266-68.

56.

Ibid., p. 278. (The Virginia exchange point was later relocated Harrison's Landing. The Dix-Hill Cartel text is in O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 266-68.

days. But, as an example of military hurry-up-and-wait, it was not until after August 28 that Tucker got an order to actually begin the movement. Prisoners would be transported via Cairo to Vicksburg in parties of 1,000, each group escorted by a company of armed guards. Tucker was to certify correct a duplicate set of rolls showing those present, left behind sick, or on parole. Prisoners' money held by the post commissary would be returned to them by the officers of the guards when they reached Vicksburg. Guerrillas and those who did not want to go would not be exchanged. Anyone who did not wish to return to the Confederate Army could take an oath of allegiance to the United States and be discharged. Sick men would be forwarded to Vicksburg from time to time as they recovered. Hoffman told Tucker he would be in Chicago shortly, but instead detailed his assistant, Capt. Henry W. Freedley to supervise.

Hoffman disposed of some last items in late September. When the prisoner sick list shrank to 10 or 15 they would be transferred from the prison hospital to the post hospital. The prisoner hospital would then be shut down and the physicians discharged. All books and records relating to the prisoners would be boxed and turned over to the post quartermaster. Hoffman had a last gripe. Captain Freedley reported the prisoner fund was in debt. "This should not have been..." scolded Hoffman; Tucker had incurred this debt at his own personal risk because the commissary was not authorized to go beyond the limit of the fund.

By late September, to the relief of all concerned, the Rebels were gone. About 150 too sick to be transported were left behind. Reflecting on Chicago's prisoner of war experience, which everyone believed to be at an end, the Tribune was moved to remark, "It is only a wonder that the whole 8,000 filthy hogs did not go home in pine boxes instead of on their feet." The Tribune was in part correct. Nearly 800 Confederate soldiers had died in captivity while at Camp Douglas.

Hoffman to Tucker, Aug. 28, Sept. 9,20, 1862, RG 249, N.A.

Ibid., Sept. 24,26, 1862.

The Chicago Tribune, Sept. 22,23, 1862; Mortality figure computed by adding figures in O.R. Series II, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003 and those in The Chicago Tribune for the period before reports begin.

III. CAMP DOUGLASS AS A PAROLE CAMP

A. Paroles Arrive from Virginia

It was just days after the last load of Rebels was packed off for the South when fresh train loads of prisoners began arriving in Chicago. But now it was masses of Yankees huddled in the freight cars. Two weeks earlier they had been captured by Confederate Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

The capitulation of Harpers Ferry, on September 15, was about as inglorious for the Union as the fall of Fort Donelson had been for the Confederacy. Neither garrison went down swinging, and following the surrender of 12,500 Union men by Brigadier General Julius White there were cries of cowardice, bad judgment and incompetence. All officers and men were released on parole by the Rebels, so that while they marched unencumbered to join General Robert E. Lee at the battle of Antietan, the mortified Harpers Ferry garrison marched toward Annapolis, Maryland. There on September 20 they were assigned to Brigadier General Daniel Tyler. He had been a prominent figure in the battle of Bull Run, but had seen no active service since.[1]

General Tyler was in for a stormy assignment. The Dix-Hill Cartel allowed not only for the exchange of captives but also for their parole. That is: release under restrictions until they could be formally exchanged. One result of the cartel was that several Union prisons were abandoned. A few other camps, however, were retained for the detention of Union parolees, who soon made a problem of themselves.

The rub came because the Harpers Ferry men believed they would receive back pay and a furlough to go home. The government on the other hand believed it would lose the services of thousands of soldiers if it allowed such a thing to happen. Secretary of War Stanton took a dim view of parole, feeling the system encouraged U.S. soldiers to give up for a chance to get back home. Instead of furloughs, all of which Stanton cancelled, those recently released by the Rebels were ordered to report to one of three camps: Camp Parole, Annapolis, Maryland; Camp Chase, Columbus,

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[1] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4 pp. 521-542, 543; Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue (Baton Rouge, 1964), p. 514. An aging West Pointer, Tyler's honesty in dealing with government contractors in 1834 cost him a promotion and led to his resignation.

Ohio; or Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Anyone who failed to immediately report would be dealt with as a deserter.[2]

Camp Parole was overcrowded with 20,000 troops, and Tyler's group of 8,000 was directed to refit at Camp Douglas before proceeding to St. Paul, Minnesota, to help put down an uprising of Sioux Indians. Camp Douglas was selected because Camp Chase was off of the direct route.[3]

Losses along the way from soldiers jumping train Tyler described as "enormous," especially men of the 32nd Ohio, who loudly announced they intended to visit home one way or another. General Tyler's command consisted of nine infantry regiments, detachments from three cavalry regiments, and four artillery companies, all unarmed. The troops hailed originally from New York Ohio, Vermont, Illinois, and a few from Indiana and Maryland. Some were heading toward home, others away. Tyler, a railroad man for years prior to the war, placed some blame on the transportation arrangements, complaining that if the railroad companies did so little as stock a barrel of water and make crude facilities to answer nature's calls in the freight cars, as they did with emigrant trains, many would not have been "left behind" at station stops.[4]

Camp Douglas was less prepared to receive the parolees than it had been to receive the Rebel prisoners back in February. The 126th New York trundled in from the Illinois Central Station dog tired on the night of September 27. Even in the dark the men sensed there was future unpleasant duty in store. The place stank.[5]

Next morning, with other troops also pouring in, they saw a filthy camp, the barracks and cook houses were infested with rats

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[2] William B. Hasseltine, Civil War Prisons: A Study in Psychology, (Columbus, 1930) pp. 74-78; O.R., Series II, Vol. pp. 94

[3] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 499, 542, 566. The idea to employ paroled troops as Indian fighters came from a suggestion from Governor David Tod, of Ohio, to Secretary of War Stanton.

[4] Hasseltine, Civil War Prisons, p. 76; O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, p. 595; Cameron to Hoffman, Jan. 20, 1863, R.G. 393. N.A. Tyler's command consisted of the 39th, 111th, 115th, 125th, and 126th New York; 32nd and 60th Ohio; 9th Vermont; 65th Illinois, detachments of the 8th New York, 12th Illinois, and 1st Maryland Cavalry; 1st Indiana Independent Battery, Company "M", 2nd Illinois Artillery, and companies "A" and "F", 5th New York Artillery.

[5] Arabella M. Wilson, The Adventures of 1,000 "Boys in Blue", (Albany, 1870) p. 107.

and crawling with vermin or lice, called "greybacks". Some sick Rebels were still present and a few dead ones were discovered in the barracks. One soldier said his quarters would not have made a healthy stable for cattle.[6]

Nasty though the barracks were, there were not enough to go around. Colonel Tucker, still commandant of the post while Tyler commanded the troops, received authority to lease the fair grounds west of camp, where the three last arrived regiments were placed in horse stalls or under shelter tents. Officially this temporary arrangements was called Camp Childs, but to the discontented occupants of the stalls, the place became popularly known as "Camp Tyler."[7]

A few days work with brooms, brushes, soap and lime, sweeping, scrubbing and whitewashing, made the camp comparatively clean. Killing rats gave some fun and exercise; bed sacks were issued and filled with prairie hay, new bunks put up or old ones repaired. Clothes were washed and the men marched by companies over to the lake for a bath.[8]

B. Sickness Among The Parolees

A soldier in the 126th New York said Camp Douglas was now "comparatively decent," meaning only that it was better than before they started cleaning. He attributed a sudden rise in sickness to the dejected morale of his outfit, lack of exercise, and the unhealthy condition of the camp. The regimental surgeon later claimed that the sick list grew longer and the mortality rate higher while at Camp Douglas than at any other time in their service. By November the regiment's sick list averaged sixty in quarters and forty in the hospital, with six captains and ten lieutenants off duty at a time. The 115th New York blamed their maladies on damp quarters and bad food. "The bacon was alive with maggots, the bread hard, sour and black, and the sugar the color of sand," said one. By November nearly everyone in this regiment felt more or less ill, forty to sixty were down with fever, and forty were dead. On October 13 General Tyler requested the assistant surgeons of the 111th and 126th New York left behind at

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[6] Ibid., p. 107, 120.

[7] James H. Clark, The Iron Hearted Regiment: An Account of the Battles, Marches and Gallant Deeds of the 115th Regiment, New York Volunteers, (Albany, 1865) p. 38.

[8] Wilson, Adventures 1,000 Boys in Blue, p. 108; Ezra D. Simons, A Regimental History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth New York State Volunteers (New York, 1888) p. 40.

Camp Parole be sent to Camp Douglas, for the regiments "have more sick men than our present medical officers can well attend."[9]

C. The Parolees Revolt

Plans to continue the Harpers Ferry paroled units on to Minnesota were suspended soon after arrival at Camp Douglas. General Tyler informed Major General John Pope at St. Paul that the regiments were unarmed, demoralized, and without leadership because nearly all the field grade officers were in Washington appearing as witnesses before the court martial of General White. They were utterly unfit for field service. To Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, who had ordered certain junior officers sent to Washington, he responded by saying if he complied, a full-blown mutiny might result. Already the 39th New York and 125th New York had "refused every duty." The 9th Vermont he adjudged his sole, reliable outfit, and it was unarmed. Only parts of two Illinois regiments were armed, but their 100-day enlistments had expired and, anyway, Tyler did not believe they were trustworthy.[10]

Trouble began back in Harpers Ferry when one of Stonewall Jackson's brigadiers told the paroled garrison that the terms of their parole exempted them from military duty. With furlough dreams dashed and knowledge gained that parole, as interpreted by their generals, meant confinement in camp, drill, guard duty, and Indian fighting, the parolees became insubordinate long before Chicago was reached.[11]

On October 5 Tyler reported the men's attitudes had improved and, grudgingly, they were behaving themselves. He expected them to police the camp, stand inspection, perform guard duty, and drill by company and battalion without arms.[12] Then a relapse occurred when the October 5 edition of the Tribune contained the text of the Dix-Hill Cartel, of which Article 4 stated that parolees "shall not be permitted to take up arms again, nor serve as military police or constabulary force in any fort garrison or field work... nor as guards of prisons, depots or stores, nor to discharge any duty usually performed by soldiers, until exchanged." General Tyler requested instructions from Washington while complaining that to

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[9] Wilson, Adventures 1,000 Boys In Blue, p. 117; Clark, The Iron Hearted Regiment, p. 38; Tyler to Wool, Oct. 13, 1862, R.G. 393, N.A.

[10] Tyler to Pope, Oct. 4, 1862, R.G. 393, N.A.; O.R. Series II, Vol.4, p. 596.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 600; General Order No. 8 Oct. 11, 1862, Camp Douglas Order Book, CHS.

comply fully, meant that "it leaves little else to do with the men but feed and clothe them and let them do as they please." He had no intention of allowing that to occur. However, his troops were under the firm conviction they had been doublecrossed.[13]

Troubles got worse when some refused duty, walked away from guard posts and broke their muskets. Those disposed to obedience and discipline became intimidated by the majority. A guard mounting ceremony had to be dismissed when the guards were pelted with stones. To the tune of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, The Boys are Marching", parolees attacked sutler stores at night, demolishing the buildings and stealing stock. Some junior grade officers, angered because they did not get furloughs or passes, incited their men, causing Tyler to plead to Washington to have the field grade officers returned. The artillery officers, with some few exceptions, Tyler characterized as "drunken and worthless."

Arsonists were at large. On October 10 two barracks and cook houses were deliberately burned by the 32nd Ohio. Six days later eleven barracks and cook houses were torched; several soldiers nearly lost their lives, and when Chicago firemen were called to extinguish the blaze, some troops obstructed the road with lumber to block their horse-drawn engines. Portions of the camp fence went up in smoke and flames. At Camp Childs, arsonists burned some of the stables. There, too, a regular Donnybrook broke out between a New York regiment and some Illinois volunteer recruits, who had taunted the parolees with, "Harpers Ferry cowards."[14]

The worst offenders apparently were the Ohioans. The 32nd Ohio to the last officer and man, were placed under arrest by Tyler and confined to quarters. He reported it "thoroughly disorganized," 233 men present, 245 absent: "most of them deserters and now at their homes in Ohio." When the 60th Ohio tried to "clean out" a sutler mutually shared by their regiment and the 115th New York, a tremendous brawl broke out, whereupon the Ohioans threatened to "burn out" the New Yorkers, the obvious victors of the fight. A crisis came on October 22 when Tyler had the regiment placed under guard and the Ohioans displayed menacing signs of resistance. To his great gratification the guards stood firm and the 60th Ohio lost heart. A search of their quarters confiscated a number of weapons. He appraised the outfit as "lost to the

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[13] O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, p. 600.

[14] Ibid., p.645; Simons, Regimental History, p. 44; Wilson, Adventures 1,000 Boys In Blue, p. 116; Clark, Iron Hearted Regiment, p. 39; Tyler to Thomas, Oct. 5, and Nov. 2, 1862, R.G. 393, N.A.

service... the men not caring for anything," and on November 10 it was mustered out of the army.[15]

In quelling the mutiny of the 60th Ohio, Tyler felt forced to call upon a company of the 16th United States Infantry, encamped three miles away at Hyde Park. So for a while the camp perimeter was guarded by U.S. Regulars who, incidently, shot one or two parolees trying to run their posts. Believing that the crisis was passed, thereafter Tyler's position for the parolees was subordination, drill, police, and guard duty. Also, he had Camp Childs abandoned and all parolees removed to Camp Douglas.[16]

Having regained a degree of control General Tyler reported to Washington, "I am shaping matters here so as to make an efficient force of about 6,500 - 7,000." Courts martial in constant session found soldiers guilty of contempt for officers, selling rations for liquor, destruction of government property, and other breaches of conduct. Hard cases were sent to the penitentiary.

Boards of officers met to examine fitness of their peers and discharge incompetents. Medical boards discharged the sick whose only service for a year had been being ambulanced from post to post.[17]

Tyler also began rebuilding burned barracks and fencing from old stables and used lumber. Labor was provided by the troops, each regiment supplying six men paid an extra 40 cents per day.[18]

"My experience here convinces me of one fact," he advised Washington," that paroled men should be kept as far from their homes as possible. If near home, no power on earth can keep them to their duty." Further, he complained he had received few instructions from his superiors, who should develop a "fixed policy" covering parolees.[19]

Insubordination had not totally ceased, for the troops still demanded to go home, rations remained bad, and if arson to the barracks ceased burning or smashing the compound fence increased. Colonel Hoffman, on November 10, recommended the ration be cut to

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[15] Tyler to Hill, and Tyler to Thomas, Nov. 12, 1862, RG 393, N.A.; O.R., Series II, Vol. 4 p. 645.

[16] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, p. 645; Clark, Iron Hearted Regiment, p. 40.

[17] Tyler to Thomas, Oct. 31, 1862, R.G. 393 N.A.

[18] Tyler to Potter, Nov. 4, and circular, Nov. 6, 1862, Ibid.

[19] Tyler to Thomas Oct. 31, and Nov. 14, 1862, Ibid.

create a fund for parolees much like the prisoner fund, for petty purchases. Tyler wisely declined to accept on grounds that any interference with the food allowance might renew trouble and render them unfit for active duty.[20]

Toward the later part of November the New York outfits were declared exchanged and, like the Rebels before them, entrained in lots of 1,000. They were headed for Washington and returning to Virginia. There were few if any regrets. Quipped a New York parolee: "Farewell, paradise of mud. City of stairs, rats, and lager beer saloons. Good bye shivering fevers, wretched horse stall, and rotten bacon. Farewell!." The 115th New York, as a parting salute, was accused of setting fire to their barracks, which they vehemently denied years later. Left behind was a small post cadre, some Illinois volunteers organizing, the 9th Vermont, and the 65th Illinois, which had organized at Douglas before being captured at Harpers Ferry and was now back at square one.[21]

It was not until January 1863 that the total cost of the damage inflicted on Camp Douglas by the parolees could be ascertained. To Colonel Hoffman's December 22 demand for an investigation, Colonel Daniel Cameron, then post commandant, responded that a Board of Survey had studied the matter. Total cost amounted to $7,652.70. Additional damage was done to Camp Childs, plus the parolees had broken 200 muskets. Known units were responsible for $2,169.65 worth of damage; no individual or unit could be held accountable for the rest, for 71,400 square feet of fence had been destroyed. Colonel Cameron accused the 32nd Ohio, 60th Ohio, 1st Indiana Battery, and 8th New York Cavalry as having taken a lead in the vandalism. The 115th New York was responsible for damage at Camp Childs, he said. Hoffman recommended to General Meigs that the accused outfits be held liable and be required to reimburse the government, but Meigs apparently took no action.[22]

All was not bad according to Christopher C. Keeney, a U.S. medical inspector who examined Camp Douglas in December after the parolees departed. Reported Keeney: "Some of the barracks have

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[20] The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 12, 18, 1862; O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 698-99, 710-11.

[21] Tyler to Thomas, Nov. 19, 1862, R.G. 393 N.A.; Frederick H. Dyer, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion 3 vols. (New york, 1959) Vol. 3, p. 1075. Clark in Iron Hearted Regiment, pp. 40-41, argues that upon vacating their barracks, soldiers from other regiments rushed in to claim their stoves, emptied ashes and coals on some straw, and the fire resulted. All the regiment's officers and men were present and accounted for at the time.

[22] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, pp. 110, 214; Cameron to Hoffman, Jan. 20, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.

been burnt and others more substantial have been built in their places. The recent conflagrations have been attended with one salutary effect, in the immense destruction of animal life in the form of lice, and had less of the filthy and rickety quarters been spared still greater salutary effects would have been the result."[23]

[23] Medical and Surgical History, Part III, Vol. 1, p. 49.

IV. CAMP DOUGLAS A TEMPORARY PRISON AGAIN

A. Arkansas Post and Stones River: Ten percent Mortality

Following the exchange of the Harpers Ferry parolees, Camp Douglas lapsed into a two-month period of quietude. Commandant Cameron complained to Adjutant Fuller in Springfield that officers of the 14th Illinois Cavalry were inducing his men to desert and join their outfit. To the U.S. Adjutant General he griped that regular army recruiters had enlisted some parolees before they had been exchanged. To Governor Yates he offered some suggestions concerning the camp's future role in the war effort. Cameron, who was commander of the 65th Illinois and held post commandant as a collateral duty, urged that the camp should have a permanent commander, whose duties would include guarding government property, employing the facility as a district depot, arresting deserters, and overseeing state recruiting. Cameron forgot, perhaps, that Camp Douglas was under federal jurisdiction.[1]

Colonel Hoffman, who in October moved his office from Detroit to Washington, was in part thinking along similar lines. He agreed that a parolee officer such as Cameron should not be commandant and requested Major General Horatio G. Wright, then commanding the Department of the Ohio, to select a suitable replacement. The post called for an officer to rank any regimental colonels who might be present, concluded Wright, and on January 6, 1863, he appointed Brigadier General Jacob Ammen. Ammen was another aging ex-West Pointer who had resigned from the peacetime army, then rejoined when war broke out.

Following action at Shiloh and Corinth, Ammen had been assigned to duty at Camp Dennison, Ohio. He was available in early 1863 because his troops had been transferred away from under him. He was reported to Hoffman as being a rigid disciplinarian and stickler for regulations.[2]

As far as Camp Douglas' immediate future went, Hoffman favored continued use as a parole camp, but this was not done. Events moved too quickly. On January 11 Major General John A. McClernand captured a Confederate garrison at Arkansas Post, or Fort Hindman, netting some 4,800. General Grant harbored no intention of having anyone exchanged at Vicksburg while he was conducting a campaign to capture that place and had them quickly sent to St. Louis. At St. Louis were another 2,500 Rebel captives taken at the turn of the year during the battle of Stones River. Hoffman ordered 4,000

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[1] Cameron to Fuller, Dec. 10, to Thomas, Dec. 22, and to Yates, Dec. 20, 1862, RG 393, N.A.

[2] O.R. Series II, Vol. 5, pp. 130, 157, 374; Warner, Generals In Blue, pp. 6-7.

prisoners sent to Camp Douglas and 2,000 to Camp Morton. U.S.Quartermaster J.A. Potter, in Chicago, had informed him that Douglas' capacity was between 3,000 and 4,000 with 300 sick or wounded.[3]

Between January 27 and February 1, some 3,800 woebegone prisoners arrived on the lake front. Those captured at Arkansas Post hailed from Texas or Arkansas. A large number of Tennesseans had been taken at Stones River.[4]

The astonishing fact connected with this prisoner group, and indeed connected with Camp Douglas' history, is that immediately following their arrival the mortality rate leaped to an all time high. Official statistics disclose that 387 out of 3,884 prisoners died during the month of February, very nearly ten percent . This was the highest monthly mortality rate for any prison--North or South--during the entire Civil War. During the same month 623 were reported as sick.[5]

The Sanitary Commission was horrified. So to "carefully avoid all exaggeration of statement," Doctors Thomas Hun and Mason F. Cogswell in a report forwarded to the War Department emphasized statistics. From January 27 to February 18, the date of the Commission's inspection, 385 patients were admitted to the camp hospital, of whom 130 died, a mortality rate of 33 percent. Many of the 148 survivors, they pointed out, must certainly have also perished. Another 130 died in the barracks, and 150 were awaiting admission to the hospital. Newspapers had informed them how another 100 had died within the previous week. "Thus it will be seen that 260 out of the 3,800 prisoners had died in twenty-one days, a rate of mortality which if continued would secure their total extermination in about 320 days. Under the circumstances the rate of mortality would increase rather than diminish." Even one of the fence guards remarked that four Rebels bearing one of their comrades to the dead house was an hourly sight.[6]

What caused such an appalling mortality? Several obvious factors were prominent. Perhaps there were others.

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[3] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, pp. 176, 180, 203-04, 207, 301.

[4] Ammen to Hoffman, Jan. 1862 R.G. 393; N.A. The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 24,28,31, 1862; G.G. Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War 2 vols. (Burlington, 1888) Vol. 2, p. 210.

[5] O.R. Series II, Vol. 8,p. 989.

[6] Ibid. p. 583; Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War Vol.2, p. 210.

First was the wretched physical condition of the prisoners when they arrived at Camp Douglas. Many were more dead than alive from their previous hardships and, anyway, these prisoners were hardly the cream of Southern aristocracy. The Tribune depicted the Arkansas Post prisoners as "white trash," describing them as poor, dirty and cadaverous." A Vermont guard was moved to remark they looked as if they were clothed in sack-cloth and ashes and doing penance for past sins. Arkansas Post was an unhealthy place long before armed Yankees appeared; a Texas lieutenant wrote in his diary, "A great many sick are in this month of November and they die very fast." Following capture, the trip to St. Louis crowded them aboard river steamers, where most prisoners slept on open decks without protection from the elements; few had extra blankets or more than the clothes on their backs, and cooking facilities were poor and limited. The stopover at St. Louis did not help. Wilted in morale as well as health, 800 prisoners were under medical treatment before reaching Chicago. Some had smallpox.[7]

A second obvious reason for the mortality was that Camp Douglas' basic faults from the previous year endured. Drainage remained bad despite prisoner labor detail efforts. Everything always seemed damp, and no improvements to make the camp healthier took place. True, $15,000 had been spent since October to rebuild barracks and fences, but some were still in disrepair. It became an accusation by the Sanitary Commission that the hospital was in worse shape than in 1862.[8]

A corollary that must be mentioned is the near-Arctic Chicago weather. General Ammen noticed, as the last prisoners were arriving, many were without blankets or proper clothing and suffering severely. A guard said some prisoners did not have hats, coats, or shoes, with the temperature dropping to minus twenty degrees. There were rumors that some prisoners froze to death. Camp Douglas officials denied this, but the Tribune quoted an investigative report revealing blankets and the fuel supply were insufficient, and extra clothing was being employed as a reward for taking the Oath of Allegiance. Whatever the facts, some Union army uniforms condemned as unfit for Federal issue were distributed, and

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[7] The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 28,31, 1863; Samuel T. Foster, One of Cleburne's Command, (Austin, 1980) p.8; Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War, p. 210; O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, p. 235, 345. A footnote in Foster, op.cit., by another Texan at Arkansas Post states when he wrote home: "There is a good deal of sickness here, pneumonia and winter fever. This country was never made I don't think for white people to live in, nothing but frogs and craw fish can live here long...."

[8] The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 28, 1862; O.R., Series II, Vol.5, pp. 345-588.

Chicago's citizens contributed a large number of articles, but not nearly enough to go around.[9]

As to medical care given to the prisoners--a third explanation--evidence is contradictory. To be sure, medicine in 19th-century America at its best was primitive and difficult to evaluate by modern practices. Still, at this time there existed no post surgeon. Medical care was in the hands of Dr. George H. Park, Surgeon of the 65th Illinois. Under him were four civilian physicians, employed by contract, aided by four Rebels: a surgeon and three assistant surgeons who voluntarily stayed with their men.

On March 11 Hoffman's assistant, Captain Freedley, reported the post hospital was neat, clean, supplied with cots and bedding, medical supplies ample, and patients were treated kindly under a competent physician. But the Sanitary Commission, conversely, reported the few cots present had been supplied by public charity, were without bedding, and neglected patients were filthy and covered with vermin in smelly conditions "discreditable to Christian people." Captain Freedley, after noting the February mortality rate, said prisoner health was improving. The Sanitary Commission predicted it would grow worse.[10]

A fourth factor, though to a limited extent, must have been the food given to the prisoners. Rations for the camp were supplied by contractor, William F. Tucker. Guards and prisoners received the same ration at a cost of $14.43 per hundred, an increase of $3.58 over the previous year. In his optimistic report,Freedley told Hoffman that the food was "good, wholesome and of the first quality". The commissary was being run efficiently and to the satisfaction of all concerned. No one was getting fat at Camp douglas, but neither were they being starved. The contribution of food to the high mortality was not in quantity or quality but rather due to the lack of a balanced diet, course, and unsuited to weakened, sick men in drooped spirits.[11]

Whatever the comprehensive explanation for the unusually high mortality rate for the Arkansas Post and Stones River prisoners

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[9] Ibid., Feb. 4,6,1862; and Ibid. pp. 235, 265, 345; Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War, p. 210.

[10] O.R., Series II, Vol.5,pp. 345, 587-88. It should be noted that, Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 989, no statistical return is found under Camp Douglas for March, 1863.

[11] Ibid., p. 344.

records for this period are sparse), the grim fact is that in ten weeks about 700 prisoners or, nearly twenty percent, died.[12]

Fortunately for the prisoners, their stay was brief. On March 28 they were loaded on trains bound for City Point, Virginia, via Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Ft. Monroe. The 9th Vermont, declared exchanged on January 10 and performing guard duty with new Enfield rifle-muskets, formed the escort. Two companies accompanied each 500-man prisoner group. On April 6, General Ammen informed Hoffman that except for 350 in the hospital, sick, or acting as attendants, the camp was cleared. Some 2,534 were transferred; 229 took the Oath of Allegiance and were released.[13]

Hoffman directed that all government property purchased through the prisoners' fund be collected by Assistant Quartermaster Potter. Should the camp again hold prisoners in the future, the Chicago quartermaster was authorized to make periodic inspections.[14]

Among those transferred prisoners were ten men infected with smallpox. By the time the trains reached Baltimore, one prisoner died, and a guard had contracted the dreaded disease. Those infected were quarantined in Baltimore's Marine Hospital. Secretary Stanton of the War Department was notified, and he was angry, very angry. Stanton demanded an explanation from Hoffman within 24 hours.[15]

It happened that all Chicagoans had recently gone through a smallpox scare. The disease was first observed in November but did not become prevalent until February, coinciding with the arrival of the Arkansas Post prisoners. A complaint from a Cottage Grove neighbor speedily brought a concerned committee representing the Chicago Board of Health to investigate. They urged vaccination of everyone, construction of a quarantine hospital, a special cemetery set aside, and all possibly infected clothing burned. Nineteen prisoners and a like number of guards had meantime died, and 500 cases were estimated in Chicago in mid-March, but the epidemic was rapidly declining.[16]

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[12] The Chicago Tribune, April 4, 1863.

[13] Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War, p. 210; The Chicago Tribune, March 31, April 1, 1863; O.R. Series II, Vol. 5, p. 440.

[14] Ibid., pp. 452-53.

[15] Ibid., pp. 444, 453.

[16] The Chicago Tribune, March 12,20, 1863.

Colonel Hoffman, obviously discomforted by Stantons curtness, in his response disavowed all responsibility for the spread of the disease and placed all blame on the shoulders of General Ammen and the Camp Douglas medical staff for slackness in examining prisoners prior to departure for exchange. General Ammen had permitted lenient Rebel surgeons to conduct the physicals, Hoffman learned, which was beyond his control. Furthermore, he pointed out, to delay or cancel an exchange involving thousands of prisoners just because of a few cases of smallpox, which were diagnosed to be slight, would have been silly.[17]

He vigorously attempted to pinpoint responsibility but Camp Douglas had meanwhile undergone a command change and his efforts met frustration. In a follow-up message in response to the Sanitary Commission's report, Hoffman stated a fundamental problem: "When there are such frequent changes of commanders and medical officers as there has been at Camp Douglas it is almost impossible to have instructions carried out. There is no responsibility and before neglects can be traced to anyone he is relieved from duty."[18]

Mr. Stanton remained unhappy about the incident. Colonel Hoffman, caught in the middle, clearly believed that Camp Douglas had blemished his reputation in the eyes of a superior. If he could prevent it, such a thing would never occur again.

For the next four months, from April until August, Camp Douglas housed only a handful of prisoners, mostly sick, and a small garrison. In May, of the 339 Rebels present, 42 died and 226 were exchanged, leaving only about 50 present during the spring and summer.[19]

Most of the Federals also moved on. The 104th Illinois, captured by the Rebel cavalry raider John Hunt Morgan at Hartsville in mid-December and sent to Camp Douglas as parolees, was declared exchanged and returned to Tennessee by April 10. General Ammen was transferred to command the District of Illinois, on April 13, headquartered at Springfield. Colonel Cameron returned to command for not much more than a week before April 19, when his 65th Illinois was declared exchanged and ordered to duty in Kentucky. Command devolved upon Captain John C. Phillips, Company M, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery. This outfit, Companies F and H, 65th Illinois, and Company F of the 9th Vermont, was all that was left. And this was further reduced when Phillips' battery was ordered to Mississippi to join Grant's army, about to besiege Vicksburg,

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[17] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5 pp. 449-50, 495-97.

[18] Ibid., pp. 686-87.

[19] O.R.., Series II, Vol.8, pp.990.

leaving Captain James S. Putman, of Company F, with 169 men. The Vermont company escorted some prisoners to City Point, reducing the total to only 116. Some 200 Union wounded arrived at the end of the month for hospitalization.[20]

In June the city was enlivened by the new Department of the Ohio commander, Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, when he suppressed The Chicago Times for four days before Washington revoked his orders. Turnabout being fair play, another minor fracas aroused the papers when soldiers arrested a Chicago policeman and jailed him in the Camp Douglas guardhouse. Deserters were also placed in there, and one was shot while attempting to escape. In other words, not much of importance happened in wartime Chicago in 1863.[21]

Camp Douglas' days as an instruction camp were finally over. Up to June 1, 1863, more than 30,000 troops had been organized, equipped and trained at the post. The total included 27 infantry regiments, plus two companies, three cavalry regiments, and eight artillery batteries. For the remainder of the war, Illinois troops would be organized at Camp Fry, north of Chicago, Springfield's Camp Butler, or else.

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[20] Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 467-68, The Chicago Tribune, April 10,20,24, May 8,12,15,30, 1863; Dyer, Compendium, vol. 3, p. 1075.

[21] The Chicago Tribune, June 5,16,19, 1863.

V. CAMP DOUGLAS BECOMES A PERMANENT PRISON

A. Breakdown of The Dix-Hill Cartel

From nearly the moment of signing, the Dix-Hill Cartel seemed doomed. In the end, it was both parties who evaded the stipulation of Article 8, which called for the two sides to "carry out promptly, and in good faith all the details and provisions" of the agreement. There were a number of causes and reasons and incidences of avoidance, but two most prominent stand out.

The first concerned a thorny racial question. Following the battle of Antietam, President Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation as a war measure broadening the Union political base beyond salvation of the Union to further include the abolition of slavery. Southerners, alarmed by reading the document and taking it at face value, bitterly accused their opponents of inciting a racial insurrection, and learning that U.S. authorities had begun organizing regiments of freed slaves from their plantations seemingly confirmed their worst fears. A Confederate response came in the form of a joint resolution by their Congress on May 1, 1863, declaring that, in the future, white officers leading black soldiers would be tried for the crime of inciting servile insurrection, which carried the death penalty. Furthermore, black soldiers would be dealt with as runaway slaves rather than prisoners of war, to be turned over to state authorities for punishment or returned to their owners.[1]

Anticipating such a reaction, President Lincoln had asked Dr. Francis Lieber, a prominent Prussian-born professor of constitutional law at Columbia College, New York, to draft a code of war to govern the Army's conduct. Lieber's Instructions of the Government of the Armies of the United States, revised and transcribed into War Department General Orders No. 100, April 24, 1863, became the very first comprehensive code of international law issued by any government. Paragraph 57 states, "The law of nations knows no distinction of color...." If the Confederates enslaved a U.S. soldier, the government had a right to retaliate. Since it could not in turn enslave an enemy, it could evoke the death penalty.[2]

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[1] Haseltine, Civil War Prisons, pp. 72-73.

[2] Lieber's Code, as it is often called, appears in O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, pp. 671-82. Section III, 32 paragraphs, pertain to prisoners of war; and A.J. Barker, Prisoners of War, (New York, 1974) p. 13.

This exchange of threat and counterthreat led to a suspension of the exchange of commissioned officers, commencing May 25, although for a while other ranks continued to be exchanged.[3]

A second major cause for the breakdown of the cartel came because the tide of war changed and different interpretations were placed on details of the agreement. When the cartel was signed in the summer of 1862, Union forces had just suffered a disastrous setback before Richmond in the Peninsula Campaign. Consequently they were most anxious that exact terms be carried out, for the Confederacy held a preponderance of prisoners. One year later, however, nearly to the day, the Confederates suffered twin disasters at the battle of Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg, and now it was the North who held greater numbers and Southerners who pressed for strict compliance. When the North balked, the Southerners in September, while the battle of Chickamuga was brewing, declared an unagreed exchange involving unequal numbers of two for three in their favor, including nearly half of the 36,000 recently captured in Mississippi and Louisiana. In the bickering over misunderstandings and abuses, the two commissioners for exchange, Union Brig. Gen. Sullivan A. Meredith and Confederate Col. Robert Ould, bitterly began exchanging names rather than prisoners. Negotiations broke down totally, and on October 27, 1863, all U.S. prison camp officials were notified by Secretary of War Stanton that for the time being all exchanges with the Confederate States were suspended. It was an impasse destined to last for 14 months, till nearly the end of the war.[4]

B. Preparations: A Sewer Is Built

In response to an April 1863 inquiry from the War Department, Colonel Hoffman addressed the prison situation in the West, where there were five prison sites. In Hoffman's opinion, only Johnson's Island, the sole facility designed to serve as a military confinement camp, was suitable. The remaining four were impressed instruction camps, modified slightly, where garrisons and commandants change too frequently. Camps Butler and Chase were either too small or poorly located. Camps Morton and Douglas, he felt, were serviceable only for parole camps or assembly points for recruits. What Hoffman seemed to be hinting at was construction

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[3] O.R. Series II, Vol. 5, p. 696.

[4] Lewis and Mewah, Prisoner Utilization, p. 30. For a detailed explanation of the negotiation breakdown between Meredith and Ould, see Edwin C. Bears, Historic Base Study: Andersonville (Washington, 1970) pp. 3-12.

of a large new prison modeled after Johnson's Island. What he got, and in the end all he got, was more prisoners.[5]

Relocating Camp Douglas could not be an alternative. Back in March, General Burnside had inquired of the War Department if he, as department commander, had authority to move the camp to Des Plaines, a few miles northwest of the city. He was told his question would require an investigation and an order from Mr. Stanton. In other words, no.[6]

Still, following the terrible prisoner death rate of February, there came a recognition that some changes were indispensable. The location, which in 1861 everyone believed was good, now became generally recognized as bad. Something had to be done about the drainage problem. Hoffman, on April 18, again addressed his tight fisted superior, General Meigs, about the possibility of a sewer. If prisoner labor were employed the project would cost only $5,000, and the present $2,000 balance in the prisoner fund would help defray the cost, he explained. Nearly all the space in the camp left for sinks was gone, which made the need greater than ever. Meigs replied he would take the issue under thought, and Hoffman pressed further, sending him copies of previous reports. Finally, Meigs acceded. On June 11 Hoffman relayed a go-ahead to Quartermaster Potter to begin construction according to the plan previously submitted by Samuel Greeley, the Chicago engineer.[7]

The labor took six weeks to complete but hardly begun when hoards of incoming prisoners arrived. When completed, the sewer was an underground wood-lined trough, narrower at the bottom than the top. It ran three-quarters around the interior of the camp, entering at the northeast corner, where it connected to the city water supply by a three-inch iron pipe. From there it ran west behind the cook houses inside the north fence until it turned south between the parade and the two rear barrack squares, then east through the hospitals and White Oak Square. It exited under the fence and continued easterly under a street named Cook Place until it emptied into Lake Michigan, a total of 3,600 feet. Five manholes gave access, and there were four drains built in to eliminate surface water. Ten privies with water-tight soil boxes connected from above. However belatedly, action had at long last been taken.[8]

C. Colonel De Land Becomes Commandant

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[5] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, pp. 511-13.

[6] Ibid. pp. 400, 409.

[7] Ibid, 492, 595, and Vol. 6, p. 4.

[8] Ibid., Vol.4, 280-81; The Chicago Tribune, Aug. 19, 1863.

Rumors that Confederate prisoners would again be held in Camp Douglas interrupted a relatively quiet summer of 1863 in Chicago. Captain Putman, the skeleton garrison commander, advised Colonel Hoffman on August 13 that Douglas could host 8,000; but Captain Potter, more experienced with the camp's facilities as Chicago quartermaster, compromised Putman's estimate with a more realistic figure of 6,000 maximum, including the guard force. Potter, unaware that Hoffman had not the power to appoint or discharge commanders, also requested a commandant.[9]

It was Department of the Ohio commander, Brig. Gen. Orlando B. Wilcox, who ordered the future new Camp Douglas commandant to report with his regiment from Dearborn, Michigan. He was Col. Charles V. De Land, a 35-year-old volunteer officer under the temporary misapprehension he was returning to the shooting war and his stop at Chicago would be brief. He would stay six months. De Land had a taste of captivity himself. As part of a Union occupation force at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, he had been taken during a Confederate cavalry raid, paroled at Richmond, and eventually exchanged. At the time he was a company commander in the 9th Michigan. Returning home to Jackson County, he received authority to raise a regiment, the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters. An infantry outfit with two companies of Chippewa Indians from the Lake Superior region, he became its colonel. De Land arrived on August 17, 1863 and officially took command the following day by order of General Ammen.[10]

De Land hardly had time to unpack his baggage. Within 24 hours the first 500-man prisoner group arrived, followed the next day by another 500, with further newcomers until 3,200 was reached by October 7. Additional arrivals over the next four weeks swelled the inmate population to 6,100, slightly above Quartermaster Potter's estimate of the camp's capacity.[11]

As usual, Camp Douglas was unprepared. In August only a single hydrant worked to supply water for 1,300 prisoners and 900 guards. Work on the sewer was hardly begun but at least it was in

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[9] O.R., Vol.6, pp. 200,206.

[10] Wilcox to De Land, Aug. 15, and Ammen to De Land, Aug. 18, 1863, Order Book, R.G. 393, N.A.; De Land Pension File, R.G. 15, N.A.

[11] Prisoner receipts of Sept. 24, 26, Oct. 4, 9, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.; The Chicago Tribune, Aug. 19, 21, 17, Sept. 1, 28, 1863.

progress, and the new inmates soon supplied fatigue details. Repairs were also made to the fence.[12]

De Land started off by issuing general orders to regulate the daily routine. General Ammen wrote to say that Hoffman's July 1862 instructions would serve as his guide and gave some suggestions based on his recent experience as post commander. De Land's problems included overcrowding, and he requested of Hoffman permission to rebuild the barracks burned Autumn 1862 by the paroled troops. The increasing numbers of prisoners forced them to be lodged in outhouses and kitchens. The post chapel he converted temporarily into a hospital. He also needed an additional hospital building and hospital laundry. Hoffman a month prior had asked Mr. Stanton if the burned barracks could be replaced. He conveyed Stanton's refusal to Camp Douglas. He did not, however, relay the War Department's exact words: "The Secretary of War is not disposed at this time, in view of the treatment our prisoners of war are receiving at the hands of the enemy, to erect fine establishments for their prisoners in our hands".[13]

1. Inspectors From Washington

On October 1 Colonel Hoffman directed Surgeon A. M. Clark, Assistant Medical Inspector, Prisoners of War, to canvass ten western hospitals occupied by U.S. paroled prisoners and Rebel prisoners of war. Furnishing Clark with a copy of his 1862 management regulations, Hoffman wanted Clark to find out how closely they were being followed.[14]

Surgeon Clark came to Chicago and inspected Camp Douglas on the ninth of October. A no-nonsense authoritarian similar to Hoffman, excuses or explanations counted for little -- conditions were either satisfactory or they were unsatisfactory. And there was much at Camp Douglas that passed under Clark's critical gaze which appeared unsatisfactory. The water supply was deficient; more hydrants were needed. Sinks were filthy and showed no evidence of management. Police of the camp was neglected. The guards and hospital patients seemed clean but, due to a lack of facilities, the prisoners were filthy. Many needed clothing. Major repairs were needed on the barracks. Bunks were unserviceable. Tables and other furniture were insufficient. The hospital and guards' barracks appeared to be well heated, but Clark

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[12] Ibid., Aug. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 19, 1863.

[13] G.O. No. 1 and 2, Aug. 17,23, 1863, Ammen to De Land, Aug. 22, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.; O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 314-15, 363, 390.

[14] Ibid., pp. 331-32.

observed few stoves in the prisoner's barracks. The prisoner's did their own cooking, unsupervised, noted Clark, and he discovered ovens going unused because bread was furnished by contract. Cooking utensils were scarce. Laundry facilities were insufficient. Discipline was lax. Nursing was deficient. Hospital bedding was very deficient; 1200 blankets were needed. Two additional medical officers were required. Typhoid fever and pneumonia were prevalent; measles cases were not isolated. Sickness recovery rate was not good. Medical records were satisfactorily kept, but the hospital fund was in arrears. Finally, the camp stockade, or "dungeon," Clark described as "inhuman."[15]

Two weeks following the inspection, Hoffman wrote to De Land expressing his displeasure, In sum, Clark had said that Douglas had seven major deficiencies. Foremost was the inadequate water supply and ground drainage, but he acknowledged progress was under way. Police of the camp Hoffman acidly called "inexcusably neglected". The barracks needed repairs inside and out. Cooking arrangements were chaotic and, finally, the hospital needed to be enlarged. "All these deficiencies must be remedied at once", ordered Hoffman. Furthermore, the post surgeon had to submit an immediate report concerning the hospital fund. "At the end of this month you will report what has been done to carry out the instructions contained in this letter," he ordered.[16]

On the deadline, October 31, De Land answered he was too ill to write, but three days later he responded to his two critics. He contended that discipline at Camp Douglas never was better, considering his security force was a quarter less in strength than the number of guards previously employed there. With 6,000 prisoners, shortages were bound to occur in housing, clothing and hospital space. Under the difficult circumstances he confronted he assured Hoffman he had been doing all that could be expected; the laundry and hospital building were being built, barracks were undergoing renovation, the fence was getting repaired, new latrines were being installed over the sewer, water supply was now adequate, and clothing was being distributed to supplement what was received by the inmates from their relatives. So far $20,000 had been spent. Stormy weather impeded progress, but most of the labor had been drawn from the prisoners working for a tobacco ration purchased through the prisoner fund. As to Hoffman's recommendation of using large boiler pots for cooking, De Land said that method failed when tried before. In closing, De Land said his

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[15] Ibid. pp.371-74.

[16] Ibid., pp. 417-18.

agenda was: first, prison security; second, humanitarian needs; and lastly, conveniences and adornments.[17]

Before De Land's explanation reached Washington, Hoffman again was writing to Camp Douglas headquarters, and this time expressed anger. In the ten weeks since De Land had taken command, ample evidence in the form of tardy and inexact reports indicated to Hoffman he was contending with another commandant out of the Tucker-Mulligan mold. A further case of carelessness came to Hoffman's attention following a prisoner transfer from Louisville to Chicago. It seems the officer in charge had merely counted heads as the inmates passed through Douglas' main gate; no roll call had been conducted, 11 prisoners were unaccounted for, and De Land gave no satisfactory explanation for the mistake. One Camp Douglas commandant had already made Hoffman look bad to his superiors and Hoffman did not intend to let such mistakes go unrebuked. To De Land he stormed: "It is your duty to see that those under you perform properly their duties assigned to them, and unless you hold them to a proper account of such neglect, as in this case, the responsibility must rest upon yourself. It is not sufficient that you give orders," he scolded, "but you must see that they are obeyed."[18]

On the sixteenth, with De Land's report at hand, Colonel Hoffman exhibited a better humor. He expressed appreciation for improvements under way, but he said the reason why his cooking scheme had not worked was because others did not want it to succeed, and he sternly explained what changes needed to be made. In effect, Hoffman was saying that he, Hoffman, would henceforth forward run Camp Douglas by remote control: "I depend upon you, Colonel, to put my plans into successful operation." Commandants would not think or act independently. "If there is any obstacle in the way, which I do not anticipate, report to me at once."[19]

For his part, De Land hated every day spent at Camp Douglas. He believed Hoffman and Ammen undercut his authority. While prisoners escaped in record numbers, he blamed the post's design and an inadequate security force. "We have all labored as I never labored before and I have done some pretty hard soldiering in the last two years," he told Hoffman.[20]

Besides feeling sorry for himself, he blamed others for his troubles. Errors in his paperwork were the fault of "the confused

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[17] Ibid., pp. 461-62.

[18] Hoffman to De Land, Nov. 2, 1863, R.G. 249, N.A.

[19] O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 489-90.

[20] Ibid., pp. 434-35.

hape in which the prisoners were forwarded here." Unable to supply data for a tri-monthly report to Springfield he told the department commander, "The fault lies with the commanders who preceded me, and it is too late to correct their errors."[21]

He took to petty squabbling about rank. Col. Benjamin Sweet, recently assigned to the security forces with a regiment of Invalids, challenged De Land's authority. Grounds were that his previous position as colonel of the 21st Wisconsin Regiment predated De Land's commission; also, his current U.S. commission took ascendancy over De Land's state volunteer commission. De Land fired back that when Sweet resigned from the volunteers service to accept a lower grade in the Invalids, he forfeited any title to prior rank. Besides, said De Land, Congress had not recognized the Invalid Corps as a part of the regular U.S. Army establishment, and appointments and commissions were without intent to place the Invalid Corps above the volunteer force.[22]

Receiving the dispatch in Springfield, General Ammen, possibly sensing trouble, forwarded it to Washington. Hoffman decided until further orders De Land would remain in command. He was leaving for Chicago that evening.[23]

He had good reason to be in a hurry. Colonel De Land, on the eleventh, wired that a serious fire had destroyed a goodly portion of the post, and Secretary Stanton had taken alarm.[24]

Hoffman arrived and inspected the damage after a breakfast in Chicago on November 15, four days following the fire. To a lesser degree he expressed gratification to find that only 400 feet of fence had burnt instead of 1000 as first reported. More serious appeared the other destruction. Quarters and mess halls for six guard companies, a commissary building, and other outbuildings and all their contents were in ashes. But unlike the arson of the year before, this fire was accidental. As nearly as could be determined, some Union officers had left a hot stove burning in their quarters during their dinner absence and the building ignited at the roof. Within minutes it got beyond control as high lake winds quickly spread the flames to nearby structures. The garrison reacted quickly to contain the loss, by tearing down threatened buildings to check the fire's spread, at the same time quelling the excited and cheering prisoners before they got ideas. Captain Goodwin, the quartermaster, had rebuilt the section of destroyed

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[21] De Land to Lt. Richmond, Oct. 13, 1864 R.G. 393, N.A.

[22] De Land to H.Q., Dist. of Ill., Nov. 9, 1863, R.G. 393 N.A.

[23] Hoffman to De Land, Nov. 14, 1863, R.G. 249 N.A.

[24] De Land to Hoffman, Nov. 12, 1863. R.G. 393 N.A.

ence before nightfall. Hoffman assured that any lost private property would be reimbursed by the government and gave necessary orders to rebuild the structures.[25]

Besides the fire damage, he also briefly inspected the rest of the post, finding prisoners' and guard quarters and the hospital much too crowded, but water supply and sewage system satisfactory. If he contracted any opinions about Colonel De Land's management he did not mention them in his report to the War Secretary. He promised he would recommend to Mr. Stanton that the vacant square destroyed by the arsonist parolees be rebuilt, and sustained De Land in his power struggle with Colonel Sweet. Then he departed to continue a tour of inspection at Rock Island, Johnson's Island, and Camp Chase.[26]

No sooner had Hoffman departed than another inspection took place. The inspector this time was Brig. Gen. William W. Orme, soon destined to be the next post commandant but for the present dispatched by War Department orders to conduct a three-week tour of twelve prisoner depots and report about their security, supplies, sanitation, "and everything relating to them which it may be useful to know". Uncritical and general in nature, Orme told Washington officials nothing they were not aware of: sanitation and supplies appeared good but the prison was overcrowded and the guard force was too small.[27]

2. Colonel De Land Disposed

Since Colonel De Land had taken command in mid-August his style had been that of a strict disciplinarian. Paragraphs of his first general order restricted visitors, restricted pass privileges for the garrison, restricted sutlers, and prohibited conversations between guards and inmates. Subsequent orders increased restrictions. Cases of Union men caught absent without leave would be treated as outright desertion. Further, Chicago authorities could claim a reward of $10 or even $30 for apprehending an absentee. All sutlers were ordered removed from post. He employed private detectives to snoop around and report potential threats. After the November 11 fire he decided all stoves would be extinguished at Taps, plus "a more strict discipline". Greater attention henceforth would be paid to police and sanitation. Quarters inspections increased. And if these actions made De Land unpopular with his own troops, the Confederates hated him. Following a mass tunnel escape involving nearly a hundred prisoners on December 2, De Land retaliated by having the flooring removed

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[25] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 633-34.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., pp. 660-61.

from all prison barracks and mess halls and the spaces filled with dirt.[28]

It certainly was true that improvements had taken place at Camp Douglas while under De Land, inadequate though they may have been. The sewer was completed, the barracks and fence repaired, clothing issued to the prisoners, and discipline tightened. A new hospital and laundry were being erected. By 1863's end nearly $30,000 had been spent. His security force increased. On December 18, ten companies of the Invalid Corps came from Elmira, New York, and Columbus, Ohio, to bolster the overworked guard force.

But his incaution with regard to record keeping kept De Land floundering in the eyes of supervisors. His days as a commandant were numbered. Rather than being summarily relieved, however, De Land was eased out of responsible office by way of a command reorganization. General William Orme, on December 16, got his orders to proceed to Chicago and command what became known as the Post of Chicago, its chief responsibility being supervision of the prison installation at Camp Douglas. Orme relieved De Land on December 23, 1863, but 10 days later reinstated him, assigning him to immediate command of the garrison, the internal management of the post, and custody of the prisoner population. But all camp correspondence would be merely routed through De Land to Orme's headquarters. De Land's duties became further reduced in early March when Orme appointed a separate garrison commander and commissary of prisoners, subject only to Orme's orders. But by that time it made no difference. De Land and his regiment were already under orders to report to the IX Army Corps at Annapolis, Maryland. They departed on March 17 by train.[29]

D. General Orme Becomes Commandant

The man in charge of Camp Douglas and all military facilities in Chicago was Brigadier General William W. Orme, a lawyer before

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[28] G.O. No. 1, august 17, G.O. No.6, September 9, G.O. No. 12, october 5, G.O. No. 14, October 13, G.O. No. 19, November 13, G.O. No. 21, November 21, G.O. No. 22, November 24, 1863, R.G. 393 N.A.; O.R., Series II, vol. 6 pp. 637-38.

[29] O.R., Series I, Vol. 52, p. 504; G.O. No.1, Dec. 23, 1863, G.O. No. 11, Jan. 2, 1864, Orme to Hoffman, Feb. 9, Mar. 15-22, 1864, R.G. 393 N.A. Colonel De Land later participated in the Virginia campaign of 1864: wounded at Spottsylvania, May 12, 1864, wounded at Petersburg, July 30, 1864, wounded and taken prisoner at Poplar Spring Church, Sept. 30, 1864, exchanged Feb. 1865 and honorably discharged Feb. 4, 1865. He was promoted brigadier general U.S. Volunteers Mar. 14, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious service." De Land Pension File, R.G. 15, N.A.

the war who had come originally from the East as a young man to rise rapidly in the practice of law. Abraham Lincoln once regarded him as the most promising lawyer in all Illinois. Elected colonel of the 94th Illinois Infantry, his first fight came at the battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas, gaining him notice for bravery and eventually a promotion. In the unhealthful climate of Mississippi while commanding a brigade in General Grant's army before Vicksburg, though, he contracted a tubercular condition rendering him unfit for further field command. Following his inspection tour for Secretary Stanton in November, he came to Chicago as a sickly man. He took over on December 23.[30]

Orme started by making several revisions to the standing orders and the daily routine. He convened the post Council of Administration to review procedures and audit the prison fund. His reorganization of the garrison guards featured the addition of an interior police patrol. Additional clerks were employed at headquarters to compensate for De Land's administrative carelessness. And he made sure to touch base with Colonel Hoffman concerning instructions governing the prisoners: "I find at this camp but very deficient records of such regulations." Hoffman was pleased enough to respond by saying, "The measures you have instituted I am sure will bring about all the necessary reforms so much needed and produce a state of discipline and police which will be highly satisfactory."[31]

Besides managerial alterations, Orme also made changes in the post's physical plant. The old building used as the guardhouse that had its roof partly blown off during a December storm got repaired. To the prisoner's barracks 50 heating stoves were added. Large cooking pots called Farmer's boilers were purchased to institute Hoffman's favored cooking scheme. Orme established a post bakery. He also made improvements to the new prisoner hospital by adding a furnace with plumbing and drain to supply hot water to its laundry. He white-washed the buildings, added water closets and washboards, and had zinc pads placed underneath stoves for fire prevention.[32]

But by far the most noticeable improvement begun by General Orme was the rearrangement of the prisoners' barracks. Oddly, there existed no physical separation between the prisoners and the

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[30] Warner. Generals in Blue, pp. 350-51.

[31] G.O. No.2, Dec. 2, G.O. No.4, Dec. 4, 1863, G.O. No. 9, Jan. 1, G.O. No.12, Jan. 8, G.O. No. 25, Mar, 1, 1864, S.O. No. 92, Dec. 26, 1863, No. 97, Jan. 20, 1864, Orme to Hoffman Dec. 29, 1863, R.G. 393; Hoffman to Orme, Jan. 27, 1864, R.G. 249 N.A.

[32] Orme to Hoffman, Dec. 23, 1863, April 23, 1864; S.O. No. 116, Feb. 3, G.O. No. 25, March 1, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

garrison; the prisoners stayed in the western half of the grounds while the garrison occupied the eastern half. The security force guarded the entire enclosure, and it had been this way since the days of the Fort Donelson prisoners. Orme conceived the idea of erecting a fence to divide the post in two, segregating the prison population without diminishing their space, while additionally reducing the number of sentinel posts necessary to keep watch over them. Furthermore, the barrack buildings he planned to rearrange from the current scheme of two large squares surrounding a parade ground, into parallel lines of barracks on east-west streets. Orme worked out the details--to include the benefits and savings to the government, in a report to Colonel Hoffman. After consulting Secretary Stanton, Hoffman nodded his approval. Actual work, however, had hardly commenced in the spring before Orme submitted his resignation. He became too sick to continue.[33]

1. More Inspectors

In early 1864 Washington officials kept themselves appraised of conditions at Camp Douglas and other prisons by means of traveling inspectors. Edward D. Kittoe, U.S. volunteers surgeon, examined the snow-covered prison on a frosty January 18. He had been dispatched by the Assistant Surgeon General, Col. R.C. Wood. A fortnight following Kittoe, Surgeon A.M. Clark, Colonel Hoffman's investigator, returned to gather data for another of his faultfinding reports.

Their reports were quite similar. Despite the sewer, both men believed the drainage remained imperfect. Kittoe deplored the site, saying the low, marshy land swept by cold damp winds and being too close to Chicago's smelly cattle slaughter yards contributed to diseases of respiratory organs. To him the site possessed "objections which neither money nor art can remove or obviate." The garrison appeared clean enough to both, but the Rebels they described as dirty and crawling with vermin. Many of them had diarrhea. Police in their area appeared bad. Cooking arrangements were in turmoil. Since De Land had removed the barracks' flooring the places were now masses of mud and filth, besides being overly crowded. Kittoe believed that discipline was good. Clark thought it was slack. He made a suggestion that since the barracks were about to be moved anyway, they should be raised off the ground a few feet.[34]

All was not bad, however. The water supply seemed ample, and if the prisoners' barracks were dirty at least they were warm

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[33] Orme to Hoffman, Feb. 11, March 22, 1864, R.G. 393; Hoffman to Orme Feb. 24, 1864 R.G. 249, Sweet to Hoffman , June 13, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[34] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 848-851, 908-910.

nough. Rations seemed good in quality and sufficient quantity. The hospital was in good shape overall. Even the hypercritical Clark found no fault there. The number of sick and the death rate seemed reasonable. All things considered, Camp Douglas displayed much improvement in the four months since Surgeon Clark's last inspection.[35]

In mid-April John F. Marsh, a special investigator for the Inspector General's office, submitted a report to his superiors reiterating what Kittoe and Clark told theirs. Marsh noted two additional criticisms, both unmentioned or unnoticed by the first two inspectors. He detected obvious friction between General Orme and Colonel James Strong, the successor to De Land as garrison commander. Nor did March seem much impressed by General Orme's attitude: "General Orme gives very little personal attention to his command at Camp Douglas. The result is a want of harmony and efficiency in the management of every department of his command."[36]

2. The Ration Swindle

When General Orme first took command he heard rumors afloat that the prisoners' rations were being short changed. The matter might not have come to light except for an unusual set of circumstances. A well-meaning Canadian from Montreal, Dr. Monroe A. Pallen, requested the U.S. War Department's permission to take a flag of truce boat and sail from Montreal to Richmond and back. Since the approaching winter promised to be severe, he wanted to raise money and supplies, he said, for relief of Confederate captives who were suffering at Johnson's Island, Point Lookout, Camp Chase, and Camp Douglas. He had heard of Confederate prisoners at Point Lookout being nearly naked and freezing to death.[37]

On December 19, 1863, Secretary Stanton sent copies of Dr. Pallen's allegations to Colonel Hoffman, who in turn distributed them to the four camp commandants and called for reports. General Orme, very recently assigned to the Post of Chicago, replied that prisoners in Camp Douglas were sheltered in heated barracks, receiving good food, were well-clothed, and had adequate medical care. He also mentioned, however, that upon taking command he became aware that abuses had existed in the commissary but they were now being corrected. To offer evidence his prisoners were not suffering, Orme submitted responses to eleven questions from the Confederate sergeants-major in charge of prisoner squads concerning their rations, quarters, blankets, medical attention, and health.

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 57.

[37] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, p. 178.

of the 24 responses to the questionnaire, 14 sergeants said they were dissatisfied with the beef ration, 7 signified they were satisfied, while 3 made non-committal comments like, "I rely on the gentlemen in charge to do justice to prisoners." Meanwhile, the post commissary for prisoners, Capt. Levant C. Rhines, reported to Orme that prisoner needs were adequately met, except for the beef ration. Said Rhines: "I most fully believe the prisoners have been shamefully treated by the contractor for fresh beef.[38]

Even before an aroused Colonel Hoffman studied the papers from Camp Douglas and demanded a thorough investigation and full report, Orme began gathering facts. All serious complaints seemed to have occurred before December 10. Rations then were improperly being issued directly to the prisoners instead of through the post commissary. Until November 10, the firm of E. S. Fowler and Company held the contract; after that date it went to John McGinnis, Jr. and Company. But Orme discovered these two companies were an identical group of men--E.S. Fowler, R.E. Goodell, E.L. Baker, and John McGinnis, Jr. All the owners did was change the business' name.[39]

When time came to issue food, all rations, except fresh beef went from the Fowler employees directly to the prisoners. The beef also was directly issued to prisoners, but a sub-contractor by the name of Curtis held that contract.[40]

Orme's investigation showed that pork and bacon were up to contract agreement; salt beef was good; but fresh beef was deficient in quality and quantity from twenty to forty percent, benifitting the sub-contractor. The deficiency applied to prisoners' rations but not to those supplied the Union garrison. The flour issued was only fair quality but proper in quantity. A contractor, Kendall & Sons, supplied quality bread, but there were complaints that the quantity was short. Since there were three sizes of loaves, Orme gave the bakers the benefit of doubt. Beans were good quality but they came mixed with peas. Some prisoners complained about the practice while others said they preferred it that way. Beans and peas cost the same, so Orme was unable to say if the government had gotten cheated. Rice and hominy were all right.[41]

The coffee situation was puzzling. The ground coffee issued prior to December 1, Orme said, contained everything but pure

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[38] Ibid., pp. 778,798, 799, 800.

[39] Ibid., pp. 811-12. 928.

[40] Ibid. p. 928,

[41] Ibid., 927-29.

ground coffee. It cost only ten cents a pound compared to whole green coffee, which cost thirty cents a pound. The contractors kept a supply of green coffee on hand but since neither garrison nor guards knew of it they drank the concoction called ground coffee. Colonel De Land, still post commander, told Orme that he had ordered everyone to draw green coffee, not to draw ground coffee, and gave no further thought to the matter. Neither did Orme.[42]

With respect to the rest of the ration, no complaint was made about the tea; very few drank tea. The sugar was fair in quality, sufficient in quantity. Vinegar, salt, candles, and potatoes were all right. But soap, pepper, and molasses were deficient in quality and quantity and inured to the benefit of the contractors.[43]

These findings, along with a statement by contractors Fowler and Company denying any knowledge of wrong doing, a copy of the contract, affidavits from Colonel De Land and James M. Hosford, a clerk in the post commissary, were submitted to Colonel Hoffman in Washington on February 8, 1864. Hoffman after studying the package, laid the matter before the Secretary of War with three recommendations: first, the contractors make good the deficiencies in beef, soap, and molasses at a rate to be determined by General Orme, the money to be deposited in the post or prisoner fund; second, E.S. Fowler or John McGinnis Jr. and Company, since they had no interest in the beef shortages, this discrepancy should be charged to the sub-contractor; third, since it was Colonel De Land's responsibility as post commander to see that his men and the prisoners receive the correct food allowance and he had failed, Hoffman recommended he be brought before a court martial for neglect of duty.[44]

Three days after Stanton approved Hoffman's recommendations, Orme had his orders to take action. Refunded to the government was: for beef, $1,296.12; for soap, $82.26; for molasses $38.51 = $1,416.89. Orme convened a board of survey to inspect all further ration issues and empowered it to reject all or any part deemed unsatisfactory. Further, a new beef contract for beef was let to A.P. and David Kelly. However, for whatever unknown reason, Colonel De Land never was court martialed.[45]

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 929.

[45] Ibid., p. 929; S.O. No. 172,175, 179, March 17,19,23,1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

Word of the investigation leaked to the press. The Tribune denied any problems by saying, "the rations daily distributed are the same given to our own soldiers." Yet news did not spread widely enough, or perhaps the investigation did not probe deeply enough. For there is evidence, although fragmentary, that more existed behind the incident than just a government contractor getting caught bilking the government.[46]

Two letters addressed to Capt. Ninian W. Edwards intimate that he and others high-placed in Washington circles had engaged in a conspiracy to defraud the government. Edwards became friends with Abraham Lincoln back in the Springfield days. Edwards obtained his commission through Lincoln's influence. As Commissary of Subsistence, it was Edwards who signed the E.S. Fowler contract for the government, which applied not just to Camp Douglas but also to the Military District of Illinois, which took in the entire state except for Cairo and Alton.

The first document is from Colonel De Land, written on December 9, 1863, at Edward's request just when the rations were discovered not up to the contract. De Land replied he was fully satisfied with the ration and how Captain Edwards had discharged his duties: "How any fault can be found is beyond my knowledge, unless it is because you are too strict and too cautious to shield the government and its troops from pecuniary loss and from all cause for dissatisfaction."[47]

A more incriminating letter,again written at Edwards' request, is dated December 30 from Oliver H. Browning, a slick Illinois lawyer and sometime politician who at the moment was in Washington engaged in getting special favors for contractors from Republican leaders. In this letter Browning tells Edwards the President and several military leaders had expressed confidence in his integrity and abilities. In fact, Brig. Gen. Joseph P. Taylor, the U.S. Commissary General, that morning had informed him that the Camp Douglas ration incident was being disposed of by rescinding the Fowler contract and re-letting it to another contractor. Edwards would continue at his post, and nothing further would be done. "You have had a hard time of it," wrote Browning, "but I trust now you will be let alone, and be permitted to discharge your duties in peace." Browning suggested that Edwards be discrete and quiet.

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[46] The Chicago Times also carried an item about the investigation.The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 8, 1864.

[47] De Land to Edwards, Dec. 9, 1863, Ninian Edwards Letters, CHS.

It is not necessary that the public shall know that either you or the contractors have been subjected to annoyances".[48]

And in the end that is exactly what happened. De Land was not court martialed, a new contract was let, Edwards kept quiet, and the public was never the wiser.

E. Colonel Sweet Becomes Commandant

May 2, 1864, marked a significant date in Camp Douglas' history. For on that day General Orme, his health in continued deterioration, resigned from the service and passed the Post of Chicago command to Colonel Benjamin J. Sweet, 8th Veteran Reserves. Command of the garrison went to Col. James S. Strong, 15th Veteran Reserves. Sweet began a more organized and capable administration than any of his predecessors.[49]

Sweet was in his late twenties, a quiet lawyer who left his practice to organize the 21st Wisconsin in September of 1862. Just five short weeks after his regiment mustered into U.S. service, Sweet led it in his only battle. A wound at Perryville left his right arm everafter uselessly dangling. Not the type to give up easily, he resigned and reentered the army with the Invalid Corps, later redesignated the Veteran Reserves, and served at Camp Douglas seven months before replacing Orme.[50]

Sweet appeared satisfied with the routine and made no sweeping changes upon assuming command. Inspections increased, standing orders concerning police and forbidden intercourse between garrison and prisoners he found necessary to reiterate some of Orme's rules relating to visitors and prisoners receiving packages he relaxed. To comply with a Washington circular, he reorganized the prisoners into 175-man companies; previous commandants more or less had retained the Confederate military organization.[51]

He completed the physical improvements proposed and begun by Orme. On the first of June he reported he was nearly finished: grounds were thoroughly drained and policed; streets graded, the

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[48] Browning to Edwards, December 30, 1863, Edwards Letters, CHS.

[49] O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, p. 102; G.O. No. 37, May 2, G.O. No. 39, May 3, 1864, R.G.393, N.A.

[50] William DeLoss Love, Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion. (Chicago, 1868) p. 611; Boss, "History of Camp Douglas," Reminiscences of Chicago.

[51] G.O. No. 42, May 23, G.O. No. 51 June 23, G.O. 54, June 29, Sweet to Skinner, May 11, 1864 R.G. 393, N.A.

old plan of barracks in the prisoner area laid out in two open squares re-arranged into streets with allies between the ends; the barracks white washed inside and out and raised off the ground on blocks. "It leaves the grounds handsomely arranged, clean, and commodious, and clears somewhat more than half of the ground formerly occupied by the same barracks....," he boasted to Hoffman. He additionally estimated that by adding 39 more barracks with enclosed kitchens at a total cost of $19,600, Camp Douglas could hold 12,000 prisoners.[52]

But Hoffman did not want to hear any talk of constructing new barracks. In the third week of May he instructed Sweet to prepare for two-thousand incoming captives by sheltering them in old tents. Sweet said no old tents were available, only new ones; but he could erect temporary sheds quickly and cheaply, or some of the old guard barracks in garrison square could be moved to the prison square and modified at a cost of about $2,500, which could come out of the prison fund. Hoffman consented to moving the old barracks, but insisting Sweet find old tents. So for the summer some prisoners were sheltered under canvas.[53]

Also in May, in response to a War Department circular, Sweet ceased issuing hominy as part of the ration, reporting "it has been and is entirely wasted." Candles too often served to illuminate underground tunnels, so they too were eliminated. The commissary officers recommended no further issues of tea, rice, vinegar, as well as a general reduction of the prisoners' food. Secretary Stanton, meanwhile, decreed a ration reduction enforced throughout the entire prison system.[54]

Despite an overall satisfaction with Colonel Sweet's management, Washington officials were not pleased when they discovered Sweet and Colonel Strong maintained headquarters in the city, and it took two orders from the Adjutant General and a month to get them to take up quarters at the post. Sweet explained to Hoffman that Post of Chicago headquarters since its creation had been located in Chicago to be near the telegraph, provost martial, and quartermaster, and he hinted he would prefer it remained there so he would not have to make trips back and forth daily. Unlike his acidic letters to De Land, Hoffman relied on flattery to bring Sweet into line. Wrote Hoffman: "The change in headquarters from the city to the camp was in no way intended as a censure, but on the contrary, I felt that the good condition of the camp, as often reported to me, was attributable to your attention and good

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[52] O.R. Series II Vol. 7, pp. 184-185.

[53] Ibid., pp. 184-85, 195, 201-202.

[54] Ibid., pp. 142-43, 183.

management, and I feared that in your absence from the camp it would necessarily fall into other and less reliable hands...." More than just changes in its outward appearance had transpired at Douglas.[55]

Sweet's relationship with Hoffman grew in strength to the point that in July he was permitted to take a leave. In his absence, Colonel Strong, who incidently bore a remarkable resemblance to General Grant, issued the garrison a congratulatory order. Headquarters was pleased, he said: "Garrison duty is the most trying the soldier is called upon to perform. In the battle, excitement fires the soldier to deeds of daring, but in the dull routine of camp life, the soldier walks his lonely beat merely from a sense of duty, and the earnest duty to perform it." Thanks went to everyone for good order, discipline, appearance and the low number of prisoner escapees.[56]

In July and August nearly 2,500 captives taken in the Atlanta campaign of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman were added, bringing the prisoner population to about 7,500. At the same time Sweet's forces continually were drained by seeming endless petty but necessary details and performing provost duty in the city. Many men from each of his two regiments were on detached duty elsewhere. Sweet wrote to the Provost Martial General in Washington requesting additional troops and the return of his detached soldiers. The War Department found reinforcements.

First to arrive on the thirteenth came the 196th Pennsylvania Volunteers, 802 strong, a three-month outfit raised in the Philadelphia area. Especially welcomed were their firearms, for Colonel Sweet had complained long, loud, but vainly that the Prussian made smoothbore muskets carried by his Veteran Reserves were so useless they did more to encourage than deter prisoner escapes. A fortnight later the 24th Ohio Independent Battery commanded by Capt. I.H. Hill rolled into Camp Douglas.[57]

Sweet needed every man he could get. Union authorities were growing increasingly aware of an armed conspiracy to attack Camp Douglas from the outside.

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[55] Ibid., pp. 428, 503, 664, Sweet to Hoffman, Aug. 8, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[56] G.O. No. 59, July 4, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[57] Sweet to Fry, Aug. 9, Sweet to Potter, Aug. 15, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A. (Companies D and F 15th V.R.C., were detached respectively to Paris, Ill. and Chifbourne Barracks, Wash. D.C. Twenty-five of the 8th V.R.C. were detached for provost guards to Buffalo, N.Y. and 40 more of the 15th were in Buffalo or Louisville.

1. The Chicago Conspiracy

By 1864, an election year, the South's chances of winning the war were slim and growing slimmer. Yet there were some who believed that perhaps a clandestine uprising by disaffected Northerners coupled by the release of Confederate prisoners of war could reverse the tide by recalling Sherman's army from Georgia and lengthening the war to the point where European powers would intervene.

Behind this hope lay an old argument that the Northwest and the South were bound by geography, agriculture, blood ties, and the Mississippi River, which alienated the Northwest from New England Yankees and from Washington politics. Lincoln is said to have feared "a fire in the rear," and in 1863 Governor Yates voiced concern about a "bloody insurrection in our state"[58]

Several shadowy Copperhead groups--the Knights of the Golden Circle, the Sons of Liberty, and the Order of American Knights--added militant organization to political unrest. The notion that the Northwestern states would openly revolt against the rest of the Union, or, more realistically, form an independent government on its own peacefully, was a long shot gamble at best. But given the odds, the Confederacy had to attack any opening presented.[59]

It came to be known as the Chicago Conspiracy, this plot to upset the Union war effort, because only in Chicago did it stand the remotest chance of succeeding, and how close it came is subject to debate. It began in April of 1864 when Confederate President Jefferson Davis dispatched a three-man commission of Jacob Thompson, C.C. Clay, and J.P. Holcombe to Canada with $900,000 to stir up trouble for the Union. A few weeks earlier, Capt. Thomas C. Hines, of the Confederate Army, had been sent north to assist prisoner escapes and advise Copperhead leaders. During the summer Hines, the three commissioners, and the Copperheads conducted a series of meetings at which Thompson became impressed with promises of 300,000 armed Northerners ready to fight, he was told, under Southern leadership. Thompson grew convinced that the time for a revolt was ripe.[60]

The core group planned to move from Canada to St. Louis and Louisville, picking up recruits along the way, while several prisoner of war camps, including Camp Douglas, would be attacked,

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[58] Howard K. Story, "Camp Douglas 1861-1865," Thesis, Northwestern University, 1935. pp. 84-85.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 86-89.

the released prisoners joining the march; state governments would be overthrown, provisional officials friendly to the Confederacy installed, and Sherman would have to come home from Georgia. But twice the Copperheads postponed the starting date. Nearly all their plans had gone awry, and Federal authorities had caught on that there was mischief afoot. Finally, the group decided on August 29 to coincide with the Democrat's national convention being held in Chicago.[61]

On August 27 and 28 the Confederates and Copperheads arrived in Chicago. A meeting at the Richmond House, headquarters for the conspiracy, brought out that the Sons of Liberty had failed to organize their men. Although Captain Hines said Camp Douglas prisoners were organized and itching for outside help, no decision to begin was reached. At the next night's meeting, August 29, the Copperheads' enthusiasm had obviously cooled, for they said the Democrats would give them no recognition at the convention, and reinforcements had arrived at Camp Douglas. To this Hines replied there were only 3,000 U.S. troops at Douglas; the rumor of 7,000 was just that, a rumor. But the Copperheads had lost their nerve. So with not enough dependable men to attack the prison, and Union officials obviously aroused, the Confederates scattered into hiding, and the first attempt on Camp Douglas was stillborn.[62]

Hines, however, disagreed with the commissioners that the secret societies were worthless. He wanted to try again in November. With three subordinates he would lead a group of radical peace men under a plan similar to the August one but limited in scope to Illinois and Indiana. At a signal on election night, November 8, Camp Douglas would be attacked from without while the prisoners revolted. Arms would be seized, communications severed, and banks robbed. One force would capture and liberate the prisoners at Rock Island, then all would join forces with Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest's Confederates somewhere on the Ohio river. The prisoner population at Camp Douglas was large, the guard force was small. Hines was confident.[63]

a. Colonel Sweet Strikes First

What caused Hines' scheme to fail was a lack of secrecy among his own men and the alertness of his opponent. Colonel Sweet had spies among the Sons of Liberty, a government detective on the case, and at least two released prisoners working for him and against their former comrades. Secrecy became impossible. In late September, Sweet informed the War Department of his awareness of

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[61] Ibid., 89-90.

[62] Ibid., 91-97.

[63] Ibid.

plot to release prisoners simultaneously at Camp Douglas and Johnson's Island. His first strategy was to let them try and "punish them in the act." But then he changed his mind. Through a general order issued on October 1, he told the prisoner population that he was aware of their plans. It was their duty to try to escape, he told them, and it was his to prevent them; and if anything so foolish as an attack on the guards were attempted, he would meet force with force and there would be bloodshed and innocent lives lost.[64]

How much of the prisoner population was involved in the plot is unclear. The post adjutant, who questioned prisoners at the time of their release in 1865, said he was told they were divided into companies, regiments, and brigades, and they were confident of success. Southern sources written after the war, however, are usually silent or unhelpful concerning their side of the planned escape.[65]

Sweet, believing the threat to his command genuine, struck pre-emptively on the night of November 6 and the early hours of November 7. Squads of soldiers from Camp Douglas reinforced by Chicago policemen arrested Hines' lieutenants and many Copperheads and their leaders. Hines barely got away and took a train for Cincinnati. Arrests continued throughout the day. A total of 109 rebels and Copperheads were taken. At the treasurer's home a cache of 210 shotguns and carbines, 350 pistols, 13,000 rounds of ammunition, gunpowder, tools and other supplies were seized.[66]

Those in custody were taken to Camp Douglas for interrogation. At Sweet's recommendation, seven ring leaders were brought to trial on charges of conspiracy. The trials were held in Cincinnati in the spring of 1865, verdicts rendered on April 9. All were found guilty and given sentences ranging from three years to life imprisonment.[67]

2. Final Inspections, Final Touches, Final Arrivals

In July Colonel Hoffman dispatched acting medical inspector Surgeon C.T. Alexander on what would prove to be a final inspection tour of Camp Douglas and eight other Western prisoner depots. Although Alexander's orders were to pay specific attention to

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[64] O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, p. 861; G.O. No. 95, Oct. 1, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

[65] Boss, "History of Camp Douglas", Reminiscences of Chicago, pp. 175-78.

[66] Ibid., pp. 274-75

[67] Story, p.97.

spitals, he also had authorization to make recommendations and order improvements, provided they did not exceed $100.[68]

After reviewing Johnson's Island and before moving on to Rock Island, Alexander spent July 24 and 25 at Camp Douglas. He reported to Hoffman that since April, when he was in Chicago last, "the change for the better is astounding." He praised the hospital and its management, and even if 46 smallpox cases were housed in a stable, at least they received decent care. If the prisoner population were increased to 12,000, however, he recommended that the three-inch water pipe be enlarged to a six-inch line. He additionally urged an increased variety in the inmates' diet, for their only vegetables were potatoes. Minor criticisms aside, Hoffman, he said, would he pleased to see the post.[69]

The following month Colonel Sweet appointed his own special investigator, Lt. Michael Briggs, 8th Veteran Reserves. His task and that of his successors in the office was to submit weekly condition and progress reports to post headquarters. These reports, submitted over the next five months, show an overall satisfaction with the camp and hospital. Nevertheless, there were repeated requests to improve the condition of the prison barracks and the condition of the prisoners. The food was good quality but in quantity "hardly sufficient". As new prisoners captured by the Union field armies continued to swell the inmate population, shortages began increasing. Bedding and blankets were in short supply. More clothing was needed, especially for the new arrivals, who as usual were in destitute condition. An increase in sick prisoners overtaxed the hospital, and doctors complained that patients feigned sickness after recovery rather than be returned to Prison Square.[70]

Many things Union officials got done, if somewhat tardily. Hoffman, on September 9, approved increasing the water supply by laying the six-inch pipe and connecting as many hydrants as might be needed. He also gave permission to replace the Farmer's boilers when they became unserviceable. The 196th Pennsylvania transferred away to be mustered out of service and Provost Martial General James B.Fry found five hundred replacements for the two Veteran Reserve regiments. Repairs to the barrack's roofs and windows were completed by October 23. Plans for a new small pox hospital and a new chapel were approved. But other recommendations fell on deaf ears. Prisoner rations could not be increased nor changed without approval of Mr. Stanton. And although a new hospital building

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[68] O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, p. 468.

[69] Ibid., pp. 496-98.

[70] Ibid., pp. 840, 913, 959, 1027, 1104, 1187, 1243.

approached completion, the sick list was such that men died in the barracks.[71]

Primary reason for the strain on existing facilities and resources was that 4,900 new captives were added in November and December Union victories at Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee, about quashed the Civil War in the West. The captives of these two battles brought the total number of prisoners to 12,082, the largest number of prisoners to be confined inside Camp Douglas' fence.[72]

Aside from the excitement caused by the events of the Democratic convention and election day Copperhead arrests, little occurred at Camp Douglas in the last months of 1864 to alter the routine of daily guard duty and monthly musters and inspections. Sweet found it necessary to restate orders prohibiting talking and trade between guards and prisoners. One-hundred guns were fired on September 29 to celebrate the Union battlefield victory at Fisher's Hill, Virginia. Major General Joseph Hooker, the department commander visited the camp and the troops passed in review for him on October 15, for which Hooker gave compliments and praised their soldierly appearance. A fire brigade was organized from the garrison, and Sweet ordered that after December 3 any dogs found running at large through the camp would be shot. Prisoner escapes were few. Sweet ordered the officer of the day to position a cannon with infantry support in front of the entrance to Prison Square to prevent trouble on December 1. On December 20 he was breveted brigadier general for his part in quelling the Copperheads' revolt. And of course the guards continued to get themselves in minor trouble when off duty. They damaged the gate when they trespassed on the grounds of the Chicago Driving Park Association, and at Christmas time got into a fight on a streetcar, and some got arrested for unsoldierly conduct. Sweet issued an order two days after Christmas saying that such men "would not be allowed to stain the good name and reputation of this garrison". Officers would report the names of disorderlies to headquarters.[73]

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[71] Ibid., pp. 1083-84, 1257.

[72] Ibid., Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003.

[73] G.O. No. 84, Aug. 12, G.O. No. 92, Sept. 26, G.O. No. 101 Oct. 16, G.O. No. 118 Nov. 30, G.O. No. 119, Dec. 1, G.O. No. 120, Dec. 2, G.O. No 121, Dec. 9, G.O. No. 125, Dec.27, 1864 R.G. 393, N.A.

I. CAMP DOUGLAS STRUCTURES

During its four year existence, Camp Douglas underwent continual and progressive change. The Illinois state training base of 1861 only resembled the 1864 U.S. prisoner of war depot. The boundary fence had been moved, modified, repaired and reconstructed. The same could be said about the barracks. The Camp's layout changed with its function. New buildings were added, others were torn down, the lumber salvaged and reused.

Finally, on December 19, 1864, U.S. Quartermaster Potter reported to his Washington Chief, General Meigs, that Camp Douglas was about as finished as it could be. The general hospital has not yet been completed but it was in use, and incidental repairs were going on, but the sewer, water system, and fence were satisfactory. Reported Potter: "Slight changes in location and capacity of buildings are continually being made, but in the main features of the camp there will be no material change." No new construction was being contemplated.[1]

A. The Fence

A wooden fence surrounding the camp was part of Camp Douglas from its 1861 beginnings. It consisted of an upright framework to which boards were nailed vertically.

At first, these boards were fastened to the frame's exterior. Colonel Tucker complained to Hoffman that "numerous props and irregularities on the inside afford ready means of climbing over quickly." Following his July 1862 inspection, Hoffman directed the fence be moved and modified, emphasizing to put "all the frame work on the outside."[2]

He also at this time ordered a sentinel's walk built around the top of the outside at "convenient distances." He did not want it to surround the entire camp; for it appeared unnecessary along Cottage Grove Avenue or behind the guards' barracks in the eastern square. "We will try it with intervals of fifty to seventy-five feet," he said. He also wanted it made of old lumber around the camp and boards removed from old stables. "Let it cost as little as possible", he had told Tucker.[3]

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[1] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1864, R.G. 92, N.A.

[2] O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 247, 279.

[3] Ibid., p. 279.

When General Tyler's unreliable Harpers Ferry parolees occupied the post in the Autumn of 1862, they burned a substantial portion of the fence 3,000 feet. Repairs were haphazardly made. By August of the following year, when Douglas became a permanent prison, Colonel De Land said the fence had become so obviously dilapidated that in his opinion it had no value for restraining prisoners from escape. Many boards were thin, broken or decayed, some lengths of the fence were lower than others, and at some places the boards were horizontal rather than vertical. Everywhere there were holes or gaps allowing communication with the outside.[4]

De Land had the entire fence rebuilt in oak. His only verbal reference to the new work was in a letter to General Ammen about escapes, saying the new fence," fourteen feet high," would be an effective deterrent. A sketch plan in the National Archives, however, shows it as twelve feet high. This plan also depicts the sentinels' walk, which eventually ran around the entire post exterior, as two and one half feet wide, plus sentinel boxes, an unknown number of which were built along the walkway. When General Orme and Sweet had the barracks rearranged, a section of new fence thereafter divided the prison square from the garrison square.[5]

There is one additional item in conjunction with the fence: The interior of the prisoner compound was illuminated by oil lamps. Accounts by prisoners and guards attest to this.[6]

During the tense autumn of 1864, Captain Potter feared that a mass prisoner rush at the fence might break down a section of the upright boards and permit a great escape. To discourage such an attempt he had the fence reinforced with an additional layer of horizontal boards nailed to the inside. After this, he told General Meigs, the prisoner square was "perfectly secure".[7]

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[4] Tyler to Potter, Nov. 4, 1862; Hoffman to Potter, Aug. 29, 1863, R.G. 249, N.A.

[5] De Land to Ammen, Oct. 13, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.; "Proposed Fence at Camp Douglas" R.G. 92, N.A.

[6] Grebel, Diary, L.C.; J. H. McNeilly, "Under Fire at Port Hudson," Confederate Veteran, Vol. XXVII, p. 218.

[7] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1864, R.G. 92 N.A. Though there is no written record to establish the fact, a water color sketch in the Chicago Historical Society by a guard, of the 196th Pennsylvania indicates the fence was painted or white washed.

1. Gates

Camp Douglas had two gates to allow entry. The main entrance was on Cottage Grove Avenue, facing east toward the lake. One reference states it looked like a castle and was guarded by six soldiers. The other gate, a secondary entrance, was located along the south fence toward the rear.[8]

2. The Deadline

Like most military prisons, Camp Douglas had a deadline to keep inmates in sight of the sentinels, and any prisoner who crossed the deadline was subject to be shot. The Camp Douglas deadline ran around the interior of prison square and was located within ten feet of the fence. It consisted of a one-by three-inch plank nailed to low posts, about a foot off the ground.[9]

B. Structures In Prison Square

1. Barracks

Captain Potter reported 64 prisoner barracks in December, 1864. Each had the capacity for 174 men. Thus the barracks' total capacity was 11,136 men at a time when the prisoner population soared above 12,000. From the time Colonel Sweet rearranged prison square in the summer of 1864, the barracks were placed in lines along streets fifty feet wide, either four or five barracks located on each street. An alley twenty-five feet wide separated the ends of the barracks. Before that, the barracks were arranged in two hollow squares.[10]

The buildings were made of "common lumber", very likely all pine. When Sweet ordered lumber purchased in May 1864, for barrack repairs, he specified pine pieces. The outside walls were batten construction. That is, the seams of the boards when nailed

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[8] Joseph L. Eisendrath, Jr., "Chicago's Camp Douglas", CHS.

[9] Copley, Sketch, p. 82. A Chickamauga prisoner said a Chicago woman donated seed and that for a while vegetables were grown between the deadline and fence, but before the crop was ready for harvest prison officers confiscated it as contraband. T.L. Page "Prisoners of War," Confederate Veteran, Vol. VIII, p. 63.

[10] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1864; R.G. 92; Sweet to Hoffman, May 23, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

vertically were covered by a narrow wooden strip. The wooden roofs were covered with tar paper.[11]

Exactly what the early barracks looked like--those built by the Mechanic Fusillers in 1861--is difficult to say because of scanty, conflicting evidence. Probably there were two types, the ones in the eastern garrison square near the headquarters being different from those in the western squares, which eventually became the prisoners' area.

Those early barracks in the western square to which prisoners were assigned, based on sketches and illustrations, appear to have been elongated hallways, with their interiors divided into bunk bays. For when Sweet rearranged the prison in May of 1864, he told Hoffman that barracks were cut into lengths of ninety feet before being moved.[12]

A Mississippian among the Fort Donelson prisoners hinted that the Illinois trainees had taken good care of the barracks, for "Everything looked new and clean." Seven months later, when the Harpers Ferry parolees arrived, they had no such kind words about the Rebels. They said the former prison was empty of everything but filth, rats, and vermin. "How human beings could have existed in such quarters, nobody but a southern rebel knows." Neither Colonel Mulligan nor Colonel Tucker exercised much discipline over the prisoners.[13]

A report to Colonel De Land on November 1, 1863, by Assistant Surgeon Ira Brown, 65th Illinois, stated that design faults rendered the barracks inherently unhealthy. Lighting and ventilation were deficient, and the amount of superficial square feet per occupant was below regulations by a third. Even though they were policed several times daily and scoured twice a week with water, Brown stated overcrowding made it impossible to keep the barracks sanitary. Lack of proper ventilation to nineteenth-century medical men was a serious fault because "miasmas", or bad air, were believed to be chiefly responsible for the spread of diseases. Besides, observed Brown, the barracks were out of repair. Roofs leaked because tar paper had blown off during storms, one-fourth of the quarters were boarded up and their

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[11] Report of Capt. L.M. Pierce, Sept. 1865, R.G. 92; S.O. No. 227, May 27, 1864, Brown to De Land Nov. 1, 1863, R.G. 393 N.A.

[12] Sweet to Hoffman, May 23, 1864, R.G. 393, NA.

[13] Milton A. Ryan, "Experiences of a Confederate Soldier in Camp and Prison in the Civil War" typescript in Andersonville NHS., GA; Willison, 1,000 Boys in Blue, p. 107.

indows removed while they had been unoccupied,[14] and some had no nks, forcing prisoners to sleep on the floor.

Colonel De Land's extensive efforts to repair the prisoner's barracks were seriously compromised when, in December, he ordered the buildings lowered to the ground, the floors ripped out and filled to forestall inmates from tunneling out.[15]

On February 3, 1864, General Orme directed post quartermaster Goodman to raise the prisoner barracks eighteen inches off the ground, erect steps to the doors, and make floors of a double layer of rough lumber. Prisoners would supply labor and be paid with tobacco. By May, with Colonel Sweet now in charge, the project of rearranging the prison was well under way. He reported he had cut old barracks into lengths of ninety feet, except for one seventy feet long, whitewashed them inside and out, had floors laid, and raised them four feet from the ground. The total then was 32 barracks. The following month he told Hoffman the forty-acre prisoner square could hold 82 barracks under the new scheme. He still had 14 to move, and wanted permission to build 22 more, at an estimated cost of $500 each. The cost of moving old barracks at $1,000, fixing them at $1,500, and erecting new ones he totaled at $13,500. The prison fund for May was $7,058.60. He figured the oject could be paid off by August.[16]

Washington was slow in responding. On September 17 Hoffman gave an approval to erect new buildings. However, he wanted the cost cut. The barracks were too high off the ground; he wanted them elevated just enough to police under them and prevent tunneling: "Every foot of lumber saved in this may lessen the expense." He also directed the cracks underneath the floor boards to be covered with lathing rather than have the floors built with two layers of planks, and all openings between boards chinked with clay plaster to keep the rooms warmer and save fuel expenses.[17]

Three days later Sweet relayed Hoffman's approval by ordering quartermaster Goodman to build 20 new barracks in prison square to conform in style and dimensions with the existing ones. Echoing

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[14] Brown to De Land, Nov. 1, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.

[15] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 637-38.

[16] S.O. No. 116, Feb 3, 1864; Sweet to Hoffman, May 27, June 17, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[17] O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, pp. 834-35.

ffman's sentiments, he ordered, "The most rigid economy will be exercised in their construction."[18]

While new barracks were being built in the Fall months of 1864-- additional ones added, however tardily, in attempts to keep pace with an increase in prisoners--the older ones were repaired and remodeled. Ventilators were added to the roofs and kitchens were installed, eliminating prison cook houses. A January 1865, medical report describes the finished barracks: "The prison barracks are one-storied, ridge-ventilated buildings erected on posts four to six feet from the ground, to prevent escape by burrowing. These barracks are sixty-four in number, four of which are for convalescents exclusively; thirty-one have been built since January, 1864. They are arranged in streets of suitable width, and are all of the same dimensions, viz: 90 feet long, 24 feet wide and about 12 feet to eaves....Each barrack is subdivided into a kitchen and dormitory, the former 20x24, the latter 70x24, the dormitories fitted up with wooden bunks three tiers in height."[19]

John H. Copley, a prisoner captured at the battle of Franklin and who became an inmate on December 5, 1864, said each barrack had a single entrance in the center. Inside, bunks were arranged in three tiers around the walls. Each barrack had a kitchen at one end, generally but not always to the left. The kitchen was separated from the bunk area by a partition in which there was a square hole closed by a sliding panel. Inmates called this the "Crumb Hole," and it was open only when rations were issued.[20]

To take Copley's description and apply it to a photograph of the barracks, the entrance was on the south side of the building. Three windows were to the right, five to the left, meaning the doorway led to the center of the bunk area, which had six windows, three on each side of the door, and two for the kitchen. Visual documents also show three ventilators on each barrack roof, plus three brick chimneys. The cooking apparatus clearly was located at the rear of the kitchen next to the wall. The other two chimneys were for the two heating stoves located in the central aisle between bunks. In October and in November Captain Goodman received orders from Sweet to install a total of 131 coal stoves

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[18] S.O. No. 350, Sept. 21, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[19] O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, p. 804; Medical and Surgical History, pt. III, vol. 1, p. 49. With a total of 64 barracks, the logical arrangement of prison square would be 16 rows of 4 barracks on each street. A June 1864 report in Ibid. states that there were 52 barracks with 8 under construction. Despite the statement that the barracks were "four to six feet off the ground," photographs and sketches document they were not so high.

[20] Copley, Sketch, pp. 84-86.

the prisoner barracks, two in each. Sweet said they should be large enough to make the building comfortable, but "stoves will be of the cheapest pattern, studying economy of fuel". According to Copley, during the cold weather Union guards detailed two men to fire watch duty during the night, one until midnight and the other to 8:00 a.m. Cooking on the heating stoves was forbidden, but prisoners did it anyway.[21]

2. Other Structures in Prison Square

Eleven other structures according to U.S. Quartermaster Potter's report to General Meigs, were located in the prisoners' compound. There was one wash house with six "large boilers" having the capacity for 1,400 men per day; it measured 24 by 66 feet. There was a drug store, a sutler's store, a surgeon's office and dispensary, a workman's tool shop, and an express office. Potter also said there were five prisons with the capacity for 1,200 prisoners. No further description of these structures or their exact location could be found in the post's records. Prison Square had nine water hydrants and two iron plugs. Potter made no mention of the latrines.[22]

C. Structures in Federal Square

1. Barracks

In December of 1864 there existed a total of 32 Union company size barracks, each having the capacity for 96 men and three officers. Smaller than the prisoner's quarters, they measured 85 feet by 24 feet.[23]

Scant information is available concerning the garrison's barracks because most reports concerned the welfare of the prisoners. The Tribune in 1861 said the quarters built by the Mechanic Fusillers were" partitioned off for various companies, each division embracing a large sleeping room, with three tiers of berths upon each side, and rooms for the orderly sergeant, two lieutenants, and captain. In the rear of each barrack is a large and finely constructed mess room, kitchen and sink." Acting Medical Inspector Clark, when he performed his detailed examination, said only that the Invalids kept their quarters clean but too warm. Later, some Federal barracks were abandoned and

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[21] Ibid., pp. 84-86, 144-146; S.O. No. 376, Oct. 18, S.O. No.410, Nov. 23, 1864 R.G. 393, N.A.

[22] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1864, R.G. 92 N.A.; Illinois Adjutant General's Report, Vol. 1, p. 121, O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, p. 1027.

[23] Ibid.

ved into the prison square. In January 1864, Surgeon Kittoe reported, "The barracks occupied by the troops who garrison the camp are for the most part new, well built of lumber, raised sufficiently from the ground, well ventilated and warmed, with good and convenient mess-halls and kitchens."[24]

The main garrison area occupied the northeast section of the post. Barracks were aligned in two straight rows facing inward on either side of the parade ground in front of post headquarters. It is also quite likely that the buildings in White Oak Square, the smaller southeast square, were garrison barracks. Some barracks also were located outside the prison fence.

Hoffman told General Meigs, after his first visit to Chicago in 1862: "By erecting barracks outside of the camps for one regiment of the guard, leaving one regiment inside, there will be quarters enough and greater security...." Contemporary illustrations confirm that for about two years, till the summer of 1864, rows of barracks were located just outside the south fence.[25]

2. Cook Houses

Cook houses, or kitchens, are often mentioned without further details in official reports. They were detached buildings located the rear of each barrack. Colonel De Land, in a reply to ashington concerning the failure of the Farmer boilers, said that each garrison company had a range made of brick, twelve feet long, three feet wide, covered with an iron top with sixteen holes upon which pots, kettles, and pans were placed. Since quartermaster Potter made no mention of cook houses in his final report to Meigs, probably the cook houses were eliminated and kitchens incorporated into the barracks structures as new barracks replaced the older ones.[26]

3. Headquarters

The headquarters building was inside and to the right of the main gate. In front facing the parade ground was the flag staff. The structure had two stories, a pointed shingle roof, two small office wings, and measured forty by eighty feet. The interior rooms were plastered. Captain Potter said it had the capacity for

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[24] Undated clipping in CHS; O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 371, 849, vol. 7, p. 478.

[25] Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 110.

[26] Ibid., Vol, 6, pp. 462-63. Although not confirmed by documentation, the above description would logically seem to apply to the prisoner's kitchens also.

field and staff officers for three regiments with their necessary offices.[27]

4. Officers Quarters

Officers were quartered separately from enlisted ranks. There were two one-story buildings, one on either side of the headquarters building. No further details are available except to say there existed a total of sixty-six rooms for officers.[28]

5. Guard House

Evidence concerning the guard houses is conflicting. There were two of them, according to Captain Potter, each having a capacity for three reliefs of the guard. The Illinois Adjutant General's Report says there was a garrison guard house measuring twenty by forty feet, and a guard house and court martial hall measuring twenty-four by fifty feet. However, on October 14, 1864, Colonel Sweet issued an order to Captain Goodman to build a new guard house ninety feet by twelve and one half feet, with six windows, three doors, the interior divided by board partitions into three rooms for the three reliefs, and bunks such as Sweet would later describe. This building was to run in an easterly direction, parallel to the fence. Most likely it replaced an earlier structure damaged during a storm, and it was located inside and to the left of the main gate, behind the stables. The other guard house may have been located inside Prison Square for Sweet on September 14, 1864, told quartermaster Goodman to relocate the second division guard house to the west end of prison square.[29]

6. Post Chapel

Two buildings served as the post chapel. The first was erected in 1861 by the Chicago YMCA for the early Illinois volunteer recruits, but it was commandeered by Colonel Mulligan and for two years served as a prisoner hospital. The second structure came about through the urging of Reverend Tuttle, the post chaplain, in December of 1864. Monies not to have exceeded $2,300 came from the prison fund. It measured thirty by seventy-

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[27] Illinois Adjutant Generals Report, Vol. 1, p. 122; Potter to Meigs, Dec 19, 1864, R.G. 92, NA.

[28] Illinois Adjutant Generals Report, vol. 1, p. 121. Oddly, Captain Potter's Dec. 19, 1864 report to Meigs did not include these structures, unless he included them as part of the headquarters.

[29] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 12, 1864, R.G. 92, N.A.; S.O. No. 351, Sept. 12, S.O. No. 372, Oct. 14, 1864, R.G. 393 N.A.

five feet and was located on the south side of the street leading to Prisoner Square. It was constructed by the prisoners using rough boards, and seated about six-hundred.[30]

Adjoining the chapel was a reading room. In May 1862, after the Fort Donelson prisoners were situated, the Philadelphia Committee on Books for Prisoners of War donated about 1,040 volumes to Camp Douglas, principally religious works avoiding denominational or sectional political materials.[31]

Following the erection of the second chapel, Reverend Tuttle learned the government would not supply a bell, so he had a collection taken from among both the prisoners and garrison, the coins melted down and cast into a church bell. Following the dismemberment of the prison in 1865, the chapel and bell were given by the government to the wardens and vestry of the parish of St. Marks, Chicago.[32]

7. Other Structures in Federal Square

A number of other structures built to support the post's activities were located inside the garrison square. Their exact locations are mostly indeterminate, except to say they were in the center, between the barracks and parade ground area and the hospital compound. The stables, however, were located to the left inside the main gate. This structure had the capacity for forage and stabling for 44 horses. There was a yard area with sheds to protect 300 tons of coal, 800 cords of wood, 25 carts, and 5 wagons.

The coal shed measured 56 feet long by 28 feet wide and was 10 feet high. A bakery with water pipes and receiving and issuing rooms could bake for 11,000 men. An ordinance warehouse measured 20 feet by 60 feet. A quartermaster warehouse was located next to the south fence in front of the hospital, and had dimensions of 60 by 100 feet and held equipment for a garrison of 15,000. The commissary warehouse, measuring 40 by 100 feet, was large enough to hold 10 days rations for 20,000 men. A contract butchers' shop also had the same capacity for meat. There was a post office, and a court martial room. The jail could hold 60 prisoners. A shop

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[30] Hoffman to Mulligan, March 18, 1862, S.O. No. 425, Dec. 8, 1864, R.G. 393; Tuttle to Meigs, R.G. 92 N.A.

[31] Vaughan to Mulligan, May 3, 1862, Mulligan Papers, CHS.

[32] E.R.P. Shurley, "The Historic Bell of St. Marks," The Diocese of Chicago Vol. 34, pp. 14,18; Meigs to Stanton, Dec. 13, 1865, R.G. 92 N.A. The chapel building following the war was relocated to "near the soldiers home" in Chicago.

room could work 33 carpenters, a glazer, a blacksmith, and horseshoer with helpers. There seems to have been a four-horsepower engine, operating an attached crosscut and a rip saw. There was also a tool shop. Federal Square had 9 privies having each the capacity for 30 men; 12 water hydrants; and 3 fire plugs.[33]

D. The Hospital

The hospital area was located in the southeast section of the garrison square, though buildings elsewhere sometimes were used for hospital purposes. The evidence concerning hospital structures before 1864 is scant and sometimes conflicting.

The first facilities apparently were very meager. In September 1862, Doctor Keeney, a medical inspector of the Surgeon General's office, reported: "The hospitals are pretty much the same as the men's barracks; though isolated they occupy grounds in the square". The following month he recommended serious cases be transferred from the camp to the general hospitals in Chicago. The initial flood of Fort Donelson prisoners so swamped the hospital that Colonel Mulligan appropriated the civilian-built chapel. Colonel De Land converted it to a permanent hospital, and never again did it serve as a house of worship. Surgeon Clark told Colonel Hoffman that protests were being lodged by "certain good ministers of Chicago, who claim that the prisoners souls should be looked after at the expense of their bodies". He also reported at this time, October 1863 there existed a hospital for the guard and one for the prisoners. He reported heating by stoves as good, ventilation "utterly lost sight of", and capacity "very deficient". He reported capacity for the garrison as 50, for prisoners 120, which the chapel would increase to 180. He recommended immediate additional accommodations for 600 patients.[34]

Hoffman, in turn, ordered De Land to erect two additional hospital buildings, each 100 feet long, with five windows and a door on each side and at each end.

It is unclear, however, if such a structure was ever constructed. The medical inspector's report for June 1864,

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[33] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1863, R.G. 92, S.O. No. 432, Dec. 15, 1864, R.G. 393 N.A.; Illinois Adjutant General's Report, Vol. 1, pp. 121-22. In a report to the Quartermaster Department, written in September 1865, Capt. L.H. Pierce in addition to the structures reported by Capt. Potter listed a yard master's office, paint shop, a brick shed and 8 privies measuring 10 by 20 feet. Pierce to QM Dept., R.G. 92, N.A.

[34] Medical and Surgical History. pt. 3, vol. 1, p.49; Tuttle to Meigs, R.G. 92, N.A.; O.R. Series II, vol. 6, pp. 372, 374.

scribes a structure quite different from Hoffman's instructions: "One building, two stories high, with two wings, newly built, well constructed frame, enclosed by a high board fence, well ventilated by the ridge and base, windows and high stories; 180 beds...." The following month Surgeon Alexander, on Hoffman's inspection errand, reported the hospital as a two-story building, with four wards, mess rooms, kitchens, adjoining a two-story laundry, capacity from 200 to 225 beds. It was constructed in the winter and spring, and occupied in April at a cost of $10,000. It was heated with stoves, had side, end and ridge ventilation, and oil lamps for lighting.[35]

Alexander also reported that, even with the new building, there was not enough bed space for the sick, so two abandoned buildings were being moved into the hospital enclosure. By October the hospital area was reported as having "two two-story pavilions, two one-story pavilions and one barrack for convalescents, all in good condition; six wards, 395 beds...." In December, when quartermaster Potter wrote his report, he said there existed a Federal hospital with water closets having the capacity for 450 men. A prisoner hospital could accommodate 350 men. One building was the medical and surgeon's office, and there was also a deadhouse with the capacity for 40 bodies.[36]

The final medical inspection, which took place in January 65, added a few details about construction. The two wings tached to the central building had four wards, one on each floor. The wards on the lower floor measured 99 feet long by 27 feet wide and 12 feet high; the wards above had the same dimensions except the ceiling happened to be a foot lower. Wards were well ventilated by cold air shafts located in the floor and vertical shafts in the walls, some vents near the floor, others near the ceilings. The upstairs wards were ventilated by shafts opening at the ridge. The inclosure fence was made of oak. There additionally was a barracks' ward 80 by 20 feet with 30 beds for erysipelas. At the time Camp Douglas was surplused and sold later that year, there were reported three main structures: a general hospital with four wings measuring 100 by 80 feet; a post hospital

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[35] O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, pp. 417-18, 496-97; Medical and Surgical History, pt. 3, vol. 1, p.49. Surgeon E.D. Kittoe saw the new hospital, while under construction in February 1864, and reported to the Washington Assistant Surgeon General that the building was frame, perpendicular boards, with seams battened, lathed and plastered inside. O.R., op, cit., p. 850.

[36] Ibid.

asuring 204 by 28 feet; and the prison hospital with measurements of 28 by 100 feet.[37]

A Confederate prisoner captured at Fort Donelson who served as a hospital nurse wrote in his pocket diary that, in addition to the wards, there were several smaller rooms for storing medical paraphernalia; cots were arranged around the room at convenient distances, and there were small tables handy on which medicines were kept. Although he wrote this description of the hospital's interior in March of 1862, probably it could hold true at any time till the close of Camp Douglas.[38]

1. Small Pox Hospital

Nineteenth-century America still lived under the shadow of deadly epidemics. Yellow fever and small pox were among the most feared. More than a few cases of small pox were diagnosed at Camp Douglas. Among the Arkansas Post prisoners were 125 cases, which caused the medical staff to erect the first quarantine hospital. The building, according to Surgeon Alexander, had been formerly a cavalry stable converted into a ward. Its location, south and west of the prison enclosure, was too close for safety to both the post and the university. The threat of disease broke up two semesters at the school. Colonel Hoffman on September 9, 1864, granted rmission to Commandant Sweet to relocate the small pox hospital Dull Grove, about one mile south of the post. Leasing the land cost nothing to the government, Sweet said. Hoffman wanted two wards with a few windows, the structure not raised more than a foot off the ground to decrease the lumber expense, and he suggested that it might be necessary to plaster the ceilings as a protection against the severe upcoming winter. Five weeks later Sweet directed that a wooden guard house 35 feet long by 20 feet wide by 12 high be constructed at the site.

In the third week of December an additional ward received approval from Washington, and on Christmas day Sweet ordered the pest hospital surrounded by a wooden fence.[39]

E. Private Structures on Post

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[37] Medical and Surgical History, pt.3, vol. 1, p. 49; Illinois Adjutant General's Report, Vol. 1, p. 121.

[38] Confederate Historical Institute Dispatch, April, 1983, p.11.

[39] O.R. Series II, Vol. 5, p.345, Vol. 7, pp. 497, 795, 1257; O. No. 401, Nov. 14, S.O. No. 442, Dec. 25, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A. llinois Adjutant General's Report, vol. 1, p. 122, states the smallpox hospital had two wings, measuring 204 by 40 feet.

Quartermaster Potter reported to Washington six buildings on post were under private ownership. Three were sutler stores: one for each Veteran Reserve regiment, and one for the artillery battery. There was also an eating saloon, a barber shop and news room, and a daguerrean gallery.[40]

One other private structure unrelated to Camp Douglas but of peripheral interest was the Union Observatory, as it was called, a private enterprise tower across Cottage Grove Avenue from the post's main gate. For the payment of a small fee a person could climb the tower's stairs to an observation platform and have a fine view of the camp and its Rebel captives. Its owner and further details are unknown, but most likely the tower was erected soon after the Fort Donelson prisoners arrived and stood throughout the war.[41]

F. Military Structures in Chicago

Since Camp Douglas additionally acted as headquarters for the Post of Chicago toward the close of the war, quartermaster Potter also listed for General Meigs government buildings in the city. One building called Soldiers Rest had the capacity for 1,500 men. There was also a headquarters for the provost guard, a deadhouse at Marine Hospital, a company barracks at Desmarre Hospital, and a one-story commissary warehouse measuring 150 by 75 feet. Finally, Camp Fry still existed, but Potter gave no particulars because Washington, he said, possessed drawings and details.[42]

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[40] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1864 R.G. 92, N.A.

[41] Undated clipping in C.H.S., Head, Campaigns and Battles, p. Several of the birds-eye view drawings of the post were obviously sketched from the tower.

[42] Potter to Meigs, Dec. 19, 1864, R.G. 92, N.A.

VII. FEEDING THE PRISONERS

A. The Ration

One of the most bitter complaints by the ex-Confederate prisoners in their post-war writings concerned the food they ate. They accused their keeper's of deliberate starvation. But, surprisingly, some Confederates said the food was good quality and ample quantity. Also, surprisingly, there are Union records by Camp Douglas officials which say that ration quality and quantity were unsatisfactory. The difference between the range of opinions is traceable to time periods in the prison's history.

At first, both prisoners and guards ate the same ration. They were furnished by a contractor, John W. Sullivan, at a cost of $1.85 per ration, or as usually stated $10.85 per hundred. The rations were generally acceptable and included pork or beef, potatoes, flour, beans, rice, coffee, molasses, vinegar, soap, and candles. Bread after May 17, 1862 also was supplied by a civilian contract. "They fed us very well", remembered a Fort Donelson captive from the 15th Mississippi, "on provisions they would not issue to their own soldiers."[1]

Even with a part of the ration being withheld to form the prison fund, a Tennessean wrote to his brother in April: "I assure you we are being taken care of as well as they can with plenty to eat and good water to drink.[2]

Nonetheless, by July sickness was on the increase and the post surgeon reported a "tendency to scurvy". Colonel Hoffman, when he learned of the disease, became irritated because he had authorized vegetable purchases from the prison fund specifically to combat scurvy. Commandant Tucker replied that approval to purchase extra vegetables came only a day after the surgeon's report; vegetables had just been added to the ration and consequently health was improving.[3]

The following year, in late January 1863, when the Arkansas Post prisoners occupied Camp Douglas, the ration contract was held by William F. Tucker, who furnished rations at a cost of $14.43 per hundred, an increase of $3.58 over 1862. Captain Freedley, Hoffman's roving assistant, reported to his boss that fresh beef

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[1] O.R., Series II, Vol. 3, pp. 549-604, 657; The Chicago Tribune, June 9, 1862; Ryan, Experiences", Andersonville NM.

[2] Unsigned letter to "Bro. Robert," April 1862, Stones River NB.

[3] O.R. Series II Vol. 4, pp. 253-54, 324-25, 353.

should be issued more often, five times a week, rather than so much salt pork. Otherwise the rations were good and wholesome.[4]

By October the contract had again been changed by Captain Nimian Edwards, the Illinois Commissary of Subsistence. Rations were now furnished by E.S. Fowler and Company at a cost of $14.08 per hundred. This was a reduction by 35 cents less than the cost at the time of the Arkansas Post prisoners. The actual daily ration was 3/4 pound of meat--pork or bacon, with fresh beef being substituted three times a week. One pound of cornmeal or wheat flour was doled out daily. To each 100 men were issued daily: 10 pounds of hominy, 10 pounds of coffee, 1 1/4 pounds of tea, 15 pounds of sugar, and 4 quarts of vinegar. Also to each prisoner went 1 1/4 pounds of adamantine candles, while 4 pounds of pepper, 30 pounds of potatoes and a quart of molasses went with each 100 rations. The hospital ration was slightly more varied. Rations were issued between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.[5]

On the day before Christmas 1863, Hoffman ordered the molasses ration cut by a quart. He also changed cooking arrangements, to save on costs, and ordered De Land to contract for 18-ounce bread loaves to save an estimated $200 to $300 each month to build bakeries.[6]

It was around the turn of the year that Captain Edward's vender, E.S. Fowler and Company, got caught fraudulently shorting prisoner rations. As part of General Orme's investigation, Orme asked the Confederate squad leaders what they thought of the rations. Of the 24 responses, 3 said the rations were very good and had no complaint. The others were very displeased with the beef. Besides being short on weight, they agreed it was inferior quality, composed of fore-quarters, flanks and necks. Two sergeants said it was "heavy". Other answers are sometimes curious because of their diversity. Most thought the sugar was poor quality, two thought it was good, and several thought it had been bad but was now good. Some did not like the flour, or bacon, or coffee, while others thought it was satisfactory. Several stated their opinion that the ration was "indifferent" or "medium" quality and did not elaborate on details.[7]

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[4] Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 344.

[5] Ibid., Vol. 6 p. 464; The Chicago Tribune, Dec. 2, 1863; G.O. No. 19, Nov. 13, 1863, RG 393, N.A. Rations were issued to the Union garrison between 7 and 10 a.m.

[6] O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 490, 754.

[7] Ibid., pp. 778-800.

In the end, Camp Douglas officials tended to agree with the captives and uncovered additional deficiencies in soap, pepper, and molasses the prisoners were unaware of and forced the contractors to reimburse the prison fund.[8]

1. The Ration Reduced

The topic of exactly how much food U.S. authorities ought to provide for their captured enemies came under discussion during the spring of 1864. Not only were there tales that food was going uneaten, there were rumors coming out of the South that Union prisoners were being starved inhumanly. There was also the fact that each day the war grew longer it grew expensive. On May 13, Colonel Sweet, responding to a circular from Washington, informed Hoffman that he had cut out the issue of hominy because it was being "entirely wasted," and he eliminated candles because they only aided tunnelers. Additionally, he enclosed statements by state commissary Edwards and post Commissary of Prisoners L.S. Skinner, recommending the ration be reduced. Said Skinner, "In my opinion, the ration issued to prisoners is too large, as they waste a large percentage of them." Edwards agreed and urged rice and tea be discontinued. Hoffman at first believed "The scale of rations furnished from this office...is about right. Neither to much nor too little"[9]

Prior to April 20, 1864, no specific instructions did Washington issue limiting the quantities of the rations except to say that prison camp commandants were directed to withhold whatever could be spared without inconvenience as a basis for the prison fund. The following table shows the approved ration by dates mentioned from circulars issued by the Commissary General of Prisoners, together with the U.S. troops ration at the same date, and the difference in value credited to the prison fund:

U.S. Troops 1864	Prisoners 4/30/64	6/1/64	1/13/65	Employed on Public Works
Pork or bacon, or	10 oz	10 oz	10 oz	12 oz
fresh or salt beef	14 oz	14 oz	14 oz	16 oz
flour or bread(soft)	18 oz	16 oz	16 oz	18 oz
Hard Bread, and	14 oz	14 oz	10 oz	16 oz
Corn Meal	18 oz	16 oz	16 oz	18 oz

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[8] Ibid., pp. 928-29.

[9] Ibid., 142-43: Hoffman to Orme, Jan. 21, 1864 RG 249, N.A.

To each 100 rations

Beans or Peas, and	6 qts	12 1/2lbs	12 1/4	14 lbs
Rice or Hominy	8 lbs	8 lbs	8 lbs	10 lbs
Coffee, green, or	7 lbs			7 lbs
Coffee roasted/ground	5 lbs			5 lbs
Tea	18 oz			16 oz
Sugar	14 lbs			12 lbs
Vinegar		3 qts	2 qts	3 qts
Candles	5			
Soap	4 lbs	4 lbs	2 lbs	4 lbs
Salt	2 qts	3 3/4qts	2 lbs	3 3/4lbs
Molasses	1 qt			1 qt
Potatoes	30 lbs	15 lbs		30 lbs
Pepper				
Average Cost Price $26.24	$16.48	$13.63	$16.81	$20.31
Credit to Fund	$ 9.76	$12.61	$10.92	$ 5.93

Hoffman further made slight modifications to the ration by allowing tea, sugar, and antiscorbutics to be issued if necessary in the opinion of a surgeon. Coffee and sugar could be given to prisoners who aided the hospital staff.[10]

Having had an influence on the ration reduction, Colonel Sweet came to have second thoughts when sickness and the mortality rate began to increase late in the 1864 summer. Part of the cause Sweet blamed on the lack of vegetables in the diet, and he urged that the sutler be allowed to sell vegetables. Hoffman refused, replying either the prison fund savings could be employed or the meat ration reduced further to create a fund through which vegetables could be

[10] O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, pp. 521, 811-12.

purchased and issued. Sweet argued in return that meat might be cut in the summer but it was hardly advisable facing a cold Chicago winter. A November 11 report by post Special Investigator Briggs endorsed Sweet's view with the opinion that prisoners should be permitted to receive vegetables from their friends at home. The following month he recommended that the meat ration be increased two ounces: "A ration that is sufficient in this climate in the summer is not enough in winter." But nothing was done, for in January 1865, Inspector Shurley requested a ration increase and vegetables from any source: "Antiscorbutic are indispensably necessary to save life".[11]

Embittered Southerners following the war charged they had been intentionally starved, that some men actually died for lack of food. No one said he actually ate a rat, but some claimed it had been done by others. An often told Camp Douglas tale was that several Kentuckians lured a stray dog into their barracks, killed him, dressed him, and turned the animal into dog soup; and when a Yankee officer offered ten dollars reward for the return of his pet, a prisoner wrote a jingle underneath the posted reward notice:

" For lack of bread the dog is dead. For want of meat the dog was eat."[12]

One Confederate, John Copley, captured at the battle of Franklin and brought to Chicago in early December, said that the food was divided into as many portions as there were men in his mess and then distributed by chance. A loaf of bread was given to each three men for a meal. Since there were only two issues, each man got a "third" and two "thirds", he explained. Bacon was issued on Sundays, beef on week days. Each man got about eight ounces of beef, five of bacon, which when cooked shrunk to about half its original weight. Soup consisted of beef or bacon water spiked with some beans or a potato. Soap and salt were also drawn, but no candles. Copley's account rings more true than other inmates who described their ordeal at Camp Douglas, and for that reason he

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[11] Ibid, pp. 955, 1006, 1059, 1187, Vol. 8, p. 44.

[12] Head, Sixteenth Tennessee, pp. 477-78; Page, "Prisoners of War", Confederate Veteran, vol. 7, p. 63; Copley, Sketch of Franklin pp. 175-78. That there was a very real spirit of retaliation in 1864 is evidenced by a peculiar letter dated October 20, addressed to President Lincoln by the Chicago Board of Trade, urging that helpless Confederate prisoners be subjected to the identical dreadful conditions they heard were being inflicted on Union prisoners at Andersonville, Georgia. "We are aware that this, our petition, savors of cruelty...," but they said this was no time for squemishness and felt obliged to "urge retaliatory measures as a matter of necessity." O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, pp. 1014-15.

seems accurate and believable when he characterized the rations as being just enough to keep men "tolerably hungry".[13]

B. Cooking and Baking Arrangements

The first arrangements for arriving prisoners were simple. There were none, and everybody fended for himself with what they had when captured. Then Colonel Hoffman stepped in. The cost of fuel for cooking meals bothered him, "a source of very heavy expense to the government," as he called it. He therefore ordered the practice of prisoners doing their own baking discontinued as of May 17, 1862, and fresh bread acquired through a contractor. His money-saving idea was that a baker could profitably take 10 ounces of flour from the post commissary and return 22 ounces of bread. A baker could turn an even greater profit if cornbread three days a week was substitued for wheat bread. Since 22 ounces was the daily flour issue, the prisoners instead would receive 22 ounces of bread, the extra two ounces re-sold to the commissary and the savings placed into a fund. As another mode of saving money, he directed quartermaster Potter to furnish large boiler pots for consolidated group cooking to conserve fuel.[14]

In July, following his first inspection tour, Hoffman came up with his idea of Farmer's boilers. In describing them to Captain Freedley so he could purchase six new pattern 40-gallon barrel size, Hoffman's assistant described: "These are completely enveloped by the fire and set down into the heat as far as the upper flange in a similar manner that the heater of a common glue pot receives the inner vessel of fluid." Apparently the boilers were purchased but not often used. Captain Freedley did not mention them when he inspected Douglas in March of 1863, saying only there existed an unfinished bakehouse and prisoners ought to bake their own bread.[15]

This bakery remained incomplete six months later. It was among criticisms recorded by Surgeon A. M. Clark, who said he saw two ovens in working order and two which could readily be made

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[13] Copley, Sketch of Franklin, p. 166.

[14] Ryan, "Experiences," Andersonville NHS; O.R. Series II, Vol. 3, pp. 549-50. According to a veteran, the Irish among the prisoners disliked cornbread and would gladly trade for bakery bread at the call: "Yeller Hammers! Yeller Hammers! Here is your horse feed; come on with your gun wadding!" a.n.," Doorstep Reminiscences" Confederate Veteran, Vol. 10, p. 349.

[15] O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, p. 249, vol. 5, p. 345. Probably General Tyler began the bakery, for he let a contract for materials to build four bake ovens. Tyler to Hoffman, Nov. 11, 1862. R.G. 393, N.A..

erable, but "I could learn no good reason why they are not used." He found 13 20-gallon boilers originally bought as cooking pots being used in the hospital laundry for washing clothes. Clark said cooking for the hospital was good, in the garrison tolerable, but Union authorities paid no attention whatever to how the prisoners ate.[16]

When Hoffman's response directed Colonel De Land to implement Farmer's boilers and have the post do baking for the prisoners, De Land balked. He said Farmer's boilers were a tried failure. He had just ordered the garrison to use brick-and-iron 16-hole ranges, cheaper, safer, and more economical. The prisoners preferred cornmeal by choice and baked Johnny Cakes in ovens and bake kettles furnished by the contractor at no additional expense to the government. Hoffman replied, in turn, he was well aware contractors supplied ovens, because they profited from the cornmeal. He confessed by failing to have his orders obeyed the previous year, regarding cooking, the saving fund collected a mere $1,000 instead of between $10,000 to $20,000 which could have been saved. A 60-gallon boiler costing $25 to $35 could accommodate 120 men, the wood supply required was small and, furthermore, it avoided gatherings of men crowded around a range. All other cooking utensils were to be confiscated to prevent noncompliance. "And now I must insist that my instructions be strictly carried out," wrote Hoffman.[17]

He additionally modified baking arrangements. Until the ovens were put into working order, De Land was to contract with a local baker to take 20 ounces of flour and return 18 ounces of bread, savings to go into the prison fund. When the ovens were ready, a baker would be hired at from $75.00 to $100.00 per month, with three or four assistants detailed with some inmates allowing them extra pay, and De Land could save $200 to $300 a month. Once or twice a week, for variety, cornbread could replace wheat bread. Hoffman told De Land specifically not to consult with contractors or listen to their advice.[18]

But Commandant De Land failed to carry out his instructions. General Orme inspected the Western prisons and reported to War Secretary Stanton on December 7, that at Camp Douglas: "There is no good system for cooking, each man being left to arrange for himself." Orme, when he became commandant, put Hoffman's plan into operation, ordering quartermaster Goodman to repair ovens, construct new ones,and hire a baker. The Farmer's boilers by

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[16] O.R., Series II, Vol.6, pp. 373-75.

[17] Ibid., pp. 489-90.

[18] Ibid.

October, however, were worn out and unsafe after eight months use. Hoffman approved replacements.[19]

Besides having their meals cooked for them, the prisoners had one other method. They used the stoves located in the passageways of their barracks.[20]

B. Water

The water supplied to Camp Douglas presented only rare, minor problems. The entire camp drank water from the same source. It came from Lake Michigan, pumped by the city water works through a three-inch pipe. The system had some faults. In August of 1863, when the Kentucky cavalrymen came, only one hydrant functioned. Surgeon Clark on October 9 said the water supply was deficient because there were only three hydrants. But when he returned for a second inspection after six months he noticed twelve hydrants and found no fault. The ex-Confederates recalled that sometimes the system froze solid during the winter. Secretary Stanton passed along an inspection complaint that, in August, the supply of water was deficient, especially if a fire occurred, because the hydrants had only one-inch spouts. Hoffman replied Commandant Sweet had approval to enlarge the line with a six-inch pipe and connect as many hydrants as he thought might be required.[21]

C. Sutlers

An Army sutler did not, contrary to popular belief, have the free reign of a civilian merchant. Army Regulations controlled about every aspect of the military entrepreneur. Sutlers were to be appointed by the Secretary of War, and only one sutler was authorized to a post or regiment. Similar to an enlistment, they were limited to three years service unless discharged or their privileges were suspended by a commanding officer. The Army regulated their prices. Regulations, however, often went ignored. Appointments usually came from post or regimental headquarters rather than from Washington.[22]

Colonel Tucker appointed Moses W. Lester as the first camp sutler on November 4, 1861. Two months later, Tucker's council of administration eliminated his competition by prohibiting

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[19] Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 660.; Vol. 7, p. 1067; SO No. 140, Feb. 18, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[20] Copley, Sketch of Franklin, p. 146.

[21] O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 371, 908, Vol. 7, pp. 1067, 1083; The Chicago Tribune, August 21, 1863.

[22] Revised Army Regulations, 1863., p. 36.

unauthorized sutlers, fixed prices for all Lester's stock, and established his "authorized assessment", or tax, at three cents per month for each soldier on post. Use of credit tickets and sale of alcohol were prohibited.[23]

A subsequent council called by Colonel Mulligan altered the sutler's tax structure. A regimental sutler now paid a flat rate of $50.00 per month, the money to be paid for deposit into a regimental fund. The post sutler and other authorized vendors also paid a monthly rate, proceeds to go to post headquarters and placed in the hospital fund. The post sutler paid $75.00 per month. Again, unauthorized sutlers were expelled from camp, and liquor prohibited.[24]

Returning to command in August 1862, Colonel Tucker decreed hence forward sutlers would maintain separate markets. Regimental sutlers were forbidden from doing business with prisoners and could sell only to Union soldiers; the post sutler had an exclusive privilege of trading with the Confederates. Tucker furthermore prohibited all sutlers from accepting or delivering any packages or articles to prisoners and from socializing with inmates. Violation of this order could mean dismissal.[25]

In November, during Douglas' use as a parolee center, General Tyler increased the sutlers' tax to $100.00 per month, an increase which seems to have been a fine for sutlers having exceeded their privileges. Contrary to Army Regulations, Tyler forbade credit sales and disallowed sutlers from collecting debts at the pay table. Selling liquor once again was prohibited, and he charged the provost with authority to arrest and jail violators.[26]

Perhaps it was the stories that sutlers engaged in aiding prisoners to escape that caused Colonel De Land to take a dislike to the three sutlers he found on post when he assumed command. C.K. Winne & Son, and McBride & Van Fleet came to Douglas as regimental sutlers for the Illinois volunteers and stayed around to do business with the Harpers Ferry parolees after the trainees departed. A woman by the name of Mrs. Finley had set up shop outside the fence and made such an annoyance of herself that Colonel Cameron let her inside. Although all were paying their tax assessment, camp records disclosed that none of the three had an

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[23] S.O. 15, Nov. 4, 1861, S.O. 15, Feb. 3, 1862 Order Book, CHS.

[24] Ibid. Order dated May 20, 1862.

[25] Ibid. G.O. 9, July 19, 1862, G.O. 12, August 6, 1862,

[26] Tyler to R. Warner, Nov. 10, 1862; Order Book, Nov. 12, 1862, R.G. 393 N.A.

fficial appointment. After a convened council of administration uncovered "gross irregularities", and General Ammen in Springfield advised that there should be as few sutlers as necessary, De Land moved to get rid of them. But he kept his own, 1st Michigan's Hall & Treadwell, whom he said came recommended to him by the governors of Ohio, Michigan and U.S. Senator. Yet Colonel Hoffman ordered them reinstated. Although his management instructions of 1862 left sutlers under a commandant's control, by the next year he controlled every dimension of the military prisons.[27]

For three months, from December 1863 through February 1864, Secretary of War Stanton directed that all trade between prisoners and sutlers be prohibited. No explanation was included in the order except that it be "strictly carried out". It applied to all prisons. At Douglas, the government took over the private buildings of C.K. Winne & Son and McBride & Van Fleet,[28]

When sutler exchanges were permitted to reopen in early March, the War Department issued a specific list of articles authorized for sale. The articles were: tobacco, cigars, pipes, snuff, steel pens, paper, envelopes, lead pencils, pen knives, stamps, buttons, tape, thread, sewing cotton, pins and needles, handkerchiefs, suspenders, socks, underclothes, caps, shoes, towels, looking glasses, brushes, combs, clothes brushes, pocket knives, and scissors. Groceries included: crushed sugar syrup, soap, butter, lard, smoked beef, beef tongues, bologna, sausage, cornmeal, nutmeg, pepper, mustard, table salt, salt, fish, crackers, cheese, pickles, sauces, meats and fish in cans, vegetables, syrups, lemons, nuts, apples, matches, and yeast powder. They were permitted to sell crockery, glassware, and tinware. Sutlers were not authorized to sell cheese. Further, the authority to sell vegetables must have been recalled, for in October, when Colonel Sweet requested permission for sutlers to sell vegetables, Hoffman refused, saying they should be purchased through the prison fund and added to the regular ration. Only those articles enumerated on the list could be sold; the War Department envisioned no large stores, but rather small shops or rooms where supplies for about a day or two would be kept on hand. At Douglas, business hours were between sunrise and sunset.[29]

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[27] De Land to Hoffman, Sept. 26, 1862, R.G. 249, Ammen to De Land, Aug. 22, 1862, R.G. 393 N.A.
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[28] O.R., Series II, Vol. VI, p. 625; S.O. 54, Dec. 21, 1863, R.G. 393 N.A.

[29] Hoffman to De Land, March 3, 1864 R.G. 249, G.O. No. 2, Aug. 23, 1863, R.G. 393 N.A; O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, P. 1006.

Garrison sutlers were exempt from Washington's restrictions but not from inspection reports. Colonel Marsh reported on April 16, 1864 to the Inspector General's Office that the appointed sutlers of the 8th and 15th Veteran Reserve Regiments sold pies, candies, cakes, and cider but did not have their price lists posted as they should. He also said he saw no evidence of pecuniary transactions between Union sutlers or soldiers and the Rebel prisoners.[30]

Since prisoners were not permitted to possess money, a system had to be devised for them to make transactions. Post headquarters kept their money on deposit, usually cash received from friends or relatives sent by mail, for which the inmate got a receipt. Under General Ammen's system, the post cashier issued tickets, or sutler checks, to the prisoner to the amount of 50 cents per week for direct purchases. For larger orders, the sutler had approval to dispense articles on credit. Sometimes a dishonest prisoner would answer a notice posted for a creditor to appear at the sutler's store and fraudulently pick up the merchandise. If caught, this little trick meant a ride on Morgan's Mule. Colonel Sweet modified the system somewhat. The headquarters clerk keeping accounts went to Prisoner Square with a book showing who had how much on deposit, and a ream of blank purchase order forms. He filled out the orders at the inmate's request, had them sign it, then issued sutler checks for the stated purchase in denominations of 5,10,25, 50 cents, or a dollar. The sutler sold items by means of these checks, turning them in to the clerk for cash. No blank orders were allowed in prisoners' hands, which could lead to forgery or dispute. But when Sweet's system showed up on a routine inspection report to Washington, Colonel Hoffman prohibited further use of sutler checks. After August 10, 1864, when a prisoner wanted to make a purchase he obtained a printed order from the sutler on which he noted the articles he wanted and the cost. The sutler then presented the document to the post cashier for payment.[31]

Postwar Southerners in their writings bemoaned what they considered to have been exorbitant prices charged by prison sutlers, a gripe which seems unjustifiable because post councils of administration set a sutler's fees. Guards and prisoners paid the same prices, and no evidence of black marketing appears in Camp Douglas records. In fact, one of Morgan's Kentuckians wrote that the border states' men lived pretty comfortably when the sutlers were open. However, their complaint that headquarters' clerks fleeced them of mailed money is backed up by a complaint addressed

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[30] Ibid. p. 57.

[31] Tuttle, History of Camp Douglas, p. 20; O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, p. 496; Sweet to Hoffman, Aug. 5, 1864, Hoffman to Sweet Aug. 10, 1864, R.G. 249, N.A.

to Hoffman by a prisoner's father, who stated that five times he mailed his son $5.00 and only once did the boy receive any money.[32]

1. Other Vendors

Camp Douglas records show the existence of other vendors besides sutlers who did business, though on a smaller scale. The May 1862 council of administration of Mulligan's which fixed flat-rate taxes on sutlers also levied a tax of $10.00 a month on a grocery store located in the northwest corner of the camp, a photographer $5.00 a month, a shoemaker's shop $5.00 per month, a milk and butter peddler operating from a cart $5.00, a newspaper depot $4.00, and a barber shop $1.00 a month. A milk and vegetable peddler carrying articles in hand paid no tax. No further reference is made about the grocery store. The photographer and barber on March 1, 1864, had their taxes raised to $10.00; but the following month Hoffman ordered the photographer and other "establishments of a private character" removed from Prison Square. On the first day of 1864 Colonel De Land prohibited news boys from camp.[33]

Laundresses also did business on post. A November 19, 1861, council of administration fixed their rates at 50 cents per dozen for articles of clothing washed for enlisted men, and 75 cents per dozen for officers. Officers paid more because their clothes required ironing[34]

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[32] Head, History of the Sixteenth Tennessee, p. 477; R.T. Bean, "Seventeen Months in Camp Douglas", Confederate Veteran, (June 1914) p. 269; Hoffman to Tucker Aug. 4, 1862 R.G. 249, N.A.

[33] May 20, 1862 entry in Order Book, CHS; G.O. 25, March 1, 1864, G.O. 9, Jan. 1, 1864, Hoffman to Sweet, June 24, 1864, R.G. N.A.

[34] S.O. 4, Feb. 4, 1861, Order Book, CHS.

VIII. GUARDING THE PRISONERS

A. The Guard Force

Garrison duty at Camp Douglas consisted primarily of guarding prisoners. The first prison guards were the Illinois trainees, who had added to their training agenda the duty of patrolling the fence and keeping watch over the Fort Donelson captives. During the month of June 1862, the state organized several regiments for limited three-month service. Two of these outfits, the 67th and 69th Illinois, performed guard duty at Camp Douglas for their entire service. The 9th Vermont and 65th Illinois, plus several temporarily detached companies of General Tyler's parolees, were issued arms and guarded the Arkansas Post prisoner group in early 1863, then escorted them to Virginia for exchange.[1]

Following the War Department's 1863 decision to retain Confederate captives rather than exchange them, most Union prisoner of war depots employed United States Colored Troops or Invalid Corps (later Veteran Reserve Corps) units as security forces. But occasionally combat outfits like Colonel De Land's 1st Michigan Sharpshooters and Captain Hill's 24th Ohio Battery at Camp Douglas were assigned to garrison security duty for periods of time.

No blacks served as soldiers at Camp Douglas. Here the post relied principally on Invalids, with reinforcements, as the camp security force from September 1863 till the end of the war. The Invalid Corps was constituted in April of 1863 as a response to the North's dwindling manpower supply. Its recruits came from men joining from hospitals, unfit for field duty but still hale enough to perform light tasks, including provost guard duty, guarding hospitals, depots, arsenals, and prison camps. By December more than 20,000 joined. The officers were usually wounded combat veterans. The rank and file came from soldiers debilitated by disease.[2]

The organization got off to a poor start because the initials for the outfit coincided with the "Inspected-Condemned" stamped on unserviceable government equipment and animals; a distinctive uniform of robin's-egg blue made it the butt of many an insensitive joke, and some soldiers asked to be sent back to the fighting rather than be called an "Invalid". So in March of 1864 the War

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[1] Karlen, "Postal History," American Philatelist p. 820; Dyer, Compendium, pp. 1076-1652.

[2] Mark M. Boatner, Civil War Dictionary (New York, 1959), p. 870; Medical and Surgical History, vol. pt. 3, p. 28.

Department renamed the organization the Veteran Reserve Corps and issued regular army uniforms.[3]

There were two categories within the corps. Those able to handle a musket were assigned to companies of the First Battalion and used for noncombat garrison and guard duty. Below them came the Second Battalion, those too enfeebled to do more than become nurses and cooks. The 8th Regiment and 15th Regiment were composed of First Battalion companies, transferred to Camp Douglas and reorganized into regiments in October of 1863. They served until mustered out by detachments between June and November, 1865.[4]

The two Veteran Reserve regiments were for the most time reinforced by a third infantry regiment. The 1st Michigan Sharpshooters served as guards from August 1863 to March 1864, before being ordered to the Army of the Potomac in Virginia, where they saw hard and bloody combat under General Grant. During the conspiracy crisis of autumn, 1864, the 196th Pennsylvania, a 100-day Philadelphia-raised regiment, added its strength to post security between August and November. The 24th Ohio Independent Light Artillery spent its entire service threatening prisoners with cannons, first on Johnson's Island in 1863, then at Camp Chase, before moving to Chicago at the end of August 1864, where it remained until mustering out. Finally, the 48th Missouri, after routine guard duty along Tennessee's railroads, moved to Camp Douglas in February 1865 and escorted the Confederates to City Point for the final exchange.[5]

1. Guard Strength and Shortages

A recurring complaint to Washington by Camp Douglas commandants was that the numerical strength of the guard was barely sufficient for the task, although no statement regarding exactly how many men were required was ever made. Colonel Tucker, in July of 1862, told Colonel Hoffman that his guard detail at that time consisted of a captain, 7 lieutenants, 24 corporals, and 382 privates, not including an exterior force of the fence perimeter, to keep watch over 7,800 prisoners. A medical inspection report during March 1863, just before the Arkansas Post prisoners were exchanged, gives the number of Union effectives present at 1,737

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[3] Boatner, Dictionary, p. 870.

[4] Boatner, Dictionary, p. 870. The 8th Regiment was organized by consolidation of the 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 31st, 63rd, 78th, 81st, 83rd, 92nd and 96th companies, First Battalion. The 15th Regiment consolidated the 21st, 24th, 25th, 68th, 70th, 75th, 94th, 105th, 107th and 120th Companies, First Battalion; Dyer, Compendium,. 1741, 1742.

[5] Ibid., pp. 1280, 1338, 1499, 1624.

enlisted men guarding 3,520. Certainly General Ammen had no cause for complaint.[6]

Colonel De Land believed his forces were inadequate and complained bitterly. In September he had 775 guards, of whom 225 went on duty daily to guard 3,200. The following month the prison population increased to more than 6,000 while the guard was only 978. In December he griped that many of his men were so overworked and physically broken down with measles and lung diseases, and the winter weather was so severe the men could not stand duty oftener than every fourth or fifth day. The daily guard detail was about 250 with only 10 officers. But by February of 1864, with the prisoner population reduced slightly to 5,900, the Veteran Reserves increased De Land's garrison force to 1,781.[7]

Colonel Hoffman reported in December 1863 the guard numbered 1,196 but only 859 enlisted men could be counted on due to the "unavoidable inefficiency " of the Veteran Reserves. Sweet's 1864 forces, though not reported, can be estimated at slightly under 2,000, perhaps a bit higher following the arrival of additional veteran reservists in November. Whatever the exact figure, it was apprehended by Sweet and others that, during the conspiracy crisis, the Union forces could be defeated if the prisoners attacked. Said one Washington inspector: "The garrison, in my opinion, is too weak for safety, especially at this time, when everything tends to show that the prisoners of war expect succor from some quarter." The recommendations were that howitzers be sent, either an additional regiment of veteran reservists added, or the 8th and 15th Regiments be brought to full strength. All this temporarily brought to Chicago an unknown number of reserves from the 5th, 17th and 22nd Regiments stationed in Indianapolis.[8]

2. Arms Shortcomings

Since several regiments guarded the prisoners, the guards carried a variety of weapons. The 9th Vermont, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, and 196th Pennsylvania all had issued to them British-made caliber .577 Enfields, a first-quality rifle-musket. The Veteran Reserves, however, were forced to make do with undesirable scrapings from U.S. arsenals. An ordenance report dated February 11, 1864, states the weapons carried by the 8th Regiment were "old and probably condemned lots of arms, unserviceable and positively dangerous to the men using them". The

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[6] O.R. Series II Vol. 4, p. 279, Vol.5, pp. 344-45.

[7] Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 372, 908; De Land to Hoffman, Sept. 7, Dec. 19, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.

[8] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, Vol. 7, p. 1067; G.O. No. 110, Nov. 14, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

inspecting officer did not consider them a fit arm for guards: "They were probably never good arms even when new." An exception was Company D, which he found had standard issue, new Springfield rifle-muskets, caliber .58. The great majority of the 8th and 15th Regiments were armed with caliber .69 Prussian smoothbore muskets, some caliber .69 old Springfield smoothbores, and a few caliber .71 Belgian muskets. Ammunition consisted of buck-and-ball cartridges.[9]

Colonel Sweet reported that a June 2, 1864, breakout attempt was foiled by patrol guards pistols because only one musket discharged of four fired from the fence. Adding his opinion, he told Colonel Hoffman the inmates were well aware that many guards had defective weapons, and this knowledge had spurred them on. He informed Hoffman that three months before he had had these weapons condemned and requested replacements, but nothing happened. In the meantime he ordered guards to carry revolvers rather than muskets.[10]

But the handguns were no great shakes either. Records show they were Pettengill six-shot revolvers, .44 caliber an unusual-looking double-action pistol featuring a hammerless frame. The internal mechanism proved too delicate for field use and many were condemned. According to Colonel Hoffman, the post had 500 of them. They were carried by the Prison Square police patrol in lieu of muskets.[11]

The 24th Ohio Battery had 10-pounder Parrotts for armament but Colonel Hoffman had doubts about artillery's usefulness. Whatever its ability to overawe prisoners, artillery was useless

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[9] Report of Lt. Col. H.H. Beadly, Feb. 11, 1864, Misc. Ms. File, CHS; S.O. No. 239, June 3, S.O. No. 278, July 13, S.O. No. 280, July 16 SO No. 311, Aug. 16, S.O. No. 312, Aug. 18, 1864, RG 393, N.A. Also listed are a few Austrian-made caliber .54 rifle-muskets and some French muskets described as "bad" or "worthless".

[10] O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, pp. 187-88. Guards sometimes did not load their weapons so they would not have to clean them; see G.O. No. 86, Sept. 15,1864, RG 393, N.A. Whether or not these muskets were replaced is unclear. A July 1864 ammunition requisition ordered 30,000 Enfield cartridges; however, subsequent special orders the following month document issues of buck-and-ball cartridges and Prussian muskets S.O. No. 280, July 16, S.O. No. 311, Aug. 16, S.O. No. 312, Aug. 18, 1864 R.G. 393, N.A.

[11] Ibid.; O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, p. 1083; Pettingil Army Model Revolvers were made by Rodgers, Spencer and Co., Willowvale, New York. The government purchased 2,001 of them. Frederick P. Todd, American Military Equipage 1851-1872 (Providence, 1974) vol.1, p.172.)

and subject to capture by revolting prisoners unless supported by infantry, and if the infantry properly put down the revolt, there would be no need for cannons, he reasoned. He felt revolvers would be the best weapons during an emergency.[12]

B. Guard Duty - The Daily Routine

1. Garrison and Prisoner Guard

Much of the day-to-day routine throughout the post's history became established in its earliest days. When a change in command took place, the new commander usually announced standing orders would remain in effect, then made corrections as he thought necessary. Guard duty was the fundamental, ongoing task.

In December of 1861, five weeks following the camp's official opening ceremony and eleven weeks before prisoners arrived, Colonel Tucker established the first schedule. Sentinels stood a 24-hour tour of duty. They were divided into three reliefs: two hours spent on guard, four hours off, but ready on call nearby in the guard house or barracks. A drummer signaled the reliefs to assemble. Corporals in charge of reliefs bore the responsibility of assembling, counting, and dismissing their men. Commissioned officers supervised the proceedings; two had to be present at all times in the guard house. The 1st relief posted at 9 a.m., and continued till 11 o'clock, when the 2nd relief took over. The 3rd relief relieved the 2nd at 1 o'clock, and was in turn relieved at 3 o'clock when the 1st relief returned to duty.[13]

Forty-five minutes were allowed for meals. The 3rd relief ate dinner first, from 11:45 to 12:30. The 1st relief ate from 12:45 to 1:30, followed by the 2nd relief from 1:45 to 2:30. The same routine was followed for supper. The 3rd relief ate from 4:30 to 5:15, the 1st relief from 5:30 to 6:15, and the 2nd relief from 7:30 to 8:15. No schedule was set for breakfast.[14]

Tucker also was the first to prohibit unnecessary conversation between guards and inmates, a rule every subsequent commandant found necessary to repeat.[15]

General Tyler, the parolees' commander, outlined a daily regimen. Reveille and roll call sounded at sunrise; breakfast at

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[12] O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, p. 1083.

[13] G.O. No. 36, Dec. 1, 1861, CHS.

[14] Ibid.

[15] G.O. No. 9, July 19, 1862, Ibid.

:30; surgeon's call took place an hour later at 8:30; guard mount was held on the parade ground in front of post headquarters at 9:30; drill accompanied by roll call took place at 3:00; retreat ceremonies and yet another roll call were held at sunset; the final roll call and tattoo took place at 9:00; followed by taps at 9:30.[16]

Colonel De Land's schedule remained essentially the same as Tyler's but he made some additions. Company first sergeants would call the roll at all formations, and they would henceforward be supervised by an officer. Morning reports had to be at regimental headquarters by 8:00 a.m., consolidated and at post headquarters by 10:00 o'clock. Company commanders were charged with inspecting barracks, mess halls, and rations every day. Each company would have a single mess. First sergeants drew rations and issued them to the cooks; cooks and detailed kitchen police were excused from regular duty, except for reveille and tattoo roll calls.[17]

De Land also required at every guard mount and each change of reliefs that pertinent paragraphs from Army Regulations and the Articles of War be read to sentinels. An officer had to certify this was done. The officer in charge of the guardhouse had to report each morning to the officer of the day how many Union miscreants were being confined. This report had to be at post headquarters before 11 o'clock[18]

Roll call for the prisoners was haphazardly done by Colonel Tucker. Colonel Hoffman required the procedure carried out by Union sergeants or corporals reporting to an officer, who in turn was supervised by a field grade officer, who made morning reports to post headquarters. De Land ordered roll call to take place at 7:00 a.m. Orme required the officer of the day to inspect prisoners' barracks daily and visit the guard post headquarters at 1:00 a.m. The Captain of the Guard received reports from officers of the guard and also visited all guard posts after midnight.[19]

General Orme decided in January 1864 to reorganize the guards into two divisions. The first division consisted of a captain and a lieutenant of the guard, 3 sergeants, 3 corporals, and 108 privates. The guard for the second division had the same number of officers and non-coms but was slightly smaller, having 92

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[16] General Tyler neglected to include supper. G.O. No. 8, Oct. 11, 1862, CHS.

[17] G.O. No. 12, January 8, 1864, RG. 393 N.A.

[18] "Letter of Instruction," Misc. Ms. File, CHS

[19] Ibid., Hoffman to Tucker July 31, 1862 RG 249; G.O. No.4, December 19, 1863, RG 393 N.A.

privates for 30 posts. This organization only existed a brief four months, however, before Colonel Sweet revoked its creation.[20]

Sweet's only other tampering with the schedule or organization of the camp guard was to have the officer of the day supervise inspection of the new reliefs being posted. And following the Autumn crisis, he ordered a guard force of unstated size to post at 7 a.m. daily before prisoner roll call was conducted at 7:30, under the guide of the officer of the day. After morning roll call, both the prisoners and guard detail were dismissed.[21]

2. The Interior Police Force

When General Orme organized the guards into two divisions, he additionally assigned to each division what he called a Patrol and Police Guard, made up of a lieutenant, 3 corporals and 15 privates. They changed reliefs like the posted sentinels and reported directly to the officer of the day. Their especial duty was to break up congregations of prisoners around their barracks, or anyone loafing around the hospital or commissary or quarters. They were authorized to arrest anyone, soldier or civilian, who associated with inmates. Twice a day the lieutenant inspected the prisoners' barracks and submitted a written report of any irregularities.[22]

Colonel Sweet did away with the patrol force but kept the interior police that Orme had instituted the following month. To stringently control the prison square, Sweet gave Captain Wells Sponable, 15th Regiment, Veteran Reserves, broad powers as post Inspector-General. The detail assigned to him took to calling themselves "Inspectors", and the Confederate prisoners took to hating Sponable and his assistants to the marrow of their bones.[23]

Reporting to Major Lewis C. Skinner, the Post Commissary of Prisoners, Sponable's force had 2 lieutenants, 10 sergeants, 20 corporals, and 38 privates who became the chief enforcers of discipline. Each morning at 10 a.m., barracks inspection took place. A sergeant and a couple of corporals and privates were placed in charge of one or more barracks to strictly enforce rules

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[20] G.O. NO. 12, January 5, G.O. No. 42, May 23, 1864. Ibid. Although not specifically stated, it seems that Orme's first division guarded prison square while the second division guarded the garrison square.

[21] G.O. No. 98, October 5, G.O. No. 119, December 1, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

[22] G.O. No. 12, January 8, 1864, Ibid.

[23] G.O. No. 21, February 23, 1864, Ibid.

and regulations. While the prisoners assembled outside, Sponable or his officers entered to inspect for cleanliness. The sergeants delivered prisoner mail, drew rations and delivered them in carts to the cooks. Sponable's men additionally had authority over feeding arrangements, including detailed prisoner cooks, kitchen police, eating messes, and grounds police.[24]

A detail of one corporal and four privates constantly patrolled prison square day and night. According to Orme's instructions, all violators of camp rules were to be reported to Captain Sponable, who in turn furnished headquarters with full reports. But according to many ex-inmates, Sponable's men frequently took corrective action on the spot by inflicting punishments on their own. Two of the Confederates' least favorites they nicknamed "Prairie Bull" and "Billie Hell", each of whom wielded either a leather strap or a club.[25]

3. Provost Guard

For keeping the Union garrison under control, to include the city of Chicago, there was the provost guard. General Tyler organized a force of 1 captain, 3 lieutenants, 3 sergeants, 4 corporals, and 85 privates to be furnished to the Provost Marshall by the officer of the day and report at 10 a.m. The Provost Marshall was responsible for those under arrest--civilians and state prisoners as well as soldiers--safe keeping of all post records and documents and the training of those placed under him. Each morning he was required to file a report to headquarters outlining the previous day's activities under his jurisdiction. For private soldiers, being selected for provost guard detail carried additional responsibility, and those caught in "a house of ill fame" or "too intoxicated for duty" were relieved and returned to their company commanders for punishment.[26]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.; J.W. Cook, "Villainous Inspectors at Camp Douglas", Confederate Veteran, Vol. 110, p. 406.

[26] Special Order Book, October 28, 29, 1862 S.O. No. 65, March 6, 1865. The Tribune suggested that the provost guard patrol the grounds adjoining the Douglas estate and arrest "the hundreds of abandoned women who resort there to indulge in the grossest licentiousness with the soldiers from the camp who are allowed to congregate there in full view of the grave of Doulas and of reputable citizens of the neighborhood." The editors said these group encounters" "would be more appropriate in the houses of prostitution on Wells Street." The Chicago Tribune, May 28, 1864.

4. The Fire Brigade

Given that Camp Douglas structures were built of wood, it seems almost peculiar that not until almost the end of the war was there an organized fire-fighting organization. Colonel Sweet appointed Capt. Samuel A. Gold and 2nd Lt. W.J. Wood on November 28, 1864, to head a detail of 5 sergeants, 10 corporals and 135 privates. The detail was subdivided into 5 divisions of a sergeant, 2 corporals, and 27 privates. In addition to their regular duties, the officers had charge of 5 engines, its hoses and buckets; and the non-coms and privates were trained in fire fighting drill.[27]

C. Financing The Prison

1. Prison Economics

Union authorities believed that keeping enemies imprisoned was not only burdensome but expensive. Costs for running Camp Douglas at the end of February 1862 ran about $2,000 per day. Rations for guards and prisoners consumed about half the total, fuel cost $400, and garrison pay and incidental expenses made up the rest. The economics of running the post rose steadily till 1864 and peaked at $8,540 per day, exclusive of garrison pay, an increase of 327 percent.[1]

Beyond these expenses were the monies spent for expansions, repairs and improvements to post facilities. Between October 1862 and February 1863, $15,000 had to be spent on repairing barracks and the fence. Colonel De Land spent about $30,000 by the end of 1863 fixing up the post. The sewer cost more than $5,000, the new hospital ran to more than $10,000. Sweet spent $52,000 on barracks, $182,000 on the fence and sewer, $61,000 in improving the prison square, and $80,000 on new buildings, for a total of $375,000.[2]

2. The Prison Fund

Thus it became fundamental that collection and disbursement of the prison fund was basic to the management and operation of a Union prison. Quartermaster General Meigs had made it clear he wanted prisons managed frugally. So Colonel Hoffman, to acquire

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[27] G.O. No. 125, Nov. 27, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

[1] The Chicago Tribune, Feb. 27, 1862; Andrews History of Chicago, Vol. 2, p. 303.

[2] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, p. 492, Vol. 7, pp. 496-98; The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 28, 1863; Tuttle, History, p. 15, Colbert, Chicago Historical and Statistical Sketch, Vol. 2, p. 95.

revenue, extended the post fund system, traditionally employed by the U.S. Army at its forts and garrisons, to prisoner depots.

Experience had taught that soldiers seldom ate their entire food allowance. Arrangements were therefore made whereby the ration could be legally reduced and the money saved accumulated in a fund through which purchases could be made to vary the diet. For example, surplus bacon or coffee or flour could be converted to fresh vegetables. Cooking utensils, mess furniture and other articles of convenience could be bought from the fund. Army hospitals adopted this system so that things like milk, eggs, chickens, fruit and vegetables, items not issued by the subsistence or medical departments, could be obtained for the sick.[3]

Ration savings was the primary but not the sole source for the fund. Taxes levied on sutlers and other vendors went into the fund, as well as illegal money confiscated by prison authorities enroute to prisoners. Money left behind by deceased inmates also went to the hospital fund.[4]

In his 1862 management instructions, Colonel Hoffman allowed great leeway to prison commandants concerning collection and disbursement of this money. What part or how much of the prisoners' rations could be withheld he left to their discretion. He told them the fund could be spent for table furniture, cooking utensils, police articles, bed ticks and straw, extra pay for clerks, and improving and enlarging the barracks. The chief commissary officer would be responsible for funds and keeping accounts. Purchases would be made by requisition by and through the quartermaster, with the commandant's approval. Property purchased from the fund became the responsibility of the quartermaster. Hoffman's stated intention was twofold: to make the prisoners as comfortable as circumstances allowed, and to save government funds. He neither envisioned a large amount to accumulate nor have it wasted on luxuries beyond what was necessary for health and comfort.[5]

Everything from lamp oil to major barracks repairs and detective salaries to coal stoves came out of the fund. In the prison's early days the fund at Camp Douglas was relatively small; a July 1862 audit stated it amounted to $369.48. In March of 1863 it totaled $1,473.38, of which $1,115.34 accrued in the month of February. Despite continual and sometimes large-scale improvements made to the post, the Camp Douglas prison fund grew by astounding

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[3] Medical and Surgical History, Vol. 1, pt. 3, p. 68; Revised Army Regulations, 1863, pp.35-36.

[4] Medical and Surgical History, Vol. 1, pt. 3 p. 68.

[5] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 698-99, Vol. 5, p. 637.

proportions. By July 1864 it had grown to $19,692.50. Reduction of the prisoners' rations accelerated the fund's growth. When the post closed down, after the war was over, and the fund transferred to the U.S. Treasury in August 1865, it amounted to $181,739.96[6]

D. Garrison Administration

1. Council of Administration

The Camp Douglas Council of Administration consisted of three officers. Usually, but not always, they were three regimental commanders appointed by the commandant to meet at least once every two months. They acted as the commandant's advisory board. The junior officer of the group had the title of treasurer but acted as a chief auditor. Regulations prescribed the councils' duties to regulating the sutlers; deciding what could be sold at what prices, inspecting stock, and periodicly examining his books and papers. Laundresses, too, were subject to the councils' regulations. The council disposed of the effects of deceased soldiers, and audited the prison fund. All proceedings of the council were reviewed and subject to a commandant's approval.[7]

In addition to what was stated in Army Regulations, the council at Camp Douglas also established tax rates for all post concessions. Colonel De Land once used the council's investigation report of "gross irregularities" to have all sutlers expelled from post, except for his own.[8]

2. Boards of Survey

When government property became damaged by unauthorized or improper use or was suspected deficient in quality or quantity when received, the post commandant had authority to appoint a board of survey to examine a complaint, assess any monetary value, and place responsibility. Usually the board consisted of three officers. They could act as investigators but could not condemn property. Camp Douglas records show that boards frequently investigated quartermaster supplies. They undoubtably had a field day after the Harpers Ferry parolees departed, but their activities could also

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[6] Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 220, Vol.5, p. 345, Vol. 7, p. 498. Hoffman to McClure, Aug. 8, 1865 RG 249, N.A. This final figure of 1865 includes an unknown amount received from the sale of Camp Douglas property when it was auctioned. For example, $2,469.15 brought by the sale of stoves was placed in the fund on July 25, 1865. Recorded in Letter Book, RG 393, N.A.

[7] Revised Army Regulations, 1863, pp. 29, 34-36.

[8] S.O.No. 4, Feb. 3, Order dated May 20, 1862, CHS; De Land to Hoffman, Sept. 26, 1863, RG 393, N.A.

be trivial. General Orme's board of survey found 2 officers, 3 sergeants, and 6 corporals of the 1st Michigan Shapshooters responsible for a broken stove in the guard barracks, for which the officers were fined $5.00, the sergeants $2.00, and the Corporals $1.[9]

3. Boards of Investigation

From time to time commandants found it necessary to convene investigative boards for matters not specifically enumerated in Army Regulations. For example, Colonel Sweet a Special Board of Investigation to inquire into alleged damage done to cars of the Chicago & Alton Railroad by U.S. troops being hauled from Chicago to St. Louis. In March 1864, by Secretary of War Stanton's order, a Board of Officers was convened to investigate the circumstances every time a guard shot a prisoner of war, and submit a full report with remarks to the Commissary General of Prisoners. Also, Sweet called upon a board of three officers to decide the make, style, and color of new gloves sold by the sutler and worn by all sentinels.[10]

E. Martial Law

From July 8, 1862, onward, Camp Douglas came under martial law. All prisoner of war depots came under martial law, and the incident causing the general declaration occurred at Camp Douglas. When a clergyman was refused permission to speak to the Fort Donelson prisoners, he attempted to conduct a conversation through the fence and was challenged by a sentinel. He became indignant, used abusive language, and got himself arrested by the officer of the guard. A Chicago court unexpectedly upheld military authority. Colonel Hoffman repeated the story to Secretary of War Stanton with the suggestion that martial law should be extended for a hundred feet outside the fence and trespassers be confined for a short time, or court martialed, at the discretion of the commandant. Stanton agreed that trouble with civilians could be nipped before it got serious, and so Hoffman ordered Colonel Tucker to drive a line of stakes two feet above the ground, fifty feet apart, and have a declaration published in the Chicago newspapers.[11]

Subsequent abuse got heaped on Colonel Tucker, who did not enjoy the popular support of Colonel Mulligan. For there were

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[9] G.O. No. 147, Feb. 28, G.O. No. 28 March 16, SO No. 173, March 17, S.O. No. 203, April 14, 1864, RG 393 N.A.

[10] S.O. No. 211, Aug. 22, S.O. No. 399 Nov. 12, 1864, RG 393; Hoffman to Orme, March 7, 1864 RG 249, N.A.

[11] Hoffman to Stanton, May 17, 1862, R.G. 249, N.A.; O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, p. 154.

those who felt liberties were jeopardized, habeas corpus was being circumvented, and a danger that the Confederate prisoners might rebel against Tucker's harsh brand of discipline. Tucker sent four derogatory newspaper clippings to Washington, including one from the Evening Journal charging him with maladministration. But Hoffman advised him to pay no attention to newspapers. If Tucker thought it might be helpful, he could tell his critics that the incident which caused the declaration of martial law happened while Mulligan commanded and would have taken place anyway. And there the matter rested.[12]

F. Detectives

Colonel De Land began the practice of employing detectives, Frank Moran and Samuel L. Jones, for special government service at $100 a month, paid out of the prison fund. Orme continued the practice, but Colonel Hoffman told Colonel Sweet they would be discharged unless approved by his office. Sweet, alarmed by what the two had uncovered, argued they were essential for security; for they had supplied names and addresses of Chicago Rebel sympathizers who harbored escapees, and disclosed the existence and leaders of the Sons of Liberty, which aside from being disloyal were then actively engaged in plotting to overthrow the camp guard in conjunction with a riot from within by the inmates. They also infiltrated the prisoners' organizations in cahoots with the Sons of Liberty, Sweet said.[13]

But Hoffman remained skeptical. He and General Orme had had some discussions about detectives and he left it up to Orme's discretion "for the present", he said, and "if at reasonable rates." He now felt $100 a month was unreasonable. Still, he did not want to compromise Camp Douglas' security, so without actually giving approval, he told Sweet that money to pay for detectives should come out of the quartermaster department instead of the prison fund and Sweet should apply to his department commander. Two weeks passed and Hoffman still was troubled about the expense. He advised Sweet that perhaps a dozen or so inmates might be employed to inform on their fellow prisoners. They should be rewarded, he suggested, but not paid. Finally, on February 21, 1865, with Camp Douglas safe, the conspiracy broken and the copperheads in jail, prisoners about to be exchanged, Hoffman had his final say: "Detectives by the day or month are not authorized.

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[12] Ibid., pp. 192-95, 223.

[13] De Land to Goodman, Sept. 17, 1863, RG 393, Hoffman to Sweet, Sept. 13,19, 1864, RG 249, Sweet to Hoffman Oct. 11, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

You are again forbidden to employ detectives...without authority from this office."[14]

Pass Privileges

From time to time the garrison's soldiers received passes to leave post. Frequently they got themselves into trouble. Within a month after the 1861 opening of the post, Colonel Tucker threatened to restrict passes because of reports of "disorderly and riotous conduct" by the trainees in Chicago. When abuses continued in saloons, on the streets, and in railway cars, Tucker ordered regimental commanders to restrict passes to "such men and for such time as they think most beneficial to the service". Apparently Tucker's order went unheeded by Colonel Mulligan's subordinates, who delved out passes on a quota basis, forcing Tucker to repeat his instructions when he returned to command. Tucker approved of Chicago police arresting soldiers caught in the city without a pass.[15]

A liberal pass policy by General Tyler quickly led to problems with the Harpers Ferry parolees. Officers came and went at their leisure leaving commands without a commissioned officer present. They set a bad example for their troops. Some men left camp with loaded weapons. So Tyler ordered that passes would extend only to [illegible] p.m.; officers had to apply for passes through their regimental commander just like enlisted men, and regiments had to have a field grade officer, and companies a commissioned office, present at all times. The Illinois trainees could apply for a pass only through Colonel Tucker.[16]

Colonel De Land granted passes on a quota basis. In each company, one officer and two enlisted men could leave per day for necessary business. All others were to remain on post. Abuses abounded, as usual, and De Land found it necessary to get tough. Rewards were extended to city police for arresting absentees, who he threatened would be confined at hard labor and court martialed for desertion.[17]

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[14] Hoffman to Sweet, Sept. 13, 29, Oct. 17,29, 1864, Feb. 21, 1865. RG 249 N.A.

[15] Order No. 19, Nov. 16, 1861, G.O. No. 53, Jan. 19, Order No. 4, Feb. 3, G.O. No. 7 July 5, G,O, No. 18, Sept. 10, 1862, CHS.

[16] G.O. No. 3, Oct.7, G.O. No. 11, Oct. 22, G.O. No. 14, Oct. 24, 1862, CHS.

[17] G.O. No. 2, Aug. 23, G.O. No. 12, Oct. 5, 1863, RG 393, N.A.

Colonel Sweet during the conspiracy crisis revoked all pass privileges to Chicago except to orderlies and clerks. Those few passes he did grant had to state a purpose for issuance. Groups of men could continue to bathe in the lake, he said, but they had to be supervised by a senior non-commissioned officer. Later, it would have to be a commissioned officer. Sweet also changed his mind about passes. He permitted two men per company per day to go on pass, the document approved by company, regimental, and post commanders. He also extended pass privileges to outstanding sentinels at guard mount, provided they were off duty.[18]

Only one reference during the entire war was made to furloughs. In November of 1863, District of Illinois headquarters ordered that no one could go on furlough or extended leave of absence. Colonel De Land passed the message to his officers with the addition it would be futile to apply.[19]

What was there to do on pass? Saloons and prostitutes aside, according to the diary of Pvt. Edward Greble, 196th Pennsylvania, a good soldier could enjoy himself without getting arrested. While the weather remained mild, Lake Michigan offered recreation in the form of swimming and fishing. Greble went there every couple of days, usually in the evening. He went to the theater several times, mentioned specifically he saw "Our American Cousin", the comedy destined for tragedy when it played in Washington, D.C. A city boy from Philadelphia, Grebel found Chicago's sites worth visiting. On one off-duty Thursday he saw ale being brewed at Sand's Brewery, watched a tunnel being constructed beneath the lake, and visited the Cook County Court House. He attended Trinity Episcopal Church, noting that provost guards were present at the door. He visited a bakery. On election day, November 11, he played billiards at the Sherman House.[20]

No doubt Camp Douglas contained a great number of soldiers like private Greble, who were not drunken hellions, who cheerfully performed their duties, and respected their officers and obeyed their commands. No doubt, also that every commandant from Tucker to Sweet wished that all the garrison's soldiers were like him.

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[18] G.O. No. 68, Aug. 15, G.O. No. 14, Aug. 26, G.O. No. 78, Sept. 3, G.O. No. 22, Nov. 24, 1864, Ibid.

[19] G.O. No. 22, Nov. 24, 1863, Ibid.

[20] Grebel Diary, L.C..

IX. CARE OF THE SICK

A. Hospitals--An Overview

Ten days following the Camp Douglas opening ceremony, Surgeon J.V.Z. Blaney received appointment as post surgeon. He would be the first of nine medical officers to hold the position. His tour of duty lasted a mere five weeks before bing relieved by Dr. Edmund Andrews on December 8, 1861. Andrews in turn was replaced on February 1, 1862 by Surgeon William C. Hunt of the 51st Illinois. Dr. Brock McVicker was appointed Assistant Surgeon by the Illinois. Adjutant General. Except for war fever, which became a national epidemic in those early days, the most serious disease to infect Illinois recruits was measles. The recruits were generally in good health.[1]

The same could not be said for the captives from Fort Donelson. Their wretched condition elicited more than remarks; it brought formations of Chicago citizen aid committees and collections of medical supplies to help care for enemies in need of help from any quarter. Within a week after their arrival, there were more than two hundred Confederates in the hospital and three or four hundred additionals under treatment outside. The most prevalent diseases were diarrhea, pneumonia, mumps, measles, bronchitis, inflammatory rheumatism, neuralgia, and jaundice. There were also minor ailments attributed to exposure: coughs, colds, and other complaints.[2]

Increasing sickness caused camp authorities to start thinking in terms of improvements to the post. A barn had to be converted into a hospital, and still there was not room enough. By March 5th more than 325 inmates were hospitalized, and many more sick in the barracks. Twenty-nine had died.[3]

Everyone was doing everything possible and the picture was not entirely bleak. Colonel Mulligan invited a worried Chicago Board of Supervisors to inspect the camp. They tendered their thanks, saying they were "highly pleased with the orderly and cleanly appearance of the hospital, and the excellent arrangements for the care of the sick...." Colonel Hoffman paid his first visit to Camp Douglas and reported to Quartermaster Meigs his relief to find the prisoners quartered and the sick comfortably provided for in

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[1] S.O. No. 13, Nov. 2, S.O. No. 35, Dec. 2, S.O. No 37, Dec. 14, 1861, S.O. No. 2, Feb. 1, 1862, Order Book CHS; Tebbetts, "Story", Illinois Journal, p. 231.

[2] The Chicago Tribune, March 6,7, 1862.

[3] Ibid.

hospitals. Although more than four hundred were on the sick list, they now were under care. Hoffman envisioned a rapid recovery rate.[4]

If the situation seemed improving, there followed a relapse. Pneumonia increased. From Island No. 10 came 2,217 more prisoners, causing the camp to become so crowded stables had to be used for barracks. Camp Douglas became greatly overcrowded; its streets were ankle deep in mud, and the place stank.

Camp Douglas became recognized as an unhealthy place. Doctor McVicker, now post Surgeon, wrote to Commandant Tucker calling for immediate action to improve sanitation measures. Additionally, there was now a shortage of physicians since the 16 Rebel doctors had been discharged. Sanitary Commission President Henry W. Bellows wrote directly to Washington urging a new camp location.[5]

Colonel Hoffman in turn wrote to General Meigs recommending repairs and improvements, especially construction of a sewer, intimating the spectra of pestilence. But Meigs based his refusal on economics. His opinion was that prisoners ought to have the ability to keep the prison clean.[6]

Inefficiency and inexperience marked the camp's early history. Doctor McVicker's July report of a tendency toward scurvy and repeat request for more medical men brought only a long-distance dispute between Colonels Tucker and Hoffman, concerning authority to purchase vegetables. Meanwhile, 263 prisoners died and 1,147 were reported sick in June and July. Following the exchange, there remained behind about 150 too broken down to make the journey. Nearly 800 had died.[7]

Sanitation and sickness continued to be troublesome while the parolees from Harpers Ferry occupied Camp Douglas. Many of them got sick and more than a few died, although the death rate was much less than for the Confederates. The Sanitary Commission saw little meaningful improvement at this post; none of the barracks appeared

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[4] Hilliard to Mulligan, March 10, 1862, Mulligan Papers, CHS; O.R. Series II, Vol. 3, p. 360.

[5] The Chicago Tribune, March 12, April 5, June 9, 1862; O.R., Series II, Vol. 4 pp. 106-08.

[6] Ibid., Vol. 4 pp. 110, 129.

[7] Ibid., pp. 253-54, 279, 324,-25, 353, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003; The Chicago Tribune, Sept. 23, 1862.

to be really clean--not "fit habitations for respectable men"--and they again argued the camp be relocated.[8]

In the last days of January 1863, the 3,884 Arkansas Post prisoners arrived and in the following month of February nearly ten percent of them perished, with twice that percentage on the sick list. It is probably true that many were more dead than alive when they reached Chicago, but the basic faults of the camp no doubt contributed to the high mortality. Since November 26 of the previous year, Surgeon George H. Park, 65th Illinois, was in charge. Park had four civilian doctors employed by contract and four Rebel medical officers working under him. According to Hoffman's inspector, Captain Freedley, the hospital was satisfactory and stocked sufficient medical supplies. The Sanitary Commission's report to Washington came to the opposite conclusion, calling medical facilities "a painful spectacle". Smallpox grew prevalent. It broke out before the prisoners arrived, but by the second week in March there were 125 cases in the hospital and 19 each of the prisoners and guards died. General Ammen vaccinated everyone present, but at least nine inmates with the disease were among the prisoners when transferred for exchange.[9]

As a partial consequence of the terrible Arkansas Post mortality rate, Quartermaster General Meigs at last gave approval to construct a flushable sewer. This came at Colonel Hoffman's urging. Also, it was likely recognized that the Dix-Hill Cartel was on the verge of collapse and Camp Douglas and other temporary depots would be retained as prisons till the war's end.[10]

The sewer and other improvements were incomplete as the prison again became overly filled with captives in August and September of 1863. The hospital overflowed to the point where the post chapel had to be converted into a hospital building. A comprehensive inspection took place in early October by Hoffman's assistant, Surgeon Clark. Medical staff at this time consisted of Surgeon Arvin F. Whelan, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, two assistant surgeons, and two contract civilian physicians hired within the previous two weeks. There were 325 prisoners sick and 50 Union guards reported sick. The capacity in the prison hospital was for 120, or 180, if the chapel were included, and 50 for the guards.[11]

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[8] Ibid., Oct. 10, Nov.19, 1862.

[9] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, pp. 449-53, 588, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003; The Chicago Tribune, March 12, 1862.

[10] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, p. 492.

[11] Ibid., pp. 371-74.

Many but not all of Clark's criticisms stemmed from deficiencies. Blankets, clothing, bedding, laundry facilities, surgical instruments, medical attendance, rations, police, heat, and record keeping he found satisfactory if not good. Hospital discipline was "not as good as it should be." Diseases prevalent were pneumonia, typhoid fever, and few cases of measles. Recovery a rate was not good because of overcrowding and poor ventilation. The mortality rate he deemed acceptable. Interments of the dead were made by contract. Clark recommended additional accommodations for six hundred patients.[12]

Colonel Hoffman inspected the hospital three months later on his trip to Chicago to investigate a barracks fire and reported to War Secretary Stanton that he found the sick comfortable but too crowded. But, he added, additional buildings with enlarged accommodations were under construction.[13]

At the end of 1863, when fraud first became noted concerning the prisoner rations, General Orme uncovered no shortages in the hospital during his investigation. In his questionnaire to the Confederate squad leaders, he inquired if their men received prompt medical attention. Every one of the 24 sergeants replied they were satisfied. Surgeon Whelan reported the number of sick in the hospital at 217, in six wards.[14]

When surgeon Clark returned for his second inspection in early February 1864 he found conditions greatly improved and little to criticize. Bed space had increased to 234, but there were an additional 250 sick in the barracks. Pneumonia, chronic diarrhea, measles, and typho-malarial fevers were present. The 26 cases of smallpox were quarantined in a pest hospital removed from the main post. The new post hospital, when completed, accommodated an additional 189 beds. Rations, vegetables, cleanliness, cooking, records keeping, clothing, bedding, police, heat, and ventilation were all satisfactory. A new laundry was also being erected, and so for the time being washing was done by contract. The medical staff of Doctor Whelan now had four assistant surgeons assigned to the prisoner hospital, and three to the post hospital.[15]

Other inspectors were impressed with medical improvements. Surgeon Alexander praised the new $10,000 hospital and its management, but noted there was still not enough bed space for all

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., pp. 633-35.

[14] Ibid., pp. 778-99.

[15] Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 908-10. One assistant surgeon was reported in arrest.

the sick prisoners; two additional buildings were being moved into the hospital enclosure to add 70 more beds. Although vaccination was enforced, some smallpox cases had to be treated in an old cavalry stable. Recovery from sickness was tardy. He estimated the sickness ratio at five percent.[16]

By the first week in August, Colonel Sweet noticed and reported an alarming increase in the sickness and mortality rate. Although nearly 2,500 prisoners had been added in July and August, bringing the prisoner population to 7,500, the death rate soared out of proportion to the increase in inmates. In June, 34 had died, 49 in July, 98 in August, and 123 in September. The number in the hospital jumped from 167 in June to 373 in September. Two of the three causes, Colonel Sweet informed Hoffman, could be removed. First, was the post surgeon. Doctor Whelan had gone with his regiment and had been replaced by Surgeon J.H. Grove, who in turn was ordered to Louisville. Assistant Surgeon A. M. Sigmund was appointed to the top medical post in June. Sweet characterized the latter as incompetent and recommended his replacement, which was done in November. Surgeon J. C. Whitehill became post surgeon. Second, there was a lack of vegetables and anti-scorbutics in the ration. Noted the commandant: " this want has been distinctly visible as a cause of disease." His suggestion was to let the sutler sell groceries, eliminating any governmental expense. The third cause could not so easily be cured. Some inmates had been confined for longer than a year and low morale led to mental and physical depression and susceptibility to sickness.[17]

Washington authorities might permit a post surgeon's removal, nothing could be done about homesick Rebels, but they adamently refused the prisoners to have vegetables or increase their rations. Not until February 13, 1865, when the final exchanges were underway, did Secretary of War Stanton permit vegetables to be sold by sutlers. Hoffman evaded the vegetable issue by suggesting purchases from the prison fund, but apparently this was not done. Certainly the government's refusal contributed to the increased sickness and mortality rate suffered by Confederate prisoners in Camp Douglas in 1864. In October, 109 prisoners died and 362 were sick, 217 died in November and 505 were sick, and 323 died and 407 were sick in December. Although the camp by then contained 12,000 prisoners, the year's death total reached 1,225.[18]

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[16] Ibid., pp. 496-98.

[17] Ibid., Vol. 7, pp. 954-55, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003; G.O. No. 20, Feb. 15, G.O. No. 33, April 25, G.O. No. 50, June 22, 1864. G.O. No. 33, Aug. 13, 1865.

[18] O.R., Series II, Vol. 7, p. 1006, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003; Circular No. 21, Feb. 13, 1865, RG 249, N.A.

Even with the opening of the new hospital, deaths continued to take place in the barracks, in part because the most recent arrivals were sick and destitute, but also because overcrowding continued. Smallpox, which had been a factor in the mortality, was under control by January; a new quarantine hospital now stood a mile south of the main post. A January internal inspection report cited only 12 new cases, of which only 4 were varioloid. But sickness and death remained high right up to the end. More than 50 prisoners died in 1865.[19]

In July, after all the able-bodied prisoners were released, those left behind sick were transferred to the post hospital to recover. The final note came on August 13, 1865, when Surgeon Henry Palmer relieved Doctor Whitehill as post surgeon.[20]

B. Feeding The Patients

The meat and bread rations issued in the hospital did not differ from those issued to well prisoners in the barracks; however, sugar and coffee or tea were issued only to the sick every other day on the recommendation of the surgeon at a scale of 12 pounds of sugar, five pounds of ground or seven pounds of green coffee or one pound of tea to every hundred rations.[21]

In the same way that the prison fund accumulated money from a reduction and consequent savings of the ration, a similar system authorized the creation of a hospital fund. It was disbursed on the recommendation or requisition of the post surgeon, approved by the commandant. Two funds were kept: one for the prisoner and one for the garrison hospital. But the hospital fund was not nearly as large as the prison fund. In February 1864, Inspector A.M. Clark reported it amounted to $ 246.21, with the previous month's expenditures being $481.48.[22]

The fund existed chiefly for the purchase of articles of diet not supplied by the ration. Also it could be spent for shirts and drawers for patients, washing clothes or police articles for the hospital. Doctor Whelan reported to General Orme, while investigation of the ration swindle was in progress, rations issued to hospitalized prisoners were the same quality and quantity as

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[19] Ibid., Vol. 7, pp. 1243, 1275, Vol. 8, p. 76, 986-1003.

[20] Hoffman to Sweet, July 3, 1865, RG, 249; G.O. No. 29, Aug. 13, 1865, RG 393, N.A.

[21] O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, pp.464, 680. The hospital ration cost $18.42 per hundred.

[22] Medical and Surgical History, Part 3, Vol. 1, p. 69; O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, p. 909.

those furnished to sick U.S. troops, consisting of bacon, beans, fresh beef, soft bread, potatoes, rice, coffee and tea. Purchases from the hospital savings included butter, eggs, cabbages, beets, parsnips, turnips, onions, chickens, oysters, fresh fish, salted fish, lemons, dried apples, berries, currants and cherries, "all in such quantities as are needed and in accordance with the diet table recommended by the Surgeon General."[23]

C. Bunks and Bedding

Each patient had a cot, a bed sack filled with hay, pillows, sheets and pillow cases, and two blankets, more if ordered by the surgeon. Those confined to their beds had issued to them from the hospital supply: shirts, drawers and socks, which were frequently changed.[24]

D. Prisoners as Attendants

When the first Fort Donelson prisoners arrived they brought 16 of their own medical officers assigned to their own captured regiments, but reported to the post commanding officer. According to Union records, the Rebel doctors turned out to be incompetent. Doctor William D. Winer, Colonel Mulligan's chief surgeon, reported a "general inefficiency and want of energy" on their part. They did not visit the barracks as directed, nor was their work in the hospital wards satisfactory. Three of them detailed to Camp Randall, Wisconsin, to work with sick prisoners there had to be returned to Chicago because they refused duty when not allowed to leave the camp.[25]

Despite a War Department general order directing all Rebel medical officers be "immediately and unconditionally discharged" as of June 21, 1862, a Texas surgeon and three assistant surgeons volunteered to remain with the Arkansas Post prisoners and did valuable service in the hospital a year later. Inmates who applied to take the Oath of Allegiance were permitted to serve as cooks and nurses, but their numbers were unrecorded.[26]

E. Civilian Aid Organizations

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[23] Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 798.

[24] Ibid.

[25] S.O. No. 200, March 6, 1862, Winer to Mulligan, March 13, 1862, RG 249, N.A.

[26] O.R., Series II, Vol. 5, p. 344, Vol. 6, p. 909.

Chicagoans' reactions were mixed while the first Fort Donelson prisoners marched through the streets to prison; some cursed the Rebels, some cursed Jefferson Davis, but there were others who were moved by the woebegone captives and their plight. Public sympathy brought about the formation of the Camp Douglas Relief Committee. It was a six-man fraternity composed of C.G. Wicker, Walter B. Scates, John Sears, Thomas B. Bryan, Brock McVicker, a future post surgeon, and E.B. Tuttle, soon to be the post chaplain. He was chosen chairman at the formation meeting held at Bryan Hall on March 1. The committeemen performed to the best of their meager limits by taking collections in churches and sending supplies "by the wagon load", according to Tuttle, to the post surgeon, plus $400 in cash. Union soldiers, however, became indignant at what was being done for the Rebels and griped that all they received from the Relief Committee was cough syrup.[27]

Also, the local YMCA built the post chapel at its own expense. It was used temporarily as a hospital by Colonel Mulligan and permanently impounded by Colonel De Land[28]

Mortality at Camp Douglas

Because it operated longer and was nearly largest of the Union prisoner of war depots, more prisoners died in Camp Douglas than any other. According to compiled figures by U.S. Army medical officers following the war, 4,009 Confederate prisoners perished while confined inside Douglas' walls. Fevers were the greatest killers. Eruptive fevers struck down 823, continued fevers 351, and malarial fevers 233. Pneumonia and pleurisy accounted for 1,296. Diarrhea and dysentery killed 698. Consumption caused 113 deaths, scurvy 39, rheumatism 37, bronchitis 27, and anemia 4. Other diseases caused 308 deaths. Wounds, injuries and unspecified diseases killed another 80. Assuming these figures are accurate, and estimating the total number of prisoners confined at 25,000, the percentage of mortality is 16 percent.[29]

Why did so many die? For one thing, it was suggested that Confederate soldiers were not as healthy as Union soldiers because of the rations furnished by the Confederate army. At Camp Douglas in June of 1864, a surgeon noted how although both guards and prisoners had been vaccinated with the same virus, U.S. troops

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[27] Tuttle, History, p. 11; The Chicago Tribune, March 3,7,24,31, 1862. Tuttle became post chaplain on July 2. The Relief Committee's existence was probably short lived.

[28] O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, p. 363.

[29] Medical and Surgical History, Vol. 1, pt. 3, p. 46. The table published therein also gives statistics for cases of disease, the total of which amounts to 70,088 cases.

prisoners had been vaccinated with the same virus, U.S. troops suffered no ill effects while nearly 1,500 prisoners healed slowly or suffered ulcers. This difference, diagnosed the doctor, "must be attributed to the cachectic and scorbutic condition of the latter". A scorbutic taint was more likely to effect Southerners before their capture than afterwards, he suspected.[30]

The principal reason for deaths among captured Confederates, concluded Union authorities, was that they were hardly in top physical condition when they arrived in the prisons. They were defeated and depressed at capture. They did not have sufficient clothing or blankets with them during the journey to confinement, were exposed to inclement weather, and suffered from lack of sleep. Many were wounded. Everyone was gloomy; they faced an uncertain future. The prisons were nearly always unprepared for their reception, unsanitary, and overcrowded. Sick men were plentiful in the quarters because hospital accommodations were inadequate. Primitive conditions were hard facts of life when Americans went to war in the mid-19th century, and despite progressive improvements, no one expected that all prisoners would survive. The official explanation, then, was: "The broken health and broken spirits of the inmates were the main factors in the production of disease and death."[31]

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[30] Ibid., p. 67.

[31] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

A. Escape

Escape or an attempt to escape cannot be regarded officially as a crime. Whereas in civilian life a prisoner is obliged to serve a sentence because he has done wrong and is under a legal or moral obligation to submit to punishment, this rule does not apply to the prisoner of war. On the contrary, it is the war prisoner's duty to attempt to escape, rejoin his friends, and continue the fight. At least such is the theory.[1]

Many rebellious souls were incarcerated inside Camp Douglas. Between February 1862 and December 1864, a recorded 319 Confederates escaped. Most likely there were many more; records are incomplete, and besides those who got away, many were quickly recaptured.[2]

In keeping with modern doctrine that the best opportunity is during transportation from the battlefield to the prison, several made attempts before reaching Chicago. One prisoner in 1863 was reported shot leaping from a railroad car; he was recaptured and his arm amputated. Thirteen of some 500 being transferred from Alton in August 1864 escaped during a train stopover. Two were shot. A Texas boy was killed by a guard when he leaped from the hurricane deck of a transport steamer bound upriver from Arkansas Post. Lucker was a Texas lieutenant on the same voyage. Somehow he managed to acquire a Union hat and coat, and to the amazement of his friends while the boat was docked at Cairo, he walked down the gang plank, saluted the guard, who returned the salute and stepped aside to make way, and disappeared among the soldiers and civilians thronging the wharf, eventually returning home to Texas.[3]

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[1] Baker, Prisoners of War. p. 147. This English historian who has studied 20th-century prisoners of war believes escape for duty's sake is overstressed sentimentality. Says A.J. Baker: "The true escaper tries to get away because he is rebellious by nature, and objects to having his liberties restricted by a lot of bastards whom he despises."

[2] O.R., Series II, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003.

[3] Collins, R.M., Unwritten Chapters of the War Between the States, (Dayton, 1982) pp. 78, 80-81; Greble, Diary, L.C.

Bluff also worked perfectly for one of the Fort Donelson prisoners early in the prison's history. This prisoner disguised himself as a civilian and boldly walked to the main gate. To a Union guard he declared, "If I had my way with these rascally Secesh, I'd hang every mother's son of them. I'd kill them all!" The irritated guard asked about his business and if he had a pass. "Well, no, but I just want to see them all hung," responded the prisoner. "Get out of here!" snapped the guard. And that is just what the prisoner did. He walked out the main gate to be seen no more.[4]

Another Fort Donelson prisoner attempted the unorthodox method of political intervention. After two months of Camp Douglas life, a soldier of the 26th Tennessee wrote to Connally F. Trigg, U.S. district judge, saying he knew the judge to be a friend of his father, and for that reason, "I take the liberty of addressing you and requesting you to use your influence to get me out of this place."[5]

While the Fort Donelson prisoners occupied Camp Douglas, escapes commonly occurred. Tales of escaped prisoners ransacking Chicago made the newspapers and rumors even more exaggerated circulated throughout the city. In a report to Washington, Colonel Tucker blamed escapes on a rickety fence, an inadequate guard force, and disloyal Chicagoans. It seems that visitors with Southern sympathies abused pass privileges to smuggle in pistols, knives, or money. A fat turkey, for example, upon dissection might be found to contain a weapon, and clothing sometimes had greenbacks sewn into the lining.[6]

Hoffman forwarded Tucker's statement to the War Department with the addition: "Where there are so many sympathizers outside to influence and bribe sentinels escapes will continue to be made." Although the likelihood of prisoners escaping from prisoner of war camps never became an obsession with him, Hoffman anticipated problems. During his 1862 inspection tour he directed Tucker to relocate and strengthen portions of the fence. It was Hoffman who ordered the construction of a guard walk, with a typical

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[4]Turtle, History of Camp Douglas, p. 14.

[5] Samuel L. Foute to Trigg, April 9, 1862, Trigg Papers, L.C.

[6] Monthly returns indicate 245 prisoners escaped between February and July 1862. But Colonel Hoffman reported to Secretary Stanton, on July 21, a total of 103 escaped prisoners. Three days later 21 more got away, although 10 were recaptured and 1 returned. Captain H.W. Freedley reported to Hoffman on July 21 that Camp Douglas' records were in a shambles and "no reliable data" was obtainable. O.R., Series II, Vol.4 pp. 62,86,252, 256, 278, 279. Vol. 8, 986-87; Illinois Adjutant General's Report., Vol.1 p. 126.

admonishment: "Let it cost as little as possible." Visitors were restricted, and as early as May 2 he directed Colonel Mulligan to have all money in the inmates' possession confiscated, even the smallest amounts, to prevent them from pooling their funds to raise enough for a bribe.[7]

Evidently this could never be completely effective, for bribery remained a primary way to get outside the fence. Following a July 23 mass escape, a trainee sentinel of the 67th Illinois disappeared, leaving his weapon and equipment at his post. Escapees recaptured shortly afterwards in Columbia, Tennessee, told authorities they had bribed guards to get away, obtained help from a Chicago citizen, and said a camp sutler knowingly sold clothing for use as disguises. A similar tale came from a recaptured Arkansas Post prisoner in November 1863, saying that he had been approached by a Union sentinel asking if he would like to get out. When asked how much, the guard replied, " $25.00." A sutler sold him a suit of clothes at $4.50 for a coat and $3.00 for pants, and he and two others got away that night. Possibly he paid too much. Disloyal Kentuckians, mostly relatives of Morgan's men who flocked to Chicago to be near their loved ones, boasted that anyone with ten dollars could bribe a guard. Colonel De Land twice admitted to Hoffman that some of his soldiers accepted money to turn their backs for a while. And General Orme received a report of a woman named Walsh, or Welch, helping escapees by sending money and information by way of her little daughter who played around the camp.

Once Colonel Sweet and the Veteran Reserves took charge, however, reports of bribery came to a halt.[8]

Bribery could take more than one form. One story tells of a prisoner in a borrowed Yankee overcoat scaling the fence with a ladder one night. At the top he met a sentinel. The disguised Rebel held up a canteen and told the guard to keep quiet; he knew of some whiskey nearby, which he would divide if the guard would watch the ladder. Not only did the guard promise to tend the ladder, he helped the prisoner reposition it on the outside of the fence. The prisoner then climbed down and made his way to Canada.[9]

Escapes were few during the period of occupancy by the prisoners taken at Arkansas Post, Island No. 10, and Stones River.

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[7] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 247, 323; Hoffman to Mulligan, May 2, 1862, R.G. 249, N.A.

[8] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4 pp. 62,279; S.O. Book, Nov. 12, 1863; HQ. Dist. of KY to Orme, May 6, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[9] Head, Thomas A. Campaigns and Battles of the Sixteenth Tennessee (McMinnvile, 1961) p. 487.

According to the monthly returns, only six escaped in February 1863, and eight the following month.[10]

But when Camp Douglas became a prison for the duration, the escape rate soared. From September to December 1863, 151 prisoners made their way out. According to Colonel De Land the chief cause, besides an insufficient guard force, was a consequential disruption to daily routine caused by construction work being done to improve the prison's buildings and fence. By disguising themselves and mingling with civilian workmen, prisoners slid out openings in the fence in broad daylight. During one period which De Land called "a streak of bad luck", 12 of Morgan's men got away in two nights by bribing guards. De Land increased the guards and confined the prisoners to their barracks. Greatly embarrassed, De Land complained to Hoffman how Camp Douglas' inherent faults were responsible: "I tell you frankly this camp has heretofore been a mere rookery; its barracks, fences, guard houses, all a mere shell of refuse pine boards; a nest of hiding places instead of a safe compact prison...." The spectra of a new fence had made the prisoners desperate, but, he assured his superior, in a few days the fence would be done and escape would be "next to impossible."[11]

Yet De Land would soon have reason to regret his words. For no sooner was the fence completed than the Confederates began tunneling out. On December 2, 1863 the largest mass escape in the prison's history took place. Nearly a hundred men got out, and even De Land conceded more would have gotten away had they not been in such a hurry.[12]

All the tunnelers were Morgan's men, occupants of Barrack No. 3, in the southeast square, only 43 feet from the fence. Underneath a corner bunk they began tunneling from a small round hole in the frozen ground. Excavated dirt they secreted between the joists underneath the floorboards of the barracks and a nearby cook-house. During the day a board and dirt covered the entrance. Union officers failed to detect it during inspections. A dark and foggy night on December 2 provided perfect cover, and about 8 p.m., one by one, the Kentuckians commenced their crawl to freedom. For an hour and a half they kept it up, until a Union exterior patrol discovered a man emerging from the tunnel exit. An alarm was sounded, mounted patrols dispatched for twenty miles around the city, and military and civilian authorities were notified as far

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[10] O.R., Series II, Vol. 8 pp. 986-1003.

[11] Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 434-35; De Land to Ammen, Oct. 13, 1863 R.G. 393, N.A.

[12] O.R., Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 637-38.

away as Detroit, Cincinnati, and Louisville. In the end, something like half the escapees were recaptured.[13]

This was the eighth tunnel escapade De Land had dealt with to date. Two had been successful. He took stern repressive steps to stop future tunnelers by ordering the flooring removed from all barracks and cook houses and the spaces between joists filled with sand. "This will undoubtedly increase the sickness and mortality," he warned Hoffman, "but it will save much trouble and add security." General Orme, Post of Chicago commander, ordered the camp rearranged by removing barracks from White Oak Square to the western side of the camp.[14]

Rearranging the prison, though, did not much deter tunnelers. Usually they worked in small groups, with 10 to 25 in on the plot, and they were very crafty. Captain Sponable, the camp inspector general, discovered a tunnel entrance beneath a fireplace in one cook house. At night the inmates removed some bricks and dug away till dawn, when the bricks got replaced, covered with ashes, and a fire kept burning all day. Another ploy was to get admitted to the hospital, where the chances for digging a successful tunnel were much greater.[15]

What did effectively prevent borrowing out was the raising of the barracks high above the ground in September 1864, and the stoppage of a candle issue. Compared with the record of 151 escapes during the last three months of 1863, only 93 managed to get out during all of 1864, a substantial improvement.[16]

With tunneling about eliminated the prisoners had to devise new tactics. Individual attempts sometimes worked. Some men "scratched out" by scooping a passageway beneath the fence with their hands. A young Kentuckian who worked as a clerk for a sutler crawled into a large empty sugar barrel and got himself carried into the city with camp refuse. An inmate named Frank Smith deserves individual recognition. This prisoner some way made an

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[13] Ibid., pp. 860-61.

[14] Unimpressed with De Land's explanation of the escape, Hoffman ordered Orme to conduct an independent investigation. Orme concluded neither De Land nor his officers were at fault. Ibid.

[15] Turtle, History of Camp Douglas., pp. 16-17; Greble Diary, L.C. In November 1864, Colonel Sweet informed Hoffman most of his recent escapes originated from the hospital, where complicity on the part of a contract surgeon was suspected. Sweet to Hoffman, Nov. 12, 1864, RG 393 N.A.

[16] O.R., Series II, Vol. 8, pp. 986-1003.

opening into the sewer and crawled through water and filth a half mile to Lake Michigan.[17]

Several attempts were made to attack the guards and storm the fence, not entirely a new tactic. On the night of July 24, 1862 a mob of Fort Donelson prisoners with three rudely-built ladders made a rush at the fence while others scraped a hole beneath it. Twenty-one got out but half were quickly recaptured. On June 1, 1864 Colonel Sweet reported an attempt at mass escape; about 9 p.m. some prisoners smashed some of the fence lamps and tried to break through the fence but were repelled by a patrol guard force and no one escaped.[18]

By the fall of that year the inmate population showed signs of unusual discontentment. Discipline and security were stricter than ever before. Most of the prisoners had been confined for more than a year, prospects for an exchange appeared to be nil, another cold winter was approaching. And everyone seemed aware of a great plot for a forceful mass escape aided from the outside. A guard of the 196th Pennsylvania heard a rumor that 700 of Morgan's men took secret oath "to regain their liberty or die in the attempt." The great escape never materialized, due greatly to Colonel Sweet's alertness. But several attempts to overpower the guards, less grandiose in scope, were prevented. A stone-throwing mob of inmates on September 6 forced a guard at Post 27 to take cover while their comrades broke out a fence board with an axe, allowing somewhere between 11 and 17 to get away. Possible big trouble was thwarted on September 27. Snow and freezing rain had cancelled drill that day, and at about eight in the evening a prisoner threw a blanket over a fence lamp while four or five others bolted from their barracks toward the fence. Immediately shots rang out and two signal rockets were fired into the sky. More shots were fired as the police patrol rushed to bar the doors of barracks. Then all prisoners were ordered out for roll call. In at least two barracks the Rebels got caught getting ready for a breakout; they had bricks ready to throw at the guards, and one of those wounded in the shooting had a wooden hammer to break the fence. Twenty-one were known to be in the on the break, and Sweet had them placed in irons. His report to Hoffman was eventually forwarded to Major

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[17] Head, History of the Sixteenth Tennessee, pp. 486-87; Turtle, History of Camp Douglas, p. 16; McLean to Ammen, Oct. 18, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.

[18] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 278-79. According to a Union sentinel, the 1862 incident began after someone smuggled whiskey into camp and gave enough of it to three or four prisoners to get them drunk and arrested; some fellow prisoners swore revenge, word spread to the guards, who grew apprehensive, and about a dozen shots were fired without effect. McClelland to McClelland, July 25, 1862, CHS. Also O.R. Series II, vol. 7, pp. 187-88.

General E.A. Hitchcock, U.S. Commissioner for Exchange, who added a note: "An attempt on the part of prisoners to escape is not regarded as a crime, but it justifies any measures necessary to prevent its recurrence."[19]

1. Return of Escaped Prisoners

Strange as it may sound, a few escapees actually returned to Camp Douglas of their own free choice following a taste of freedom. Colonel Tucker reported that one returned in 1862. Among a small group released in 1864 after taking the Oath of Allegiance, two men returned, telling camp authorities they desired to return to their quarters. One of them was a Cherokee Indian, the other a Tennessean. The Indian said he wanted back because he could not speak English well and the Chicagoans "speakee no Ingun", while the Tennessean explained that he always made it a point to stay where he felt most at home. Entirely understandable is a tale of four escapees during the terrible cold winter of 1864. Two returned shortly, begging to be taken in out of the weather. They said that their two fellow runaways had frozen to death.[20]

2. Other Crimes

When a prisoner committed an offense against another prisoner's person or property, the act was beyond the pale of federal justice. Moreover, U.S. officials did not as a rule bring prisoners to justice for crimes committed against each other. Although the camp had an abundance of rules and regulations prisoners had to adhere to, petty breaches of discipline could hardly be considered crimes. Still, as Reverend Tuttle, the post chaplain observed, harmony could not always be seen among the prisoners. In prison, he said: "the selfish principle usually predominates."[21]

Three murders, a number of stabbings, and frequent petty thefts took place at Douglas. Reverend Tuttle said one prisoner killed another for stealing a pone of bread by hitting him on the head with a board. A diary keeping sentinel wrote that an inmate who took the Oath of Allegiance got himself murdered by fellow prisoners, who suspected him of serving camp officials as an informant, but he was innocent. Colonel Sweet at exchange time in 1865 asked Washington if a prisoner who had recently killed another prisoner with a knife should be released. A knife sometimes

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[19] Ibid., pp. 703-861, 897,-98. Details concerning the attempt are in the Greble Diary, L.C.

[20] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, p. 279; Illinois Adjutant General's Report, Vol. 1, p. 127; Camp Douglas Clipping File, CHS.

[21] Turtle, History of Camp Douglas, p. 16.

settled disputes between inmates who spent long idle hours continually gambling, and in a cold, sickly place where blankets and food frequently were in short supply, theft could be expected. Turtle saw prisoners working on the hospital run a piece of string through their blanket and tie it around their neck and wear it like a cape, to keep it from being stolen as much as for warmth.[22]

B. Punishments

A Confederate veteran from Mississippi wrote bitterly long after the war that if somehow the tables were turned and he had been a Camp Douglas guard instead of a prisoner, he would not tell any one about it. Indeed, for many a prisoner what galled the most about their incarceration was what they perceived as cruel, arbitrary punishments melted out by Union guards.[23]

A few were shot. Even if, as Exchange Commissioner Hitchcock noted, attempted escape was no crime, shooting an escapee caught in the act was a justifiable measure to prevent recurrence, and it happened occasionally. For example, of six prisoners in August of 1864 who tried to flee from a work detail, one was killed, two wounded, two captured, while one got away. Attempted escape possessed grave risks.[24]

But the Southerners made acrimonious statements accusing their guardians of being trigger-happy, opening fire on little or no pretext. One ex-prisoner claimed he saw a fellow inmate killed when a wind gust blew his hat over the deadline and the man put his foot into the forbidden zone to retrieve it. Several said that guards fired indiscriminately into the barracks at night when they detected or thought they detected noise or movement. One of Morgan's Kentuckians remarked unjokeingly it could be dangerous to snore loudly.[25]

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[22] Ibid., p. 16; Grebel Diary, L.C.; O.R., Series II, Vol. 8, p. 401.

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[24] Sweet to Hoffman, Aug. 12, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[25] J.S. Rosamond, "In Camp Douglas Prison in 1865," Confederate Veteran, vol. XVIII, p. 421; R.T. Bean, "Seventeen Months in Camp Douglas," Ibid., Vol. XXII, p. 268. Reverend Tuttle wrote of a Tennessee prisoner mortally wounded in his bunk by a stray bullet. Tuttle, History., p. 13.

Another story by an angry ex-Confederate told how one morning the guards ordered out the entire 8th Kentucky Cavalry because of a tunnel discovered beneath their barracks. They would stand in ranks at attention, they were informed, until somebody talked. After six hours an enfeebled man just released from the hospital keeled over, whereupon the guards shot him to death and wounded two others.[26]

This veteran intimated that most shooting incidents occurred while Colonel De Land presided as commandant. Embarrassed by escapes and determined to enforce discipline, De Land appears to have initiated a rule that required sentinels to fire. His New Year's 1864 general order entailed that guards were to shout one challenge to any prisoner seen near the fence or outside his barracks at night, except on his way to or from the latrine; if the prisoner did not instantly obey, the guard should fire at him.[27]

Meanwhile, the War Department grew aware of the possibility for abuse by prison guards and ordered henceforward from March 17, 1864 a board of officers should investigate each shooting incident. A full report was to be forwarded to Colonel Hoffman. Stanton's order made it clear that guards and prisoners should alike be fully informed of rules; rigid discipline would be maintained, but care would be taken that "no wanton excess or cruelties are committed under the plea of enforcing orders." Between mid-August, 1864 until the release of February, 1865 eight prisoners were reported shot: six during attempted escapes, one for urinating in the street, and another was fired at for crossing the deadline but was missed and the bullet wounded two men in the barracks.[28]

Other punishments were less deadly. The most often described by ex-prisoners was a framework contraption called Morgan's Mule. It looked like an oversize carpenter's sawhorse, maybe ten or twelve feet high by twenty long. Descriptions vary. Some said its top plank, or backbone, had been planed to a sharp edge along its length, so that a ride of a few hours astraddle the horse produced severe pain. Sometimes the guards attached "spurs" consisting of bricks or buckets of sand to the riders' feet.

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[26] T.D. Henry, "Treatment of Prisoners of War" Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. I, p. 277

[27] Ibid., p. 276; G.O. No. 9, Jan, 1, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

[28] Hoffman to Sweet, March 17, 1864, R.G. 249, N.A.; O.R. Series II Vol. 7, pp. 595-97, 897-98, Vol. 8, 66-67, 115-116.

Less visible but more feared was the dungeon located in White Oak Square. Again, descriptions of exactly what the place looked like vary, but it seems to have been a sort of underground cell. Surgeon A.M. Clark, following his 1863 inspection, reported to Colonel Hoffman that the room measured eighteen feet square, had a hatchway entrance about twenty inches square in the ceiling, and a single, barred window about eight by eighteen inches located six feet above the floor. This constituted the only light source. The flooring was laid directly on the earth, so the cell always was damp. When he went inside, Clark found 25 inmates confined, he was told for attempting escape, in a space suitable for only three or four. The stench from the latrine in the corner he found so overpowering he left after only a few seconds, feeling sick and faint.[29]

The interior police guards established by General Orme also gave cause for fear. According to prison veterans, they were brutes, with "Prairie Bull," a police guard singled out for especial hatred and Southern contempt. His favorite punishment he called "reaching for grub." If Bull failed to identify an individual culprit he would order outside an entire barrack's occupants, have them stand in line, stiff-kneed, bending forward at the waist with palms on the ground. Anyone caught with slack knees got a sharp smack on his rump by a paddle, leather strap, or club. Bull and his friend, "Billie Hell", had another winter time punishment: having the Rebels pull down their trousers and sit half-naked in the snow. Buttock imprints would be visible for days. Then there were other ex-prisoners who said some guards dispensed with formalities and would simply remove their waist belts and flog a prisoner with the buckle end.[30]

Discipline was tough at Camp Douglas. For minor offenses like spitting on the barrack's floor, speaking to guards without permission, congregating in groups, failing barracks inspection, or major offenses like attempting to bribe a guard, there seemed to be no end to the punishments. Runaways had a ball and chain fixed to their ankles. One ex-prisoner said rations were withheld; another claimed the stoves were removed from the barracks one winter. Two Southern writers said they saw men hung by their thumbs. Marching around Prison Square with a barrel for a shirt

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[29] O.R. Series II Vol. 7, p. 374. The Tribune reported at one time more than one hundred men were confined there, "with but barely standing room". The Chicago Tribune April 30, 1863.

[30] J.W. Cook, "Villainous Inspectors at Camp Douglas," Confederate Veteran Vol. XVIII, p. 406; Cornelius Hite, "Man's Inhumanity to Man" Ibid., Vol. XXII, p. 218; J.M. Berry, "Prison Life In Camp Douglas," Ibid., vol XI p. 37; T.D. Henry, "Treatment of Prisoners during the War" S.H.S.P. Vol. 1, p. 278.

was one punishment. Climbing up and down a ladder until exhausted was another.[31]

How many of the ex-prisoners' tales of cruelty are truth, exaggeration, or outright lies is impossible to say. Camp Douglas' records do not mention such things. The pocket diary kept by a guard in the 196th Pennsylvania for two and a half months in 1864, however, intimates that the Southerners did not fabricate everything. On September 27 he wrote, "One of the patrol fired two shots at a Rebel for leaving the ranks." And a week later, he noted on a rainy day, "Rebels standing up in line as one of them was missing." On October 28 of the previous year, Colonel De Land in explaining to Colonel Hoffman the reasons for prisoners escaping, wrote: "I have instituted some extremely severe punishments to restrain the [prisoners], with good general success..." De Land, however, did not go into details.[32]

C. Crimes and Punishments for Guards

Prisoners were not the only ones punished. Their counterparts in the garrison regularly got into trouble and suffered the consequences. The Articles of War prescribed the death penalty for a number of offenses, but except for Pvt. James Kennedy, 8th Veteran Reserves, shot to death on July 21, 1864 while attempting to escape from the provost guard in Chicago, no one paid with his life for a crime at Camp Douglas. Nonetheless, courts martial frequently deliberated over a variety of offenses.[33]

Desertion was probably the most serious. Although in time of war it carried the death penalty, a more typical punishment was like the one handed down to Pvt. William C. Raymond, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, convicted of deserting his outfit at Douglas. He had a one-and-a-half-inch letter "D" branded on his left hip, his head shaved, paraded before his regiment, and confined at hard labor until his expiration of service. Serious cases of absence without leave were often tried as desertion but drew lenient penalties. Pvts. Edgar F. Davidson and John R. Miller, also members of the 1st Michigan, were sentenced to 30 days hard labor while wearing an iron ball chained to the ankle, plus forfiture of

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[31] T.D. Henry, "Treatment of Prisoners During the War", S.H.S.P. Vol. 1, pp. 276-279; John Copely, A Sketch of the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, with Reminiscences of Camp Douglas, pp. 133-138; R.T. Bean, "Seventeen Months In Camp Douglas" Confederate Veteran, Vol. XXII p. 269; Head, Sixteenth Tennessee, p. 477.

[32] Grebel Diary, L.C.; O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, p. 434.

[33] G.O. No. 62, July 22 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

month's pay. Striking an officer, also a possible capital offense, was punished similarly.[34]

Most offenses and punishments were not so serious. For allowing soldiers to pass his post without a challenge, one soldier had to stand on top of a barrel on the parade ground four hours a day for ten days, wearing a placard stating his misdeed. Some Union men got a dose of the same medicine as the Confederate prisoners. For being arrested two days in a row in a Chicago saloon without a pass, another guard was thrown into the White Oak dungeon for ten days with a ball and chain attached to his leg and fed a diet of bread and water. At least a few soldiers got a ride on the wooden horse.[35]

A stint in the guard house was the usual punishment for minor offenses, for a soldier could be confined there without the formality of a court martial. Following arrest, the soldier's commanding officer was immediately notified, but he could not be released except by order of the post commander or the officer of the day. Officers arresting enlisted men had to state the offense and have it entered into the guard book. If formal charges were brought, only the post commander could order release. Those in custody had to keep the building clean and repaired; the officer of the day inspected and requested materials from the post quartermaster. Rarely did the guard house go without confinees. A typical morning report for April 12, 1864 shows 22 on hand, 8 men admitted, 6 men released. Some 14 or 15 men of the 196th Pennsylvania were hauled away to the guard house for "throwing logs in the barracks.[36]

Non-commissioned officers usually were reduced to the ranks. For example, Cpl. Horace E. Seely, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, in addition to five days in the guard house on bread and water, was reduced to private for associating with inmates and voicing disrespectful language to the arresting officer.[37]

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[34] G.O. No. 8, Jan. 1, 1864, GO No. 13, Jan. 15, 1864 RG 393, N.A.

[35] G.O. No. 8, Jan. 8, G.O. No. 13, Jan. 15, 1864, R.G. 393 N.A.

[36] G.O. No. 29, Nov. 25, 1861 order Book, CHS; Greble Diary, D.C.

[37] G.O. No. 3, Aug. 26, 1863, R.G. 393, N.A.

Some of the officers got caught, too. Letters of censure and admonishment disclosing neglect of duty were regularly issued from post headquarters. A court found Lt. Patrick Higgins, of Mulligan's 23rd Illinois, guilty of aiding prisoners to escape, for which he was dishonorably dismissed from the service. In October of 1864 two company commanders and their lieutenants were reprimanded before their troops for being drunk and disorderly in a Chicago saloon. Finally, a lieutenant of the 196th Pennsylvania had to take charge of a scheduled drill formation because the captain "had two women in his room."[38]

[38] S.O. No. 195, Aug. 19, 1862, Order Book CHS; G.O. No. 99, Oct. 10, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.' Grebel Diary, L.C.

XI. THE PRISON EXPERIENCE

A. The Prisoners - A Varied Lot

"Every state in the Confederacy is represented among our butternut friends, and with them are Indians, Negroes, Mexicans, half-breeds, and octoroons-- a motley group, ragged, dirty and covered with vermin. Their clothes are a mixture of cotton and wool, dyed in oak bark, some are minus hats, some shoes, some coats; their blankets are red, white, black, brown or bed quilts of as many colors as Joseph's coat." So described a fence guard of the 9th Vermont in January of 1863 when the prisoners taken at Arkansas Post tramped inside Camp Douglas. Except for the Kentucky cavalrymen of Morgan's command, whom the Tribune admitted to seemingly have hailed from a higher social class than previous prisoner groups, the guard's depiction of dishevelment would have been echoed by most Union observers.[1]

Exact figures are lacking, but something like 25,000 prisoners of war were incarcerated inside Camp Douglas' walls from start to finish. Many prisoners refused to cooperate when Union authorities needed information. They gave assumed names, different names than those on the rolls, or changed their organizations. For example, General Orme complained to Colonel Hoffman that Power's Mississippi and Louisiana Cavalry apparently was a guerilla organization composed of deserters who sometimes gave one name and organization to one Union official, then told something else to another. Nevertheless, Douglas' high of 12,082 was superseded only by Point Lookout's 1864 total of 14,500 for holding the largest number of prisoners at any one time.[2]

Among the prisoners, obviously, great diversity existed. They ranged from mere boys to old men, from the highest to the lowest strata of Southern society. A few were relatives of well-known families or themselves became notable. Among the prisoners were Sam Houston, Jr., his father being the chief creator of early Texas' history; Magruder Magoffin, son of the governor of Kentucky, Brian Magoffin; Polk Johnson, son of Cave Johnson, a prominent Unionist member of the Tennessee state Senate; and Richard Evans, son of Judge Evans of Mississippi. Captured at Shiloh and a Camp Douglas inmate in 1862 was Henry M. Stanley, the journalist who

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[1] G.G. Bennett, Vermont in the Civil War, Vol. 1, p. 210; The Chicago Tribune, Sept. 1, 1863.

[2] Orme to Hoffman, April 28, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.; O.R. Series II, Vol. 8, pp. 987-1003.

After the war traveled to Africa to find the British explorer missionary Dr. David Livingston,[3]

1. Minorities

Among the Confederates there were a small number of minorities who fell into Union hands and were imprisoned till authorities decided what to do with them. Colonel Tucker found five women with the Island No. 10 captives. They were wives of soldiers, and one had an eight-year old boy with her. Colonel Hoffman's office told Tucker to use his best judgement: they could be turned over to a charitable organization, sent southward to the limit of Union lines, or remain with their husbands as nurses or laundresses.[4]

General Orme found four blacks in Prison Square when he took over the post; two had been Confederate officers' servants, one a servant to a doctor, but another, John A. Rogan, was on the rolls as a private in Company I, 15th Tennessee Infantry. If these blacks were slaves, decided Hoffman, revised Articles of War prohibiting Union officers from returning slaves to their masters and the Emancipation Proclamation dictated they should be set free. If, however, any among them happened to be freemen and were listed as Confederate soldiers, they would be treated as prisoners of war but would "not be sent South against their will."[5]

Some others, although not minorities in a strict sense, were found in the prison population who did not belong. One man proved to be a British subject, a bookkeeper aboard a steamboat who took sick and was put ashore on Island No. 10 just before it fell. Five Confederate officers were caught passing themselves as enlisted men by Colonel De Land. They were forwarded to Fort Warren, Massachusetts.[6]

B. Amusements

To break the hour-by-hour, day-to-day monotony of their existence, prisoners occupied their time in a variety of ways. Those with handicraft skills made trinkets like rings or buttons of a hard rubber called gutta-percha. Fancy ones inlaid with gold or silver sold from 50 cents to $10.00. Some carved pipes.

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[3] Tuttle, History, p.21.

[4] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 228-29, 247-48.

[5] Orme to Hoffman, Jan. 23, 1864; Hoffman to Orme, Feb. 9, 1864, R.G. 393, N.A.

[6] Hoffman to Stanton, July 1, 1862, Hoffman to De Land, Nov.16, 1863, R.G. 249, N.A.

arpenters made pieces of furniture, cobblers repaired shoes and boots. They mended their clothes and picked lice. Some played sports like baseball, leap frog, or marbles. Many spent their hours gambling with cards, using money not confiscated or tobacco chews for stakes. Seven-up, euchre, or faro seemed to be the favorite games.[7]

Morgan's Kentuckians produced a four-page manuscript newspaper called "The Prisoner Vidette". Besides news, rumors, an editorial and a poetry column, the amusements section on the last page advertises an entertainment group calling itself Morgan's Nightingales. They were due to perform with Professor Curd's Mammoth Manager ie, featuring lions, tigers, leopards, a trick pony, a comic mule and a monkey. No doubt this was a burlesque of sorts. Other advertisements include Professor Curd's Magic Soap, Lappin's Pipe Factory, located at Block 17, three doors west of the southeast corner, and "the soldiers' friend." Boyd's Pills and Ointment, "No humbug".[8]

Another Kentuckian, Joseph M. Dunavan, composed and arranged a song called,"T'was A Pleasant Home of Ours, Sister." The second verse goes:

> That dear old home I've left sister,
> I've obeyed my country's call
> To defend the land we so love
> And win our freedom or fall
> Through not a joyous lot is mine
> And dark with clouds in my sky
> And with a prison's close embrace
> The hours pass sadly by.[9]

C. Prisoner Amenities

1. Visitors

Confederate prisoners held captive were permitted to have visitors. Colonel Hoffman in his 1862 instructions said if a prisoner became seriously ill, nearest relatives, provided they were loyal citizens, could enter a U.S. prison camp for short

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[7] Tuttle History, p. 17; The Chicago Tribune, Oct. 15, 1863; Bean, "Seventeen months in Camp Douglas" Confederate Veteran Vol. XXII, p. 168.

[8] A worn copy of "The Prisoner Vidette" is in the Chicago Public Library.

[9] Joseph M. Dunavan, "T'was a Pleasant Home of Ours, Sister,"Chicago Public Library.

visits. Curiosity seekers were prohibited. All others had to secure clearance from Washington.[10]

Colonel Tucker made about the same decision four months earlier. For no sooner had the Fort Donelson captives entered than post headquarters became bombarded with requests for visits, delivery of packages, and other favors. The early policy of free access to civilians could no longer be extended. All visitors now had to state their wants, reasons, and apply for a pass.[11]

Visitors posed a threat to security, a problem awaiting Colonel De Land when he took over. Many Chicago citizens either hated the U.S. government, or secretly sympathized with the South's cause, or were relatives of the prisoners seeking an opportunity to free them. De Land's initial general order restricted visits to persons on business who obtained a pass from headquarters. Some of those who were refused a pass managed to skirt the commandant's authority by telegraphing General Ammon or Brig. Gen. Nathanial C. McLean, at Springfield, to get a pass from them. Nearly all these applicants were Kentuckians, relatives of Morgan's Rebels but citizens of a state technically loyal to the Union.[12]

General Ammen, commandant of Camp Douglas earlier in the year, attempted to set guidelines for De Land based on his experiences. To counter visitors secretly slipping money to prisoners, those who traveled distances to see their men should be allowed a short visit provided they took the Oath of Allegiance and were willing to have an officer present during the visit. Visitors, suggested Ammen, should be limited to four or six at a time. De Land remained unhappy. He complained in return that he was becoming "a mere cats paw in the hands of a set of impatient and persistent beggars for favors...." He said he then was spending ten to twelve hours a day in his office and still had permits enough to keep him busy for another two days in advance.[13]

Colonel Hoffman, learning of De Land's dilemma, gave the final word: De Land would strictly govern permits to visit by means of

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[10] O.R. Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 103, 153.

[11] Order No.3, Feb. 22, 1862, Order Book, CHS.

[12] G.O. No.1, Aug. 17, G.O., No.1, Aug. 17, G.O. No. 7, Sept. 14 1863, De Land to Ammen, Sept. 12, 1863, R.G. 393, NA.

[13] Ammen to De Land, Sept. 11, De Land to Ammen, Sept. 12, 1863, R.G. 393 N.A. The provost marshal, Dept. of the Ohio, told De Land that its office had issued not more than ten to fifteen permits, and if De Land believed himself overtaxed the fault was not with his office. H.Q., Dept. of the Ohio Provost Marshal to De Land, Sept, 21, 1863, op. cit.

the 1862 prison regulations, and neither McLean nor Ammen nor anyone but a commandant could issue a permit of admittance to a U.S. prison.[14]

General Orme as commandant limited pass applications to between ten and twelve per day. Officers were to ensure no packages or written communications passed between visitors and inmates. In August 1864, threatened with the possibility of mass breakout, among Colonel Sweet's precautions was the prohibition of all visitors except those admitted by his own permission.[15]

2. Mail and Packages

Because Americans were at war with themselves did not stop the mail. Included in the first general orders issued by Colonel Tucker were instructions governing prisoners' mail. Outgoing letters were routed through Colonel Mulligan's office, where they were franked and delivered to the camp postmaster, William H. Monroe, who then mailed them. Tucker authorized officers at the main gate to accept letters from outsiders and either forward them to headquarters or send them to the post office.[16]

Meanwhile, Colonel Hoffman drew up regulations for all prisoner depots. Prisoners could write letters on one sheet of paper, the contents to be strictly of a private nature or the letter would be destroyed. Post headquarters would impose censorship[17]

Colonel De Land directed the post commissary of prisoners to inspect incoming mail through the Federal sergeants of his inspectors force before turning it over to the prisoner squad sergeants-major for delivery.[18]

To write home, prisoners were allowed to send one letter per month, not mentioning politics or expressing disrespectful reflections on the government or prison officials. No references to escape were permitted. After being inspected at headquarters, at first the mail received a manuscript "Examined" with the

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[14] Hoffman to De Land, Oct. 15, 1863. RG 249, N.A.

[15] G.O. No. 2, Dec. 27, 1863, GO No.71, Aug 22, 1864 RG 393 N.A. No order is found of Sweet lifting the visitor ban after the emergency passed.

[16] Order No. 4, Feb. 23, 1862, G.O. No. 9, July 19, 1862 Order Book CHS.

[17] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, p. 153.

[18] G.O. No. 9, Jan, 1, 1863.

signature of the inspector, but after 1863 a large oval handstamp was employed with the notation "Camp Douglas /Examined / Prisoner's Letter / in blue or black ink, usually on the face of the envelope. Incoming letters to prisoners also received an oval "Examined" marking[19]

The hostile U.S. and C.S. governments exchanged mail at the same places they exchanged prisoners: Aiken's Landing and Vicksburg. At first, the mail system was not standardized; but following adoption of the Dix-Hill Cartel, postage had to be paid to both governments, which caused minor problems for prisoners getting stamps. A Georgian captured at Cumberland Gap in his letters home always requested his wife to send him Confederate stamps. The more usual method, however, was for the prisoner to affix a three-cent U.S. stamp to get the letter to the eastern exchange point, where it was picked up by Southern authorities, taken to Richmond and entered into the Confederate postal system. There the envelope was postmarked and the ten-cent Confederate rate enforced with the handstamp "Paid 10," or, more commonly, "Due 10," for if there was no stamp the carrier, when he delivered the letter to the addressee, collected the postage due in cash.[20]

Although subject to censorship, extant Confederate letters show no signs of eradications, probably because letters deemed unacceptable were destroyed. One inmate veteran, however, told a story that when a Morgan Kentuckian wrote to his father, " Please send me at once $100 or a coffin", the letter got returned from headquarters bearing the notation, " Do you think we are all dammed fools up here?"[21]

Prisoners also could receive packages, of course subject to inspection and provided the contents did not include contraband. Objects declared contraband by Colonel Hoffman included uniforms, military equipment of any kind, liquor, or "an excess of clothing over what is required for immediate use."[22]

3. Clothing and Bedding

The clothes the prisoners wore while incarcerated at Chicago came from two sources. Either it was delivered through approved channels by friends or relatives, or it was issued by U.S.

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[19] Tuttle, History, p. 16; GO No. 20, Feb. 15, 1864, RG 393, NA; Karen, "Postal History," American Philatelist, p. 927.

[20] Ibid., pp. 927-28.

[21] Page "The Prisoners of War. Confederate Veteran, Vol. VIII, p. 63.

[22] Hoffman to Sweet, March 11, 1864, RG 249, N.A.

authorities. Reverend Tuttle, while head of the Camp Douglas Relief Committee, estimated he distributed clothing to the amount of $100,000 during the first year. But this was not enough. Colonel Tucker in July 1862 wrote to Colonel Hoffman saying many prisoners were destitute; he wanted to take away their donated civilian clothes and issue captured Confederate army uniforms that Quartermaster Potter had on hand. He additionally made the unusual proposition he be allowed to have Confederate uniforms made and issued.[23]

Besides U.S. Quartermaster regular issues, Hoffman's general instructions of 1862 intimated that clothing would be among items permitted for donation. Captain Freedley reported to Hoffman, while the Arkansas Post prisoners were at Douglas, the government had furnished little, only in extreme cases, because contributions had been so large. In February 1863, 620 pairs shoes, 597 overshirts, 303 flannel shirts, 12 cotton shirts, 312 woolen coats, 1,980 socks, 1,846 pairs cotton drawers, 60 flannel drawers, 148 hats, 101 pairs pants, 3 grey under coats, "and a large number of articles of lesser value" were issued. Hoffman allowed that U.S. Government "clothing that is not fit to issue to our own men..." could be given to prisoners. Later, when Surgeon Clark reported, De Land said he had hesitated to issue Union blue uniforms to needy inmates because he feared it would aid them in escapes. Hoffman's solution was to mutilate the garments by cutting off the trim, buttons and tails so prisoners could not be mistaken for U.S. soldiers.[24]

In the fall of the year when Douglas became a permanent prison, Hoffman set limits on the amount of clothing a prisoner could possess and from whom it could be received. An inmate could possess no more than the clothes on his back and a change of underclothing. "If their outer garments in which they were captured can be made to serve them by washing and mending, they will not be permitted to receive more from any source," ordered Hoffman. An overcoat was permitted with the understanding that if exchanged the inmate could not take it with him. All clothing had to be grey or dark mixed color and made of inferior quality material. Donations had to come from relatives, not friends. If shoes were needed, only the poorest quality would be furnished,

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[23] Tuttle, History, p. 11; O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, p. 279. Several clothiers on Lake street actually made Confederate uniforms for surgeons inside Camp Douglas. The Chicago Tribune July 2, 1862.

[24] O.R., Series II, Vol. 4, pp.152-53, Vol. 5, pp. 143-46, 265, 371, Vol. 6, p. 417, 463. De Land also issued surplus grey "pepper-and-salt" uniforms originally intended for Illinois and Wisconsin State troops but turned over to the U.S. quartermaster.

nd no boots.[25] Boxes and articles for general distribution would be rejected.

When Surgeon Clark first visited Camp Douglas, he noted that prisoners were filthy, 1,200 lacked blankets, and the clothing supply was "very deficient". Returning four month's later, he said the men were still filthy but their supply of bedding and clothing was now sufficient except for overcoats. In the meantime, Colonel De Land had issued 1,000 blankets, 1,000 jackets, 1,000 pairs pants, 2,000 woolen shirts, 2,000 pairs drawers, 2,000 pairs socks, and 1,000 pairs shoes. Clothing shortages were further alleviated by donations. Squad leaders for Morgan's Kentuckians and the Cumberland Gap prisoners responding to General Orme's survey said they received nearly 2,000 suits from home. At this time there were about 6,000 prisoners. All but two of the 24 squad leaders reported bunk space was sufficient. With regard to blankets and quilts, the responses were uneven. In six squads there were small shortages while others showed a surplus; the 2nd Kentucky Cavalry reported two blankets per man and the 8th Kentucky Cavalry reported 625 blankets for 384 men. Captain Rhines, post Commissary of Prisoners, reported needy prisoners were detailed to work and he gave clothing as recompense. Bedding consisted of sacks filled with prairie hay, 12 to 15 pounds each month for each two-man bunk, which Rhines regarded as sufficient.[26]

Surgeon Alexander in July 1864 to Washington reported that clothing was sufficient. Inspector Briggs informed post headquarters in October that the prisoners had been furnished 500 bed sacks by donation; if all prisoners supplied themselves that way, he predicted, few if any additional blankets would be required during the winter. But Briggs could not foresee how a fresh tide of captures from the war front would flood the quartermasters beyond their ability to provide. In late September, he noted there existed a shortage of blankets and anticipated a need for clothing before cold weather set in. By November, he was reporting that cleanliness, clothing, and bedding were generally satisfactory, "except for the last arrivals," a phrase he repeated in several reports. On Christmas day, he reported to Sweet that "those recently received have an insufficient amount of bedding." Prisoners captured at the battles of Franklin and Nashville apparently were the worst sufferers. Belatedly, it would seem, on January 13, 1865 Commandant Sweet approved a special requisition for 8,000 blankets, 2,000 coats, 3,000 pairs trousers, 5,000 shirts, 10,000 pairs drawers, 12,000 pairs socks, and 3,000 shoes.

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[25] Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 602; Hoffman to De Land, Sept. 22, 1863, RG 249, SO No. 358, Sept 30, 1864, Sweet to Walker, Oct. 18, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

[26] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, pp. 372-74, 778-800, 908-10; De Land to Hoffman, Sept. 12, 1863, RG 393, N.A.

If this supply reached the prisoners before the final grand exchange took place is uncertain; the final post inspection report of January 29, 1865, states that clothing and bedding were "all that is necessary, except blankets".[27]

4. Religious Services

The first Confederates had their regimental chaplains when they arrived, but they did not stay long at Douglas or any other U.S. post. A War Department general order dated July 31, 1862 ordered their release "immediately and unconditionally." In the early days, too, the local YMCA, which had built the chapel turned into a hospital, took an interest in the salvation of the Rebel prisoners. President John V. Farewell wrote to the Secretary of War asking that the chapel be returned and that the YMCA be granted undisturbed use for holding religious meetings. Colonel Hoffman responded by having Colonel Mulligan relinquish the chapel. If prisoners desired, any minister who wished could preach, but no mingling of prisoners with U.S. troops or visitors.[28]

Having the policy stated, little further reference can be found concerning religious services. Colonel De Land denied a visitor permit to one N.G. Knight, saying the post supplied chaplains; no traveling preachers would be permitted inside because it would "produce more confusion and disorder than religious good." Through Colonel Sweet, Colonel Hoffman the following year replied to Bishop Duggan of Chicago when he requested permission for the Catholic clergy to visit prisoners, the rule applied to all prisons: when any patient in the hospital desired to see a clergyman, without regard to denomination, he could do so. On Sundays, if the prisoners desired divine services they could select a clergy to preach provided there was no inconvenience to the garrison routine; but under no circumstances did any church have a right to visitation. After July of 1862, Reverend E.B. Tuttle, the former head of the Camp Douglas Relief Committee, was post chaplain, but his sole reference to religion in his history of the prison was to say that a great revival among the prisoners in religious interest took place in 1865.[29]

D. Prisoner Labor

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[27] O.R., Series II, vol. 7, pp. 1026-27, 1104-05, 1242, vol. 8, pp. 44,67,76,145.

[28] Hoffman to Commanding Officers, July 32, 1862, RG 393, NA; O>R> Series II, vol. 3, p. 386.

[29] De Land to Knight, Sept. 24, 1863, RG 393, N.A.; O.R. Series II, Vol. 7, p. 374; Tuttle, History, p. 21.

Though Quartermaster General Meigs initially sponsored prisoners performing profitable work, compulsory labor was never required of Confederate prisoners of war. Prisoners, however, did work on projects to improve Camp Douglas on a voluntary basis. There was much work to be done beyond what was required for routine police and cleanliness. It was the inmates who dug the sewer ditch, half a dozen of whom nearly lost their lives when the banks caved in. Repairs to the barracks and the fence were made by prisoners. The new hospital of 1864 got built mostly by prison labor, as did the chapel. They attended to their own sick in the hospital. In spite of orders from Washington prohibiting such practices, General Orme even employed a few inmates (applicants to take the oath of allegiance) as clerks inside post headquarters; Hoffman had said "it opens the door to irregularities: by tempting their loyalty and potentially giving them access to sensitive information."[30]

Colonel De Land in November 1863 employed about a hundred prisoners daily working on the post. Prisoners were compensated for their efforts, but cost to the government actually amounted to nothing. They were allowed a slightly increased ration and extra pay or, if they preferred, tobacco. Laborers were entitled to five cents per day, skilled mechanics ten cents per day, but most preferred the tobacco. Either way, the money came from the prison fund savings, the men worked willingly, and the system avoided forced labor.[31]

E. Morale

One of the Illinois volunteers who guarded the Fort Donelson prisoners talked with a number of them. He wrote his parents: " A good share of them won't go to war again if they get home once again." One Rebel told him if ever again he was shot at by Northern folks, it would be "damned near home." The prisoners had gained a better opinion of the North since their capture, he thought, because they did not expect to be fed or treated so well. That was one side of the coin. He also met some he classified as "stubborn", those who said they would fight Yankees again at the first opportunity.[32]

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[30] O.R., Series II, Vol. , p. ; Boss, "History of Camp Douglas", Chicago in the Civil War, p. 164; Hoffman to Orme, Jan. 9, 13, 1864, RG 249, SO No. 97, Jan. 20, SO No. 177, March 22, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

[31] O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, p. 463, Vol. 7, p. 811-12; Medical and Surgical History, Vol. 1, pt. 3, p. 69. Prisoners who worked in the hospital were allowed extra rations but no pay.

[32] Tupper to "Dear Parents," March 2, 1862, CHS.

Morale, as the guard noted, was a personal frame of mind not easily given to broad generalization applicable to an entire group. Colonel Hoffman, after his first visit to Chicago, told the Secretary of War that the inmates seemed content with their lot, and Captain Freedley remarked that some Arkansas Post captives said their treatment was better in prison than it had been in the Confederate army. But on the other hand there were those who risked their lives to escape, those who were sullenly uncooperative, and those whose hatred of everything Northern was not revealed till they reflected on their experiences after the war. Colonel Sweet reported, near the end, his belief that depressed spirits caused by long confinement contributed to rise in the mortality, and Chaplain Tuttle attributed some deaths to "nostalgia."[33]

1. The Oath of Allegiance

Federal authorities cheerfully extended a pledge of loyalty as a way out of prison to those whose devotion to the Confederacy was less than zealous. At first, to get released meant simply swearing allegiance to the Union and promising not to take up arms against the United States. Many prisoners took advantage of the offer among the Fort Donelson prisoners, though exact figures are lacking, and 229 from the Arkansas Post group. On May 4, 1863, however, a War Department order halted all such releases.[34]

Somehow the order did not reach Commandant De Land, for on August 30 he wrote district commander General Ammen that many of Morgan's Kentuckians were 16-to 20-year-old boys who wanted to take the oath and go home, and their parents offered to post cash bonds as security. He believed most of them were honest, but some would require investigation. Informed by Ammen of Washington's new policy, he next turned to Colonel Hoffman, saying a number professed to be conscripts from the mountains of East Tennessee, Western Virginia and North Carolina; they did not want to be returned to the Confederate army, and even expressed a willingness to enlist in U.S. forces. Hoffman, without saying this was a matter beyond his powers, replied that the decision to not discharge oath takers was not final, though few releases were being granted at that time. De Land should make a list of applicants for

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[33] O.R. Series II, Vol.

[34] The Chicago Tribune, April 4, 1863; O.R. Series II, Vol. V. pp. 659, 669.

future reference, said Hoffman, including those who did not wish exchange and forward them to Washington semi-monthly.[35]

From time to time orders came from Washington to release certain prisoners upon taking the oath. There was attached to it a stipulation that they must remain north of the Ohio River till the war was over. Colonel Sweet grew displeased with the system and informed his superiors that most of those released were unreformed Kentuckians of Morgan's command, "among whom there is scarcely one who has any love for his country, or can be trusted." If they did not go home to become guerrillas, he said, they remained enemies in Chicago and aided escapees and Copperhead plots. Sweet, however, probably exaggerated. The applications stored today in the National Archives hint that among those who took the oath were many boys who had resided in the South when their state governments seceded; they were conscripted into the Confederate army or urged to enlist by pressure or threat; and they made their decision to approach prison authorities as small groups of friends. The numbers of releases greatly increased in the late winter months of 1864.[36]

2. Prisoner Enlistments in Union Forces

The idea of enlisting Confederate prisoners into the Union forces occurred to several. Some Irishmen among the Fort Donelson group, mainly Tennesseans, joined up with Colonel Mulligan's 23rd and Colonel Cameron's 65th Illinois, but this had been done much to the disapproval of Washington. Hoffman forbade such practices. But then the government had a change of mind. For in December 1863 a naval officer, Acting Master John D. Harty, appeared at headquarters with instructions to turn over to him any prisoners he could enlist in the U.S. Navy. The Union army organized six regiments of what it designated United States Volunteers from among its prisoner depots during the final two years of the war. Active recruiting did not occur at Camp Douglas till very nearly the war's end, in March of 1865. Commandant Sweet received directions to form three companies to serve for three years or the war; no bounties would be paid, and service would be in the northwest or the western plains. Camp Douglas companies became units of the 5th and 6th Regiments. These two outfits moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in May of 1865 and served in the District of the Plains for about

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[35] De Land to Ammen, Aug. 20, 30 Ammen to De Land Sept. 1, De Land to Hoffman, Oct. 30, Hoffman to De Land, Oct. 6, 27, 1863, RG 393, N.A; O.R. Series II, Vol. 6, p. 427.

[36] Sweet to Wessells, Nov. 29, 1864, RG 393, N.A.

a year and a half before being discharged in November 1866.[37]

[37] O.R. Series II, Vol. p. ; HQ, Dist. of Illinois to Sweet, March 20, 1865, R.G. 393, N.A.; Dyer, Compendium, p. 1717.

XII CAMP DOUGLAS' FINAL DAYS

A. Exchanges are Resumed

With the Confederacy doomed to defeat, its armies on the brink of extinction as 1865 dawned, General Grant agreed with Robert Ould, the South's exchange commissioner, to resume the exchange of prisoners of war. On February 4 a telegram arrived at Camp Douglas headquarters. It told officials there to duplicate the rolls for three thousand prisoners in groups of five hundred; they were going back to Dixie. The first groups for exchange should include principally men from the states of Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana, plus those on invalid status. But no man would be sent South who did not want to be exchanged.[1]

The prison then contained about 11,500 inmates. A week following the notification came an order to send the first party of five hundred to Point Lookout, Maryland, via Pittsburgh. The following day another wire from Colonel Hoffman ordered the preparation of duplicate rolls, in batches of five hundred, for all those who desired exchange. Those who refused to be returned should be counted and reported to Washington. Some two hundred, either deserters or influenced by talking deserters, decided not to go. The first group departed with 2 officers and 80 enlisted men of the 15th Veteran Reserves as guards. When a barracks became vacant, it received a cleaning, its doors and windows fastened shut.[2]

On the eighteenth an order came to send the second five hundred-man party by the same route. Washington was growing impatient to unburden the Union of prisoners. A February 23 telegram said to begin forwarding a thousand a week in groups of five hundred at intervals of three or four days; no citizens should be sent, nor small pox cases, and if extra guards were required, officers in charge were to contact General Hooker. No blankets should leave the camp; blankets should be redistributed to those left behind. Then for five days orders suspended the exchange, but on March 3 General Grant's orders said the next party would include civilians whose homes were behind enemy lines and who were not charged or sentenced. On March 12,14, and 21 came more orders to transport five hundred man lots, including those held in close confinement. The 48th Missouri Regiment furnished the guard details. Guards were provided with fifteen rounds of ammunition and supplied with five days rations. Transportation to Point

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[1] Hoffman to Sweet, Feb. 4, 1865 R.G. 249, N.A.

[2] Hoffman to Sweet, Feb. 11,12,1865; R.G. 249; S.O. No. 43, Feb. 12, S.O. No. 56, Feb 25, 1865, R.G. 393, N.A.

Lookout would be by rail in passenger coaches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, well lighted, with water in each car.[3]

Then in the second week of April came word of Richmond's fall and the surrender of Robert E. Lee's army . Among the garrison great rejoicing prevailed. General Sweet had one hundred guns fired to celebrate the welcome event. At headquarters he gave a speech lasting for nearly an hour, talking about the Union's future, when "the white winged messenger of peace shall reign gloriously." The Veteran Reserves' bands played "John Brown's Body" and "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow," then marched through Chicago in a jubilant parade.[4]

It hardly seemed possible, therefore, that the news of President Lincoln's assassination could be true. At dawn, April 15, Sweet's little daughter peeked through an open door to see her father sobbing while reading aloud from a telegram to three or four other weeping Union officers. She had not suspected that grown men could cry, and never did she forget the scene.[5]

Flags were ordered to half mast. Somehow the halyard to the garrison flag in front of the headquarters building became caught and the flag hung a few feet from the top, stuck fast. An audience gathered to watch a detailed soldier climb the high pole, estimated at 180 feet. But just as he got to the pulley at the top he lost his grip and plunged downward. Two hours later he died. The following morning when General Sweet called for a volunteer to try again, no one moved, not even for a substantial reward. He then turned to the prisoners. Five hundred dollars and transportation home he offered to any man who would climb the pole and fix the flag. A lean young Georgia artilleryman, about 19-years-old, stepped forward. The prisoners, guards, off-duty garrison, and many of the camp's surrounding neighbors watched breathlessly as the boy shinnied upward. A high wind off the lake swayed the pole. A few seconds at the top and he had the rope fixed, waved his hat and flung it to the crowd below. Everyone let out with a mighty cheer, probably the first and only time, noted one prisoner ruefully, that the Rebel Yell ever was heard in a Northern prison. The Federals carried the brave Georgian to the provost officer's

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[3] Hoffman to Sweet, Feb. 18,23,24,27, March 1,6, 1865, R.G. 249, S.O. 43, Feb. 12, S.O. No. 61, March 2, S.O.No. 65, March 6 S.O. No.66, March 7, S.O. No. 72, March 13, S.O. No. 81 March 22, 1865; Shirley to Q.M. March 22, 1865, R.G. 393.

[4] The Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1865.

[5] Ada C. Sweet in an undated clipping in Clipping File, CHS.

office on their shoulders, where he signed some papers, picked up his reward and he was bound for home that evening.[6]

On April 18, when Lincoln's funeral procession passed through Chicago enroute to Springfield, all labor, drill, and public business was suspended. The 24th Ohio Battery fired twenty-one minute guns at noon. In May the new post chapel and library were finished and dedicated, Reverend Tuttle discoursing at length about the character and the death of Abraham Lincoln. In early June Governors Yates and Oliver Perry Morton of Indiana gave speeches at a gala post victory celebration.[7]

Surrender of the Southern armies and collapse of the Confederate government led to the rapid discharge of all remaining prisoners still in Union camps. On May 8 the Secretary of War decreed that those who before the fall of Richmond expressed a desire to take the Oath of Allegiance and had refused exchange would be released. General Grant's policy proved more liberal: transportation by rail or water to the point nearest their homes would be furnished to all who took the Oath. At Camp Douglas, that is what they did.

Prisoners were given three days rations, paid their amounts due, if any, held at headquarters, and released at the rate of about one hundred a day. Nearly 2,000 left in May, and about 4,000 departed in June. Secretary Stanton ordered all the sick and their attendants be removed to the post hospital and released as soon as they were able to travel. By July 5 General Hoffman reported that all but those hospitalized had gone. In July only 30 were left, 4 had died, 10 were released.[8]

On July 11 came a circular to all prison depots for commandants to box up and forward to Washington all records pertaining to the prisoners of war recently confined. Soon thereafter, an order told them to report the value of government

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[6] J.N. Hunter, "Courage of a Georgian in Camp Douglas," Confederate Veteran, Vol. XV, p. 3. A slightly different version comes from General Sweet's daughter, who said the incident happened following the fall of Richmond, the prisoner was a Kentuckian, and the reward was $ 100.00 in gold. Ada C. Sweet, Op.Cit.

[7] G.O. No. 10, April 18, 1865, R.G. 393, N.A.; The Chicago Tribune, May 13, June 6, 1865.

[8] Hoffman to Sweet, May 8, June 2, July 3, 1865, R.G. 249, N.A.; O.R. Series II, Vol. 8, pp. 700-701, 986-1003.

property, make a final account of the prison fund, and make no further disbursements. The end was rapidly approaching.[9]

B. The Camp as a Mustering Out Station

Meanwhile Camp douglas' final military function was as a mustering out point for Union troops. Back to Chicago returned many of the Illinois regiments that had helped to win the war for the Union. The men were veterans of Shiloh, Perryville, Stones River, those who took Vicksburg, stormed Missionary Ridge and fought their way to Atlanta, marched to the sea and up through the Carolinas and then down Pennsylvania Avenue in the final Washington review. Among the units mustered out in Chicago were the 7th, 16th, 35th 52nd, 57th, 64th, 68th, 74th, 75th, 78th, 83rd, 86th, 89th, 90th, 93th, 96th, 100th, 102nd, 104rd, 105th, 110th, 112th, 113th, 125th, 127th, and 139th Illinois volunteers, plus the artillery outfits raised by the Chicago Board of Trade.[10]

Not everyone was entirely happy to be back. Men of the 102nd Illinois were disappointed by a less-than-magnificent welcome because they arrived while the city hosted the great National Sanitary Fair. The men grumbled they had gotten a better reception in Pittsburgh than in their own home state. The 93rd Illinois spirits were dampened by the weather; a falling rain while they moved from train to camp brought to mind an identical downpour when the regiment first entered Camp Douglas on September 17, 1862. Another dampener was General Grant's order that no liquor would be sold to Union troops in the City of Chicago. Still, most of the veterans were glad to be back and caused no trouble. Quartered at Camp Douglas for a few days while their adjutants compiled final reports, the veterans received their last pay and departed Chicago as civilians.[11]

Also mustered out of service were the Camp Douglas guards. The 24th Ohio Independent Battery departed for home on June 10 after nine months duty, and mustered out two weeks later. The 8th Regiment, Veteran Reserve Corps, mustered out by detachments from July 1 to November 30; and the 15th Regiment between June 28 and November 25.[12]

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[9] Hoffman to Sweet July 11, 18, 22, 1865, R.G. 249 N.A.

[10] Andreas, History of Chicago, Vol. II, p.303.

[11] S.F. Fleharty, Our Regiment, History of the 102nd Illinois Volunteer. (Chicago, 1865) pp. 179-80; Aaron Dunbar, History of the Ninety-Third Illinois Volunteer Infantry, (Chicago, 1848) p. 204; Hoffman to Sweet, March 22, 1865, R.G. 249.

[12] Dyer, Compendium, pp. 1494, 1741, 1742.

A rumor got started that the Army intended to retain at least a portion of the post as a permanent installation. John Wentworth, as police commissioner and member of the city board of health, directed an alarmed letter to Secretary of War Stanton saying Chicago had done its duty, peace had come: "Our people want no camps or garrisons here" What they wanted, he said, was "the camps cleared off, all them and with the officers too."[13]

C. Camp Douglas Surplused

Actually, there existed no cause for concern. Since early July it had been known that the post's property would be sold. On August 2 General Hoffman reported to the Adjutant General that the prisoners were vacated and the buildings could be disposed of at Camp Douglas. The War Department shortly thereafter turned over all structures to the Quartermaster Department, and on August 28 the Adjutant General discontinued Camp Douglas as a rendezvous point for returning troops.[14]

The first public auction took place in July, the stoves and fixtures bringing $2,469.15, placed in the prison fund and forwarded to the U.S. Treasury in early August. Advertisements appeared in the Tribune from the last week of August through the first week in October, putting horses, mules, carts, buildings, and other assorted items up for auction. Meanwhile, General Sweet resigned on September 17, turning matters over to the quartermaster, Captain Shurly, and finally at the end, Captain E.C. Phetteplace commanded.

By the last days of November most of Camp Douglas had been sold. Quartermaster General Meigs reported to Secretary of War Stanton on March 21, 1866 that the last public sale was on December 27. The land where the post had stood was returned to its owners. Camp Douglas was history.[15]

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[13] Wentworth to Stanton, Aug. 22, 1865, R.G. 92 N.A.

[14] Hoffman to Sweet, July 3, R.G. 249, Meyers to Stanton, Aug. 28, 1865, R.G. 92 N.A.; O.R. Series II, Vol. 8, p. 714.

[15] Asst. Q.M. to Hoffman, July 25, 1865, Meigs to Stanton, March 21, 1866. R.G. 92, N.A.; The Chicago Tribune, Aug. 1, 17, 21 - Oct. 3, 1865; Andreas, History of Chicago, Vol. II p. 303.

XIII. PRISONS SITES, NATIONAL CEMETERIES, and MEMORIALS

A. Camp Douglas Today

Chicago's metropolitan expansion covered the prairie site of Camp Douglas leaving no trace. In the decade following the Civil War a network of new streets lined with residences forged into city blocks the land which once was crowded with barracks, hospitals, and military dependencies. A Chicago local historian, while preparing a paper in 1878 for the Chicago Historical Society about the prison, became confused during his attempts to locate the camp site. He found the posts of the main gate on Cottage Grove Avenue, barely visible above the ground, and he noticed three wooden buildings nearby which obviously had been part of the Camp and sold and moved from their original sites. But he left the area unsure exactly where the boundary fence had been located less than twenty years previous.[1]

Nothing whatever remains at the site today to remind anyone of Camp Douglas' existence. The last surviving structure, one of the hospital buildings, once known as "Washerwomen's row" or more simply as "The Barracks", was demolished in 1940. A hotel which for years stood on the site had a marker plaque on its wall, but it too is long gone.[2]

The 60-acre site today is generally bounded on the north by East 31st Street and East 31 Street Place, on the east by South Cottage Grove Avenue, on the south by East 33rd Street and East 33rd Place, and on the west by Martin Luther King Boulevard. About a half dozen modern high-rise apartments occupy the prison site, constructed for middle class blacks. They tower above an otherwise impoverished South Chicago ghetto area as part of Chicago's urban renewal development.

A block or two to the southeast is a small park with the tomb of Senator Stephen A. Douglas. The tomb and monument, atop which is a statue of the "Little Giant", was built in 1881.

The Chicago Historical Society's artifact collection has the post chapel bell, which Reverend Tuttle had cast in 1864 from silver and copper coins contributed by both guards and prisoners.

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[1] Boss, "History of Camp Douglas", Reminiscences of Chicago, pp. 164-66.

[2] William M. McLenahan, "Site of Camp Douglas" (Chicago 1976) pp. 7-8.

llowing the sale of Camp Douglas property, the bell called worshippers to the church of St. Mark, founded by Tuttle, before it became a museum piece. But it is not on public display.[3]

The monument to those who died in Camp Douglas is located on a low oblong man-made hill known as Confederate Mound, in Oak Woods Cemetery, seven miles from the downtown area, in South Chicago. Here is located the largest single repository of Confederate soldier remains cared for by the U.S. government. Veterans Administration records place the total interments in Confederate Mound at 6,229, although this figure seems excessively high. Camp Douglas mortality figures, although incomplete, give 3,108 as the number of prisoners who died there. Those known or identified to be buried there are 4,234, with 13 being unknown. Only one Confederate grave is marked. Also contained in the mound are the remains of 12 Union guards whose gravesites are marked but their identity unknown. The mound is maintained by low-bid government contract, funds supplied by the Veterans Administration at an estimated cost of $4,900 in fiscal year 1985.[4]

Originally, Confederate dead from Camp Douglas were carried to the City Cemetery, near the lake a mile north of Chicago. But sometime during the later part of the war city government officials created and dedicated Lincoln Park, which grounds included the emetery. The city had never, with only one exception, elinquished ownership of the land. The Rebels, plus hundreds of civilians buried there, had to go. In 1866 those prisoners interred in the small pox cemetery near where Camp Douglas had stood were removed to Oak Woods, and the following year Confederate prisoner remains were reinterred in Oak Woods from Lincoln Park. A two-acre plot had been purchased for the purpose by the U.S. Government.[5]

In 1891 the ex-Confederate Association of Chicago authorized John C. Underwood to raise funds for a monument. Starting with $1,500 collected during a lecture given in Chicago by ex-Confederate general John B. Gordon, of Georgia, additional donations were solicited through the sponsorship of the United Confederate Veterans, until $10,000 accumulated. Chicago's former Copperheads and Southern sympathizers were said to have been generous donors. On May 10, 1895, with elaborate ceremonies attended by large crowds, including President Grover Cleveland and

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[3] E.R. P. Shurly, Clipping in Camp Douglas Misc. File, CHS.

[4] National Cemetery Data Book, p. 125 in Marietta National Cemetery; O.R. Series II Vol. 8 pp. 985-1003.

[5] N.A. Oak Woods (Chicago 1951) pp. 15-18.

bers of his cabinet, a Romanesque monument was solemnly dedicated.[6]

In 1910 the monument was modified slightly by raising it to the top of a truncated sub-base, for Congress in 1910 stipulated that all Confederates' graves should be identified. Sixteen bronze plaques on the sub-base list the names and commands of the 4,234 known, plus a general inscription relating the building of the monument.[7]

The monument, 36 feet tall above the sub-base, was designed by Mr. Underwood, who in addition to being the principal fund raiser was commander of the Northern Divisions, United Confederate Veterans. Adorning the front of the three layered platforms is the Great Seal of the Confederacy, and the inscription, "Confederate Dead". Atop the die is a bronze figure representing a Confederate without arms or accouterments, head bowed, arms folded, cap in hand.

B. Other Union Prison Sites

1. Elmira

Of the more than 6,300 grave sites in Woodlawn National metery, New York, about half, or 3,343, contain the remains of nfederates who died in Elmira Prison. This prison was created in May of 1864 by enclosing barracks on the Chimney River in upstate New York. The barracks housed about half of the 9,000 prisoners, while the others lived in tents, even during the hard winter. Those who died were buried by an ex-slave named John Jones. In the Confederate Section of Woodlawn are 2,963 known and 19 unknown Southerners. Their graves are individually marked with the distinctive, pointed headstones signifying that they are Confederates. Also entered in this section are 140 Union soldiers, mostly black guards, who died in the general hospital.[8]

To one side, near the cemetery fence, is the Shahda Monument. This squared boulder with mounted plaque was erected by the U.S. government in 1911 to mark the burial place of 49 prisoners killed in a railroad accident near Shahda, Pennsylvania, enroute to Elmira. All but two remains were reinterred in Woodlawn, but their graves are unidentified.[9]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] National Cemetery Data Book, p. 125.

[8] Ibid., p. 102

[9] Ibid., p. 102

Three residences existing today in the city of Elmira are believed to have been built from lumber sold at government auction when the prison was dismantled. Two small granite blocks on West Water Street mark the corners of the prison site, and the Chimney County Historical Association museum displays photographs and artifacts relating to the Elmira Prison story.[10]

On August 25, 1985 a six-foot high horseshoe-shaped concrete wall adorned with commemorative plaques was dedicated to honor all those who served both prisoners and guards at Elmira. It stands on the site of the prison and is topped with American and Confederate flags, A city councilman and junior high school history teacher, James R. Hare, designed the monument and raised the funds.[11]

2. Fort Delaware

Located on Pea Patch Island in the middle of the Delaware River, Fort Delaware is a triple-tiered brick and masonry fortification completed just prior to the Civil War. It was designed to protect Philadelphia from hostile navies but in 1863 barracks were erected on the island outside the fort. Nothing remains on the island today except the fort, which although it is a state park, is in abandoned condition. The site is reached by an excursion boat from Delaware City. Across the river, Finns Point National Cemetery, New Jersey, contains 2,436 Confederate prisoner remains who died at Fort Delaware, and those of Union guards numbering 135. The majority were interred in trenches in the Soldiers' Burial Ground. The cemetery contains two monuments: a Union monument dedicated in 1879, and Confederate one erected in 1910 listing all Southerners known to be buried there. The area where the Confederates are known to be buried is marked with rows of evergreens.[12]

3. Camp Chase

Camp Chase at Columbus, Ohio, was another instruction camp turned into a prison to accommodate Confederate prisoners captured at Fort Donelson, and used as such till the war's end. The remains of those who died were at first interred in the Columbus City Cemetery but were later relocated to Camp Chase Confederate Cemetery. This cemetery was created on a portion of the prison

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[10] Thomas Byrne to author, August 19, 1985.

[11] Council on America's Military Past, Headquarters Heliogram, June-July 1985, p. 6.

[12] National Cemetery Data Book, p. 30

grounds, six miles westerly of downtown Columbus. Remains of 31 Confederates who died at Camp Dennison were also removed here following the war. The Bolder Monument in Memorial Arch at the cemetery entrance is inscribed, "2,260 Confederates of the War 1861-1865 buried in this enclosure". However, Veterans Administration records state there are 2,122 grave sites marked by headstones for known dead, one marked to indicate unknown dead, and 2,168 deceased are buried in the cemetery. It is maintained by government contract. Each year memorial services are held by the United Daughters of the Confederacy on the Sunday nearest the June 3 birthday of Jefferson Davis. In April 1973, the cemetery was placed in the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service.[13]

4. Point Lookout

This prison was established on August 1, 1863 at Point Lookout, Maryland, where the Potomac River flows into Chesapeake Bay. Prisoners were sheltered in tents; no barracks were ever erected, the only Union prison of this type. It was also the largest prisoner depot, peaking at 14,500 in July 1864.

Confederate remains numbering 3,384 known and one designated unknown are interred in a common mound. At first they were buried in two cemeteries near the prison camp, but in 1870 were removed by the State of Maryland about a mile inland to a better location. Wooden headboards had been destroyed in a fire and individual graves were unidentifiable. In 1910 the state relinquished all right, title and interest to the United States. The Federal government thereupon marked the mound with a granite monument 85 feet high, attached to which are 12 bronze tablets giving the names and commands of those interred beneath. The small white marble monument, erected by Maryland at the time of reburial in 1870, was then relocated to the original burial site.[14]

About half of the prison site has washed away through erosion. In 1962 Maryland purchased 495 acres and created Point Lookout State Park for campers and recreationalists. The park features boating, fishing, and swimming for 200 campsites. One small brick building believed to have been used as the prison photographic studio is the only survivor of the Civil War days.[15]

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[13] Ibid., p. 127

[14] Ibid., p. 130

[15] Edwin E. Beitzell, Point Lookout Prison Camp for Confederates (Abell, M.D., 1972) p. 184.

5. Rock Island

Rock Island, 946 acres, is located in the Mississippi River between Moline, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa. It became U.S. property in 1804 and has been used continuously by the Army as a fort, depot, or arsenal ever since. In 1863, the year following establishment of Rock Island Arsenal, barracks were built for 10,000 prisoners, although 8,400 was the most ever confined. These structures, built on the north side of the island, were later used by the Ordenance Department for the storage of material turned in by field armies. None remain today, although the Clock Tower Building dates to the Civil War era.[16]

Rock Island Confederate Cemetery is administered by the director of Rock Island National Cemetery, situated a mile or so southeast. The Confederate cemetery contains about 1,950 remains.[17]

6. Camp Morton

Those Confederates who died at Camp Morton are today interred in Crown Hill Confederate Burial Plot, Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, Indiana. Maintenance to the plot, located in a private cemetery, is provided under the terms of the deed. Originally all the deceased Southern prisoners of war were buried in Greenlawn Cemetery. In 1931 they were removed to Crown Hill and two years later a monument was erected on the plot bearing the inscription, "Remains of 1,616 unknown Confederate Soldiers who died at Indianapolis while prisoners of war". An additional Confederate from Greenlawn was reinterred in 1945 and the inscription corrected. There are 26 grave sites for 1,617 remains. The Genealogy and Archives Division, Indiana State Library, has records through which the names of those who died at Camp Morton have been identified.[18]

Camp Morton's history was that of a state fair grounds turned into a state instruction camp, use as parole camp, and finally as a prison. More than 9,000 were confined there toward the end of the war. Today the site is platted as a residential district known as Morton Place. A large bolder at Alabama and 19th streets is

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[16] n.a. Brief Historical Sketch of Rock Island Arsenal (Rock Island, 1962) p. 3.

[17] National Cemetery Data Book, p. 131.

[18] Ibid.,pp. 126-126a.

inscribed, "Camp Morton, 1861-1865. Erected by School Forty-five, 1916."[19]

In the main floor corridor of the State House is a bronze bust of Colonel Richard Owen. It was conceived by S. A. Cunningham, editor of Confederate Veteran magazine, and designed by Belle Kinney, daughter of a Confederate prisoner of war. The inscription underneath the likeness reads:

Colonel Richard Owen
Commandant
Camp Morton Prison 1862
Tribute by Confederate prisoners
of war and their friends
for his courtesy and kindness.[20]

7. Alton

Federal authorities on occasion used jails and penitentiaries to temporarily keep prisoners. The abandoned State Penitentiary at Alton, Illinois, was used nearly throughout the war years, but the number confined there was not large, usually between 1,000 and 2,000. A 58 foot high Confederate monument, erected at government expense in 1910 by the Commission for Marking Confederate Graves, honors those interred in North Alton Confederate Cemetery. On six bronze tables attached to the bordered shaft are the names of 1,354 Confederates, including 181 buried on Smallpox Island. A lone headstone marks one individual grave. The North Alton Confederate Cemetery is maintained by a Veterans Administration contract.[21]

8. Camp Butler

The original burials in the 7,500 grave site Camp Butler National Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois, were the Confederates who died as prisoners. Exactly how many are interred is uncertain because of conflicting records. A list compiled in 1912 by the War Department states there are 874 Confederates there. However, the burial register at the cemetery headquarters indicates 848 are interred in the Confederate section. The gravesites are individually marked with pointed headstones. Camp Butler's use as a prison was brief due to its small size. It was employed in 1862

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[19] Hattie Lou Winston and Joseph R.H. Moore, Camp Morton 1861-1865: Indianapolis Prison Camp (Indianapolis, 1940) pp. 375-76.

[20] Ibid., pp. 284-85.

[21] National Cemetery Data Book, p. 129.

shelter the prisoners of war captured at Fort Donelson, inmates numbering 2,100. No trace of the camp exists today.[22]

9. Johnson's Island

In Lake Eire off Sandusky, Ohio, is Johnson's Island, where no trace exists of the Union prison specifically built as a prison and used to confine Confederate Officers. About 2,600 in 1864 were the most held there. Confederate Stockade Cemetery, maintained by U.S. contract, has headstones indicating there are 153 known and 52 unknown graves. A few enlisted men were buried among the officers. The cemetery register, however, lists 246 names, of which 20 are citizens, and 22 remains were removed. Other records state 206 Confederates are interred here. In 1910 the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument in the cemetery.[23]

C. Miscellaneous Cemeteries and Memorials

All together, there are 43 National Cemeteries, Confederate cemeteries, or soldier lots in private cemeteries which contain Confederate remains that are administered, maintained, or otherwise funded by the U.S. Government. Of those cemeteries containing Confederate remains, slightly more than half, or 28, contain remains of Confederate soldiers or civilians who were undoubtably prisoners of war when they died.

In addition to the nine cemeteries directly associated with major prisoner of war depots previously described, Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, administered by the Department of the Army, has a Confederate Section, Jackson Circle, with 482 remains. Pointed headstones in concentric rows surrounded a large circular granite monument topped with bronze statuary, symbolizing peace, erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1914. Interred are 46 officers, 351 enlisted men, 58 wives, and 15 civilians. A large number of these were Confederate veterans who died in Washington, D.C., during this century; the others are most probably war captives who died in Federal prisons or hospitals in the Washington area.[24]

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[22] Ibid., p.15

[23] Ibid., p. 128.

[24] Raymond W. Watkins, "Confederate Burials in Arlington National Cemetery Arlington, VA.", list compiled in 1978, furnished by Arlington National Cemetery staff.

In Congressional Cemetery, created in 1807 in southeast Washington, are 13 Confederates in government-owned plots. Probably they died while in Old Capitol Prison.[25]

A large number of Confederates are interred in National Cemeteries located in northern states. Annapolis National Cemetery, Maryland, has 10 Confederates who died while being held at Camp Parole. London Park National Cemetery, Baltimore, has 35 Southerners 31 soldiers and 4 citizens who died at Fort McHenry. Cypress Hills National Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York, has 488 confederates. Twenty-seven Confederates are interred in Mound City National Cemetery, Illinois. Fort Leavenworth and Fort Scott National cemeteries, Kansas, have 7 and 14 Confederates respectively. Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery has 1,140. Keokik National Cemetery, Iowa, has 8. Philadelphia National Cemetery, Pennsylvania, contains 416 Confederates; the grave sites are not individually marked but there is a federal monument erected in 1911, and another erected by the Dabney Maury Chapter, Sons of Confederate Veterans. Also in Philadelphia, the soldier lot in Mount Moriah Cemetery has 6 Confederates among 398 Union burials. The soldier lot in Allegheny Cemetery, Pittsburgh has 15 Confederates.[26]

In Union Cemetery, Kansas City, Missouri, a monument erected the United States in 1911 lists the names of 15 Confederates who died as prisoners of war in Kansas City and are buried in unknown gravesites. A similar government erected monument with the names of 11 Confederates and 2 citizens in Terre Haute, Indiana, is located in Woodlawn Cemetery.[27]

Finally, in "Soldier Rest", the soldier lot in Forest Hill Cemetery, Madison, Wisconsin, are 140 Confederates who died while prisoners of war at Camp Randall. A few of them were from Louisiana and Arkansas; 105 belonged to the 1st Alabama Infantry, captured at Island No. 10. For many years, till her death in 1897, these gravesites were cared for by Mrs. Alice W. Waterman, formerly from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at her own expense. Her grave is within the enclosure, marked by a memorial erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which organization also erected a

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[25] National Cemetery Data Book. pp. 135-135a.

[26] National Cemetery Data Book, pp. 3,24, ,43,55,60,70,78,105,118.

[27] Ibid.

monument to Mrs. Waterman's "boys." A U.S. government marker was also erected in 1912.[28]

[28] Ibid., p. 109,133, Edwin Y. McMorris, History of the First Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry (Montgomery, 1904) pp. 168-176.