CONTRIBUTIONS

TO A

History of the Richmond Howitzer Battalion.

HOWITZERS IN PRISON.

Prison Diary of Creed T. Davis, Private Second
Company Richmond Howitzers, Cutshaw's
Battalion of Artillery.

April 9, 1865.—Among the Confederate prisoners I have found here are eleven of our company. They tell me that the company had a desperate engagement on the evening of the 6th instant, after I was captured with the wagon train. I am also informed that Privates Hamilton and Palmer and Lieutenant Jones were killed, and that Shelton Ragland, my uncle, and many other members of our company, were wounded at the same time. We were moved from a temporary prison camp at the Junction yesterday at 9 o'clock, and marched under a heavy guard until late last night, when we went into prison camp near Blacks and Whites, wherever that may be. There are supposed to be about 8,000 men in our party of prisoners. I know it must be a great number. The prisoners are in a desperate and starving condition. We do not draw the usual rations given out to soldiers. Our guard promises us rations soon. This morning they gave us corn on the husk, which was thrown out to us from a corn-house door as if we had been a drove of hogs. There was a great scramble for it as it touched the ground, the men in their eagerness to get an ear of corn falling and tumbling pell-mell over each other, and the unsuccessful man frequently tearing from the hand of the more fortunate one his ear of corn. Our guards tell us that their men are themselves on short rations, their wagon train not being able to come up on time. As for me, I am so weak and feeble from being starved out that I am scarcely able to stand up; but I am clinging to my blanket all
Richmond Howitzer Battalion.

the same. Nothing heard from General Lee's army; it must be in desperate straits.

* * * * * * * * * *

April 13.—The harrowing events and my sufferings for the last ten days have caused me intense agony, and I almost wish that I was dead. Have marched all the time through mud and rain without a half sufficiency of either rations or sleep. We have no cooking utensils and most of the men have no blankets, in fact, nothing but the filthy clothes upon our bodies. The nights are dismal and cold and cloudy. We have no fires, as there is no wood. We have not a thread of tent cloth, and take the rain as we crouch in our tracks in the field. The roads have been in miserable condition—it having rained nearly every day since our capture. In addition to this discomfort, the roads have been made doubly bad by being cut up by both armies marching and counter-marching and fighting over them. We arrived at this place, City Point, last night. We were not put into a regular camp, but we camped in the road just as we stood when we halted. We were stretched along the road for more than a mile, where we remained and slept all night. The rain fairly poured down all night—a perfect deluge. We had not an inch of canvas to protect us—oh, thou black, horrible, cruel night. Our guards tell us that they would have camped us in a field, but that they expected orders momentarily to march us into a boat, now lying in the river, which it is surmised is to take us to a Northern prison. 12 M. We have just been marched in the steamer, Maryland; where we will be sent to no one knows. News to-day that General Lee has surrendered his army.

April 14.—After so much exposure to the weather and the late rains we had, for us, a good time on the steamer, notwithstanding we expected to find it another Black Hole of Calcutta. We have just marched out of the boat and landed on a strip of land—they say it is Newport News—where it is said we will be held indefinitely as prisoners of war. Our camp is a newly established one without even a fence around it. The officers in charge of the prison thus far have been kind to us, all of which is duly appreciated, as from what we had learned we did not expect it; our great trouble and humiliation is that negro troops have been placed over us as guards.

April 15.—Our Yankee guards treat us as well as could be
expected. They laid off a prison camp this morning, and a tent was issued to every six men, a better tent than we have ever seen in the Confederate army. The prisoners refuse to believe the news about the surrender of General Lee, although our guards declare positively that he has surrendered. I am sick—a natural result from having marched bare footed from near Petersburg to City Point, a march made through mud, in many places, almost knee-deep.

April 16—I am sick again to-day, although I make the preservation of my health (so that I may get out of this place) my whole study. A bad thing to die at any time—I should hate to die, particularly now, as the war is said to be at an end. Steamers, and every other kind of rigged vessels are going up and down the river; this greatly relieves the monotony of our prison camp. I made application to day for the position of Prison Postmaster.

April 17.—Turned in last night very sick, but am much better to-day. Preaching in prison is about the only commodity we get in a large quantity, we had it yesterday in big unbroken choking doses. Some Good Samaritan has been good enough to send us a lot of old newspapers; reading matter is extremely scarce in this prison pen; books and papers would be highly appreciated by the boys. Last night our numbers were augmented by another batch of prisoners, who had been sent to Point Lookout prison, but were returned to this place, as Point Lookout was full to repletion. The weather is very cold and disagreeable this morning, so much so, that the few of us who happen to have blankets, walk about with them thrown over our shoulders Indian fashion.

April 18.—I slept better last night than at any other time since my capture, consequently I have a better flow of spirits this morning, and, in fact, feel as fine as "frog hair," as Potso used to say. The prisoners for several days have been agitated by a rumor of the assassination of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, but we do not believe it, although we know that some officer of high rank is dead, as all the steamers that pass up and down the river have their flags at half-mast. I have been reading Pollard's Life in a Yankee Prison: it is a poor acknowledgement to the Yankees for the many privileges they allowed him while a prisoner of war.
April 19.—Still sick. Most of the prisoners are prostrated with dysentery and other bowel complaints—thought to be the results of the bad water we are forced to use in this low country. Our water is obtained from barrels sunk in the low places of the surface of the ground inside the prison inclosure. Have just read an account of the assassination of President Lincoln, which took place at a theatre in Washington city. This sad occurrence will no doubt rebound to our great disadvantage. Prisoners now consider the war at an end, and most of them are ready to swallow the oath of allegiance to the government of the United States.

April 20.—Little or no sleep last night. A sick man in a tent next to ours groaned so piteously all night that he kept me awake. There were other sick near also, who coughed incessantly. The health of the prison could not be worse. I do not believe there are one hundred well men in camp. A rumor in prison to-day that General Johnston has surrendered in North Carolina. Have written home, but have not heard from there in reply.

April 21.—Our prison life grows more and more wearisome; it is almost unbearable. Every hour seems an age, and I am in despair of ever getting out again. The negro guards of the prison become more insolent and domineering every day. They abuse us in an infamous manner. Several prisoners have been shot down for the most trivial offences, without even a warning. Two men were shot last night. Rumors to-day of a release soon, but we dare not trust ourselves to believe them, we have been so often disappointed. Our rations are codfish and hard navy crackers—a poor bill of fare for a man with bad teeth, like I happen to have. Out of heart to-day, and indescribably miserable.

April 22.—We hear of a suspension of hostilities between all the armies this side of the Mississippi river. The armistice was signed upon the part of the Confederate government by General Johnston, and upon the part of the United States by General Sherman. Prisoners take this as a final declaration of peace, and rejoice accordingly. Since it has become known that the Confederacy is dead beyond resurrection, the men are perfectly willing to take the oath. We are dying to get our liberty once more. I do not feel that I can survive another week in prison.
Actual service in the field, subject to all the risks and dangers of battle, is far preferable to this horrible life in prison.

April 23.—Great God! we are here another Sunday! A ranting old abolitionist parson is insulting and haranguing a scornful crowd of prisoners near by. It is a singular fact that these Yankee preachers cannot preach a sermon of fifteen minutes' length without alluding to slavery. What a sweet morsel it is under their tongues. I wonder if there is no lying, cheating and swindling and wickedness up their way which might afford them a topic. A negro sentinel shot a prisoner this morning. The negro claims that it was accidental. Of course it was. Every time a man has been shot this has been the excuse. Yesterday the prison authorities sounded us on the oath of allegiance question. Nearly every prisoner agreed to subscribe to it. The Confederacy certainly cannot be killed any deader by it. There is not much foolish sentiment about this oath question now.

April 24.—Another batch of prisoners brought in last night; among them, a great surprise to me, was Dr. James W. Davis, a surgeon and cousin of mine, who was captured on the third instant, but was left behind in charge of a lot of wounded men. At the time of his capture he was in charge of a hospital filled with the wounded of both armies. He expects to be soon released as a non-combatant. The rumor of the surrender of General Johnston is contradicted to-day, though I still adhere to the belief that he has yielded. Thanks for a pleasant day.

April 25.—Hospital buildings and other improvements are in progress in the prison inclosure. This does not look like a speedy release of us. Dr. James W. Davis is still a prisoner with us; he is surgeon in charge of one of the prison companies. The health of the prison is improving, and our rations have been increased. Good, good, good! Calvin Cocke, a Howitzer, my bed-fellow, who has been sick, is getting better. No news from home yet.

April 26.—The prison is unusually quiet. Even the assassination of the President has ceased to be a topic, and our whole thoughts are concentrated upon the one subject of getting out of this pen. I read on the "order board" this morning that when the prisoners were released they would be given free transportation home, wherever that might be. It is a conundrum to me
how the men from Texas and distant States are to get home without a cent in their pockets with which to buy provisions.

April 27.—Reported to the surgeon yesterday morning and got a prescription from him, which did me a great deal of good. Again, I wonder how much longer we will be kept in this pen. Is there no end to our imprisonment?

April 28.—In spite of hard-tack, bad water, and a constantly empty and hungry stomach, I am improving in health some; yet scores are dying all around me like sheep with the rot. Enjoyed the luxury of an old newspaper to day; it was crowded with graphic descriptions of President Lincoln’s funeral procession, which must have been indeed very imposing and solemn. I believe the assassination is as much lamented by the Confederate prisoners as by the Yankee people themselves. Now that slavery is among the things of the past, the prisoners are fond of discussing how free negro labor will operate. It is agreed that he will be of no account. How in the name of Old Nick will sugar-cane and cotton be cultivated? White people will not be able to stand the sun of the Southern States.

April 29.—Dr. James W. Davis, one of the prison surgeons (a Confederate), was shipped yesterday to Washington city prison. The negro guards are very severe; the slightest breach of discipline means a “dead rebel.” Read a Richmond paper. What a treat it was. William Ira Smith, the clothier, figures as the editor and proprietor of the Whig. I learn from this paper that Richmond was not so badly burned after all, only the houses on Main street and a few on Cary were destroyed; I am so glad the conflagration was not general.

April 30.—Another beautiful Sunday finds us in prison; oh, how I long and crave to be out. Can it be possible that we are doomed for another Sunday? Whenever an officer comes into the prison great crowds surround him and ply him with questions as to the probability of the time when we will be released. They always tell us, “to-morrow,” yet we linger here week after week; I suppose they intend this as a ration of hope. Oh, the bitter disappointments we have so often suffered! If I only knew the day of deliverance, I believe I could be satisfied for months, but this hope deferred has made my heart sick unto death. Many of the boys are getting letters from Richmond, though not a word has come from my folks; I reckon they have
given me up, probably think I was killed in the battle of Appomattox.

*May 1.*—Camp again in great excitement; news of a speedy release. The impression is that we will go out to-morrow. Having thought so much over it I dreamed all last night of home. If we do not go out to-morrow I think I will surely die of disappointment. Good God! a day here now, half-starved as we are, is a prolonged age of misery.

*May 2.*—Miserable to-day; completely played out; very hungry; stomach "gone visiting to my back-bone"; still without shoes; as completely bare-footed as when I came into the world; I am trying to bear up under all this trouble, but my resolution is almost gone. One crumb of comfort to-day—Major Monroe, one of the officers in charge of the prison, says he is in daily expectation of orders from Washington to break up the prison at once. Another batch of prisoners arrived from Fortress Monroe yesterday; why were they sent here I would like to know? If they intend to break up the prison soon, this don't look like it. My bed-fellow, Calvin Cocke, sold his silver watch yesterday, the proceeds of which he divided with me; to-day we have bought cheese and bread, and are living like "fighting cocks," and notwithstanding I am sick, I am faithfully illustrating greedy gut. This is the first time I have eaten a square meal since I left home—that is, enough at one sitting.

*May 3.*—Slept well last night, and feel "tip top" to-day. A prisoner was released this morning by special order from Washington city. Every Howitzer, except myself, has received a letter from home; I would write, but I can get neither paper nor stamps. Richmond papers are in camp, and they report things working smoothly, and the Richmond people are quite satisfied.

*May 4.*—Yesterday, up to the arrival of the mail boat from Washington, the prison was in a mighty flutter of excitement, as the prison officers had told us that the boat would bring orders from the Secretary of War, ordering our immediate release. The boat came on time, but alas! alas!! it did not bring the documents of release, a disappointment to which I submitted with great gnashing of teeth. Read a Northern daily—it contained a bitter speech from old Ben Butler, who proposed a new
plan for the more efficient government of the South, or lately "rebellious States." Thank you, Mr. Butler.

May 5.—A gloomy, rainy day is upon us; if we were French or Germans, there would no doubt be a small crop of suicides in prison to-day. We are crowded in our tents to keep out of the rain. Everybody is lying on the ground thinking of home before the war. We hear that we go out to-morrow—we try to believe it, but we have been disappointed so often; but a drowning man, you know, will catch at straws. All anxiety for a letter from home.

May 6.—Notwithstanding the jolly rumor of going out sure to-day, which was extensively and joyously circulated yesterday, we are still here in all the agony of deferred hope, and we begin to think that the prospect of freedom at any time soon has vanished. Have just been lucky enough to borrow writing paper and envelopes, and have written two letters, but cannot find a stamp in prison. A New York Herald, which I have just read, informs me of the surrender of our General, Kirby Smith, and also of the capture of the Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Mallory.

May 7.—Another lovely Sunday finds us locked in. A horrible monotony reigns. But for the lovely sheet of water the dear old James river forms at this point, and all around the prison, Nature would be the deadest of blanks to me. Methinks that a stroll in the fields or woods at this time would be what water is to some of the poor wretches dying in the hospital of this terrible den. It is dreadful to think of the many poor fellows dying here, and then, too, so far from home and friends, after four years of toughing it, and after the war has actually closed. Tantalus! Tantalus!! However, it may be best. Who knows what the future has in store for the South? I forget that we are a subjugated people; but the Yankees are not likely to forget the little trouble the Rebels have given them the last three or four years. We had preaching in camp to-day. I wish preaching was veritable bread and meat; we would be fat. One of the prisoners did the palavering, and we were thus spared the abolition cant generally given us by Yankee parsons. Posted a letter to my sister Belle.

May 8.—I am wrought into a state of frenzy to-day. What
a dark and stormy sea this life is anyhow. At this moment I would rather be one of the rotting carcasses on one of the battlefields around Richmond than the incarnate prison wretch I am to-day:

"Oh! for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe."

A crazy freak that I should remember this verse.

The negro guard last night bayonetted a prisoner without the slightest provocation, killing him upon the spot, and shot at another man, but luckily missed his aim. It is singular that this shooting business is allowed. After a murder of this kind, not even the shadow of an investigation is held by the officers in charge of the prison.

May 9.—A severe thunder-storm burst upon the camp yesterday. The fierce hurricane blew down our tents and scattered things generally. No news from Washington about our release that is worthy of note. The most sanguine prisoner does not place our release at an earlier day than the first of June. An old *New York Times* that fell into my hands confirms the report of the escape of President Jeff. Davis. Good-by, Jeff! The leading editorials are congratulatory of the manner in which the guerrillas are coming in and laying down their arms. Colonel Mosby is reported to have surrendered. He is considered to be the last stave in the Confederate bucket, and if that has fallen down the Confederacy is no more.

May 10.—I learn from old newspapers that General Joseph R. Anderson, Judge Lyons, and Mr. Littleton Tazewell and many other prominent men of Richmond have taken the oath of allegiance to the United States and a liberal amnesty oath is offered the citizens. Not a single line from home yet, notwithstanding I have written several letters.

May 11.—Since Calvin Cocke sold his watch, the proceeds of which he divided with me, I have gotten in much better health. We buy loaf bread, which, added to prison rations, is adding a little flesh to my bones. I am told that I look as yellow as a pumpkin—a bad liver and the bad living is the cause of this yellowness.

May 12.—The chilly winds that prevail to-day have brought
back the old melancholy feeling, and woe, woe is me! ragged, dirty, and, not to mince matters, very lousy, * from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet, and with dysentery, too. The mental torture of this place surpasses, if anything, the physical pain it produces. The louse here is a useful factor, as he furnishes occupation; but for their industry "dry rot" would prevail among the idle prisoners. Hurrah! the negro guards are about to be relieved and white soldiers placed over us. This is quite an episode in the gay life of this hospitable place.

_May 13._—This morning some philanthropic soul distributed among the prisoners a few books and old newspapers. I grabbed a book and a paper and am happy for the time being. My book was of a political character, and was an _exposé_ of General Andrew Jackson's presidential administration. The sunshine of to-day has restored my good humor, but I will be raving mad to-morrow.

_May 14._—The negro regiment stationed here has been relieved by the Fifth Maryland Volunteers. It is heartily wished by us that the negro guards have been ordered to a very "hot place." We like our change of masters, and the white guards are good fellows. They cannot prove so cruel as the negroes, and I remember the devil is called black—black devil! Another jolly rumor of going out to-morrow. I won't believe it.

_May 15._—The prison was inspected to-day. A North Carolina prisoner, with much more enthusiasm than sense, has been preaching near my tent. How these "tar-heels" do whine; but not more, I reckon, than myself.

_May 16._—One of the guards has come into camp and told us that President Jeff. Davis has been captured. The artillery salutes we heard this morning in the direction of Fortress Monroe were no doubt fired in honor of this important event, or perhaps in honor of the surrender of General E. Kirby Smith, now west of the Mississippi river. James McKenny, who is a patient in the hospital, came into camp and loaned me a number of old newspapers, and for the present I am in clover knee-deep. A pleasant spell of weather this.

_May 17._—A gay camp to day; rumors of "order" from Washington for immediate release of prisoners. The clerks at

---

*This was true of all the prisoners.
the prison headquarters are said to be filling up blank oaths, so as to expedite the delivery; the oaths will have to be swallowed before release. There is no more false sentiment about taking the oath, as "the lion" that claimed our allegiance heretofore will never shake his gory locks in the face of the enemy again—notwithstanding this funeral, we are happy to-day at the glorious prospect of bidding good-bye to this place soon.

May 18.—Received my first letter from home to-day; matters are not so bad there after all; our letters are subjected to the supervision of the prison authorities before coming into camp.

May 19.—Great God! "the order" in relation to the release of the prisoners has been countermanded—I am dumbfounded and cast down into the earth—so we are informed by the sentinels on duty here, who are as anxious to be discharged from military duty, as we are to get out of the prison; they say but for our retention they would be mustered out. How dashed my hopes are—what a bitter, bitter disappointment. Camp is in a perfect rage of despair, and the boys curse loudly and deeply; many are in the throes of despair; I know one or two men who are actually dying from pure melancholy. I have cultivated stoicism, but I grow weaker and less resolute with every disappointment. I am completely "laid on the shelf" by the last news. I don't think I can live another week here; can't stand it, by the gods!

May 20.—We are completely crushed by yesterday's news, and there is not to-day in camp a person man enough to start a lying rumor about getting out even next week. More preaching in camp by one of the boys.

May 21.—Bad weather to-day—cloudy yesterday; and I don't care if it is. What difference does it make to the poor devils of Newport News prison? Everybody in tents. A great many boats passed up the river to-day, laden with paroled prisoners of war homeward bound. They wave their caps and yell at us in the wicked old rebel way. How we would like to exchange places with them! The commandant of the prison inspected it to-day.

May 22.—It rained all last night. The long spell in May is upon us. The storm raged last night with great fury and violence. It was fresh from the sea, and shook the earth under
our feet. I never saw such flashes of lightning before. The heavens were zigzagged all over with the most fantastic streaks of fire. I thought my time had come, but I supposed I was spared to grind more hard-tack and eat more rotten codfish. During the prevalence of the storm, a tent near by was struck by lightning, the pole was shattered, and the tent torn in threads. One man was killed outright, and two or three wounded. The poor fellow killed presented a ghastly object stretched out on a plank. He laid out all last night and until the middle of to-day in a hot broiling sun. He was a splendid specimen of manhood, and the surgeons of the hospital are going to dissect him. Scarred all over with honorable war-wounds, his poor body after death is to be hacked to pieces in the interests of science. What a sad commentary on one's patriotism.

_May 23._—Glory to the Creator in the highest! The bad weather is at last over. The landscape outside, after the rain, must blush like a lovely maiden. Our landscape consists of two trees, and a few yards of wire and pepper-grass. A young prisoner preached an eloquent sermon to-day. No prospect of getting out soon, so they say at headquarters.

_May 24._—Thanks, for a day or two past, I have gotten enough to eat. Fishing in the river is splendid, and upon fish I fill up. I have formed a copartnership with an expert fisherman, who is to catch the fish, and I am to prepare and cook them. I am without clothes or shoes. A rumor again of the prison disgorging. Very cold weather for the season to-day.

_May 25._—This morning a fellow prisoner, Sergeant Thomas White, of First Regiment Virginia Volunteers, came into our tent and made himself known to me. He is an old acquaintance, and it did me good to meet with him. He is limping around, wounded in the last fight. Besides this new wound, he carries four minie-balls in various parts of his person. He informs me that his life is just held by a thread, and the surgeon says he may be taken at any moment. He is a pretty gritty rebel, in spite of it all. I have sore throat—from fish-bones I suspect.

_May 26._—The prisoners have been forced to stay in their tents to-day. It has been raining since last night, and the general dullness of our tent has been increased by the absence of William Underwood from it. He is the wit of our division. Under-
wood is only a prison acquaintance, and not a Howitzer. He says he is a Senator-elect to the Virginia Senate.

May 27.—This morning our sutler moved out of prison. This gentle hint put the whole prison in commotion and good humor. It is a sign that we catch at. This looks like breaking up prison. Every man's heart is in his mouth. A break up, can it be? Later—another sutler has moved in. What a terrible disappointment! The guards now tell us that the first sutler thought he had got the last cent in prison, and moved out under that impression to seek newer and fresher fields. An old newspaper informs me that nearly all the Northern military prisons have been emptied. Rained yesterday, and is raining now.

May 28.—For a day or two past the prison has been run stark mad. The present diversion of the boys is to fight; we have three or four every day. The guards do not interfere, but allow the boys the fullest liberty to knock themselves to pieces. But the fight has to be fair. When a fight commences a great crowd gathers around the pugilists—in fact, form a regular ring. No one is allowed to interfere with the sport. Difference in size of the combatants is not considered. When a quarrel commences between two men they are made by the by-standers to stand up to the rack and fight it out. There is no backing out, but when a party cries "Enough!" the fight is instantly stopped and the men separated. Met Martin Baker to day. A five-dollar bill received from home to-day. Thanks.

May 29.—Could not sleep last night, as my tent-mates, Calvin Cocke and George P. Hughes, Howitzers, expected to escape from prison at 1 A. M. They had promised one of the sentinels twenty dollars. Promptly at the hour named, they met the sentinel; they presented him a twenty-dollar Confederate bill; striking a match, he discovered the trick, and he made them return to their tents. Such is Cocke's story for his failure to escape.

May 30.—Howitzers Hughes and Cocke made another unsuccessful attempt at escape last night, for the sentinel failed to stick to his agreement. Deaths in prison are on the increase. The ambulance is busily engaged all day hauling out the dead. If the present mortality is kept up the whole prison will be cleaned out in six months. But a few men, I think, will be left to tell the tale.
May 31.—Hughes and Cocke made still another attempt to escape last night, but failed. William Underwood went out all right. He told me his plans before the attempt, but I did not believe he would try to get out. We are now without hope of a speedy "go out."

June 1.—Howitzers George P. Hughes and Calvin Cocke made their fourth attempt at escape last night, and succeeded in getting outside the fence. They dug under the inclosure easily, the earth being light and sandy, and escaped through the opening thus made. They insisted upon my escaping with them, but as their programme was to make their way to Richmond, through the woods and across the swamps, travelling in the night time, I thought it best not to go out with them, as I was barefooted, and would thus be a great hindrance to them on the route, as I would not be able to keep up. Now that Hughes, Cocke and Underwood have all escaped, I am in the lowest depths of despair; they were my closest friends—Cocke and Hughes being my bedfellows.

June 2.—I am as resigned as a Christian should be to-day, and have been taking a philosophical view of things—I am as pensive as a fair maiden in love. Near my tent a fiery young orator is making a speech—a preacher is speaking to another group, and right along side the religious group several of the boys have raised a tent of blankets, the blankets being stretched over poles, forming a kind of arbor, under this a game of "keno" is in progress; crackers or hard-tack, and chews of tobacco is the currency. A man frequently stakes his last chew of tobacco and the last mouthful of his scanty rations. The same eagerness is displayed in the countenance of a man, with his last cracker up, that one sees in the face of a man outside with his thousands of dollars as a stake. Frequently, with nothing but crackers up, I have seen over a hundred men around the board, breathless with excitement and expectation; an infant's breathing might have been heard when the stakes would be only a dozen or two of crackers, or a few chews of tobacco. One chew of tobacco commands a cracker; one chew or one cracker will pay for a shave; "one chew" will get a hair cut, or shave; a shirt, or any article of clothing will be washed for a chew or a cracker. Trades are made in this way: the merchant, in the morning, starts out with two bags hanging on each side of him, in one he carries
crackers, and in the other tobacco cut up into small chews; as he walks around, he cries, "here is your chew of tobacco for a cracker, or a cracker for a chew of tobacco" as the case may require. There is always somebody who is willing to exchange one for the other. Tobacco here is never sold by as large a quantity as a plug, but always by the chew. There are few men here so wealthy as to be able to buy a plug of tobacco at once.

June 3.—I have just learned from Howitzer Lucien B. Tatum, who is employed as clerk at prison headquarters, that Hughes and Cocke's escape excites considerable comment at the office, and that steps have been taken to recapture them. I am quite sure they will not be retaken, as they had taken the precaution to supply themselves with blank oath certificates which can be filled properly if required.

June 4.—This morning we were marched out in the open space or campus and made to stand in the hot, broiling sun several hours. All the prisoners were assembled. It is surmised that it was done to count us. While standing the sun blistered my feet, which are bare. I protected them somewhat by holding bunches of pepper-grass between my toes. It has been several weeks since I wore shoes. I have just read an old novel, the scene of which, strange to say, is laid in our old neighborhood in Hanover county.

June 5.—To-day is another of the warm ones, and is a gentle reminder of what we will have to endure here should we remain in July and August—but this is a too discouraging subject to be thought of. The health of the prison is dreadful; dysentery and typhoid fever are the prevailing diseases, and generally end fatally. If the present death rate continues there will be none left to tell the tale of Newport News prison.

June 6.—Received a letter from my sister, Ella, containing a dollar bill, sent by my mother. A dollar is immense wealth in this place. The top of my feet is covered with a solid scab—the effect of the sun while standing in the field the other day for inspection. Most of the boys are also without shoes and in the same fix.

June 7.—So far from breaking up prison, it is receiving reinforcements. Last evening there was an addition of twelve men. They came from Hampton Hospital, which is near by. One of them, Mr. Tennelly, was assigned to our tent, and we are already
crowded. The old intense, consuming yearning to get out of this place is in full possession of me to-day. It never relaxes its grip for a moment in the day or night; it presses upon me like a leaden weight.

June 8.—In reading an old paper this morning, I saw an order from the "Secretary of War" commanding the release of all prisoners of war below the rank of major. These orders, I presume, are yet to be transmitted officially to the superintendent of this prison. After much hot weather we are at this time having a delightful season.

June 9.—To-day I am too completely subdued to join the boys in the customary compliments to the Yankees and the world generally. We cover them every day knee-deep in anathemas. Swearing has been reduced to a fine art here.

June 10.—The prison is jubilant to-day. Howitzer Lucien Tatum, employed at headquarters' office, has been down into camp, and tells us that Captain Heath has received orders to release the prisoners as soon as possible, and that he will commence the work of liberation next Monday. This is no mere rumor, as Lucien is good authority, as he is in a position to know. Prisoners farthest from home, such as the Texans, Mississippians, and others from the far South, will be liberated first. Alas! the Virginians, being nearest home, will be the last to go out. Received a letter to-day from Howitzer George P. Hughes, under the alias of John T. Brown. After his escape from prison he made the trip safe to his home without adventure of any note. Virgil Carroll was released to-day by special order from Washington city. I do not believe I have another personal friend in the prison.

June 11.—The Virginia boys are standing about in groups, discussing the probability of the time when our turn, that is, the Virginians, will come "to go out." Anxious as we are to be released, all agree that it is right for the prisoners from the most distant States to go out first. Our turn will come about the middle of next week. Visited Tom White in the hospital yesterday. Hospital, quite crowded. Saw the most harrowing sights; death was marked upon the face of nearly every poor fellow; dreadful agony all depicted. Poor delirious fellows were groaning and talking about their homes, carrying on in most cases imaginary conversations with their home people, such as
mother and father. Nearly every man was sending last messages to his people by his friend who was to go out of prison. This is too bad—dying in prison after seeing the war at last closed.

**June 12.**—I was detailed yesterday for office duty at headquarters. I will derive great advantage from this detail, such as drawing more and better rations already prepared and cooked. In addition I will be housed, instead of being in the field, and will thus be protected from the scorching sun which has been shining “cussedly” hot. They have not yet commenced to administer the oath, owing to some discrepancy in the blank oath certificates. New oath certificates have got to be sent from Washington before anything can be done. I suppose the next thing that occurs will be that all the ink and pens in the United States will have been used and we will have to wait for more to be manufactured.

**June 14.**—I have been very busy to-day making out paroles for over two hundred men. Sick men now go out first—a good order.

**June 15.**—All the men in the office have been diligently employed the last three days. But we now have to pause in our work—all the blank certificates having been filled out and handed to the prisoners. About eight hundred men have gone out or taken the oath. I have no means of knowing, but I think this is about one-fourth of the number of men who have been in confinement. More blank forms are expected to-morrow. Should they arrive, the work of administering the oath will be resumed at once.

**June 17.**—Nothing further has been done in the way of releasing prisoners. Not a man went out yesterday. This suspension of the work of releasing the men greatly bothers the remaining men here, and they are in despair.

**June 18.**—I have employed myself to-day in making out a list of the men who have died in this prison since its establishment. I intend to have it published, should I ever get out, for the information of those persons, who have lost all traces of their friends who were in the last battle of the war, as they could not communicate with their home people in the last hours of the Confederacy, when there were no mail facilities. Again, many men were brought here wounded and sick, and were never able to write
home or give any account of themselves. By publishing this list, their fate, hitherto unknown, may come to the knowledge of their friends, who may come here and identify the graves, as I hear they are all numbered and marked, the head-board of each having the name, regiment and company of the deceased. My list is copied from the official records of the prison office.

**June 20.**—I do not think I have before noted the fact that there were ten Richmond Howitzers here—viz.: Lucien Tatum, James McKenny, Calvin Cocke, George P. Hughes, Wyndham Kemp, Gill Patteson, Harvey Barnes, Willy Winston (called "Springy Dick,"') and myself; as anxious a set to get out of prison as ever ate United States hard-tack, or vegetated in a French Bastile. This morning the captain of a vessel lying in the river, came into prison and asked Captain Heath's permission to recruit twelve men, whose services he needed. He agreed to land the men at Galveston, Texas, as there are men here from Texas. He will get them upon the terms stated. I have just learned that Captain Heath refuses him the men. The blanks for which we have been waiting have not yet arrived. The prisoners are very restive and impatient under the delay; but who can help it?

**June 21.**—No further discharge of prisoners to-day. The spirits of everybody is at the lowest ebb. There could not be more hysteria in a camp of women. Men who never quailed at the cannon's mouth weaken here, and mew like a sick kitten.

**June 23.**—Still living on hope deferred, but no one fattening on it. Blank forms not yet come, consequently nothing has been done in the office. Deep despondency reigns in the camp.

**June 24.**—"Hail glorious chief!" The blank forms have arrived at last, and Captain Heath will commence to deliver the oath to the men to-morrow. The clerks in the office have been engaged all day in filling the blanks. Received a Richmond newspaper, and was surprised to read of the suicide of old man Edmund Ruffin. He is the man who fired the first shot at Fort Sumter, which was the first shot of the war. He preferred death to subjugation. He was more than seventy years of age.

**June 25.**—The oath of allegiance has been administered to seven hundred (700) men, they will be marched out of the inclosure as soon as transportation can be furnished them to their
Diary of Creed T. Davis.

homes. Those farthest from their homes are getting out first. As the Virginians are upon their native heath, they will be the last to leave the prison.

June 26.—Swallowed the following oath yesterday: "I, C. T. Davis, of the County of Henrico, City of Richmond, State of Virginia, do solemnly swear that I will protect, support and defend the Constitution and government of the United States, against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign; that I bear true faith, allegiance and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or laws of any State convention or legislature to the contrary notwithstanding, and further, that I will faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by the United States; and I take this oath freely and voluntarily, without any mental reservation whatever."

What a sweeping oath. It must have taken a great genius to get up such an instrument. Vote him a tin horn.

June 29.—Out of prison, and on my way home, that is, what is left of it. A crowd of us arrived at Norfolk day before yesterday. After landing from the boat, we were marched under guard to the Provost Marshal's office, where our names, &c., were registered. After this business was gone through with we were marched to an old brick building on Main Street; instead of being quartered in the building itself, we were camped in the back yard under a large tree, which afforded a delightful shade. This morning we were furnished with transportation papers, after which, we jumped aboard of a steamer bound for Richmond. We feel as light as corks, I can't realize that the dreadful war is over, and that I am to-day a free man, although the war has actually been ended three months. I write this on board of the steamer Thomas Colyer, off Jamestown, and I am reminded of the doughty Captain John Smith and Pocahontas. Our steamer will arrive in Richmond this evening—no accident happening.

July 1.—"Home again" in Richmond, with the saddest of experience. Yet I would not if I could recall the twelve months' service in Colonel McAnerny's battalion of "house pigs" for "home defence only," or the twelve months more active experience in the First Regiment of Virginia Artillery, afterwards Cutshaw's battalion; nor would I blot out of my life's history the harrowing scenes of the field hospital, nor the not less painful incidents of Newport News military prison. As it was
inevitable and had to be, I am now glad I was there, even in my poor way. But, ye gods! what next? what next?

The following is a correct list, copied from the prison records by myself while a clerk in the prison headquarters at Newport News prison, of men who died while in confinement between April 18th and June 17th, 1865:

T. B. Bryant, private, Eighteenth Virginia; died April 19th; buried at Craney Island.
P. B. Jolly, private, Eleventh Alabama; died April 22d; buried at Craney Island.
J. Hamblin, private, Fifty-seventh North Carolina; died April 26th; buried at Craney Island.
James Mercer, private, Eighteenth Virginia, Company B; died April 27th; buried at P. West's farm.
J. T. Hollins, private, Fifty-ninth Alabama; died April 30th; buried at P. West's farm.
Charles Boyle, private, Eleventh Virginia, Company F; died May 1st; buried at P. West's farm.
J. J. Taylor, private, Fifty-fourth North Carolina, Company K; died May 2d; buried at P. West's farm.
J. J. Lassiter, private, Eleventh Florida, Company F; died May 2d; buried at P. West's farm.
Booker Smith, sergeant, Forty-sixth Virginia, Company C; died May 3d; buried at P. West's farm.
F. Bates, corporal, Eleventh Virginia, Company E; died May 3d; buried at P. West's farm.
John Tanner, private, Eleventh Florida, Company F; died May 4th; buried at P. West's farm.
G. Bloxom, private, Thirty-second Virginia, Company E; died May 5th; buried at P. West's farm.
J. L. Via, sergeant, Fifty-seventh Virginia, Company H; died May 5th; buried at P. West's farm.
H. J. Chriswell, private, Eleventh Florida, Company C; died May 6th; buried at P. West's farm.
E. Sims, private, Second North Carolina, Company D; died May 6th; buried at P. West's farm.
John H. Whitman, private, Fifty-seventh North Carolina, Company K; died May 7th; buried at P. West's farm.
B. Beckman, private, First South Carolina, Company F; died May 7th; buried at P. West's farm.
C. E. Haumcs, private, Thirteenth Georgia, Company H; died May 8th; buried at P. West's farm.
Ben. Hurt, private, Cobb's Legion, Company A; died May 8th; buried at P. West's farm.
Daniel Raiden, private, Thirty-second North Carolina, Company G; died May 8th; buried at P. West's farm.
L. J. Chapman, private, Thirty-seventh North Carolina, Company G; died May 8th; buried at P. West's farm.
G. Holsclaw, private, Twenty-second South Carolina, Company C; died May 9th; buried at P. West's farm.
J. S. Reynolds, private, Forty-sixth Virginia, Company C; died May 10th; buried at P. West's farm.
Abner Shriver, ———, Eleventh Virginia, Company F; died May 9th; buried at P. West's farm.
D. Carroll, private, Fifty-third North Carolina, Company C; died May 9th; buried at P. West's farm.
F. Hamtrank, private, Huger's Battery; died May 10th; buried at West's farm.
Peter McGee, private, Twenty-fifth Virginia, Company A; died May 11th; buried at West's farm.
J. C. Yon, private, Twenty-second South Carolina; Company I; died May 12th; buried at West's farm.
Samuel Word, private, Tenth Virginia, Company B; died May 13th; buried at West's farm.
J. Clayton, private, South Carolina Artillery, Company F; died May 13th; buried at West's farm.
H. Mintor, private, First Engineers, Company A; died May 13th; buried at West's farm.
W. P. Lee, private, Forty-third North Carolina, Company I; died May 13th; buried at West's farm.
R. S. Rhodes, private, Forty-fifth North Carolina, Company D; died May 13th; buried at West's farm.
W. S. Shaw, private, Forty-fifth North Carolina, Company B; died May 14th; buried at West's farm.
P. M. McGinnis, private, Thirty-fifth North Carolina, Company H; died May 14th; buried at West's farm.
G. M. Holland, private, Fifteenth Virginia Battalion, Company A; died May 15th; buried at West's farm.
Richmond Howitzer Battalion.

J. F. McCoy, private, Sixth South Carolina, Company K; died May 15th; buried at West's farm.
Jacob Rudicil, private, Fifty-fourth North Carolina, Company B; died May 15th; buried at West's farm.
J. D. Clarke, private, Fifty-fourth North Carolina, Company K; died May 17th; buried at West's farm.
H. W. Brewerton, private, Seventh South Carolina, Company H; died May 17th; buried at West's farm.
E. Kuley, private, Forty-sixth Virginia, Company E; died May 18th; buried at West's farm.
A. B. Smith, private, Twentieth Virginia Battalion, Company C; died May 19th; buried at West's farm.
W. A. Fields, private, Eighteenth Virginia, Company B; died May 20th; buried at West's farm.
—— Wilkinson, private, Twenty-second Georgia, Company D; died May 20th; buried at West's farm.
John Halbfluish, private, Fifth South Carolina, Company D; died May 20th; buried at West's farm.
William Ellkins, private, Twenty-fourth Virginia, Company I; died May 20th; buried at West's farm.
Mike Plaster, private, Sixth North Carolina, Company I; died May 21st; buried at West's farm.
J. R. Donahue, sergeant, Fifteenth Virginia Artillery; died May 22d; buried at West's farm.
Thomas H. Andrews, private, Thirtieth Virginia, Company C; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
John McClenaghan, private, Twenty-sixth Mississippi, Company K; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
Thomas Milford, private, Eighteenth Virginia Artillery, Company A; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
J. M. Dixon, private, Forty-third North Carolina, Company D; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
G. W. Wright, private, Forty-fourth Virginia Battalion, Company B; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
N. Tunstill, private, Second South Carolina, Company E; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
H. Pickering, private, Sixth Georgia Battalion, Company H; died May 23d; buried at West's farm.
W. A. Cates, private, Sixth North Carolina, Company F; died May 24th; buried at West's farm.
A. J. Allen, private, Eighth Georgia Battalion, Company H; 
died May 24th; buried at West's farm.

W. N. Knier, private, Company F, Forty-ninth Mississippi; 
died May 24; buried at P. West's farm.

M. Goodwin, private, Company E, Nineteenth Virginia Battalion; 
died May 25; buried at P. West's farm.

J. Fowler, private, Company F, Eighteenth South Carolina Regi-
ment; died May 26th; buried at P. West's farm.

G. Gaundiff, private, Company B, Eighteenth Virginia Battalion; 
died May 26; buried at P. West's farm.

J. Reid, private, Company G, Thirteenth Georgia; died May 27; 
buried at P. West's farm.

J. Gairry, private, Company G, Hampton Legion; died May 28; 
buried at P. West's farm.

J. McEwin, private, Company B, First South Carolina; died 
May 28; buried at P. West's farm.

C. Grady, private, Company H, Forty-sixth Virginia; died May 
28th; buried at P. West's farm.

H. Holmes, private, Company E, Sixty-fourth Georgia; died 
May 28; buried at P. West's farm.

G. S. Gibbs, private, Company C, Thirty-fourth North Carolina; 
died May 29; buried at P. West's farm.

J. W. Rushbrook, private, Cutshaw's artillery; died May 29; 
buried at P. West's farm.

M. McAlley, private, Company E, Twenty-eighth North Caro-
linha; died May 31; buried at P. West's farm.

V. A. Palmer, private, Cobb's Legion; died May 30; buried at 
P. West's farm.

T. Parish, private, Company D, Forty-eighth North Carolina; 
died May 30; buried at P. West's farm.

J. T. Morgan, Private, Company I, Fifty-fourth North Carolina; 
died May 30; buried at P. West's farm.

W. N. Jones, private, Company D, Eighteenth Virginia Batta-
lion; died June 3; buried at P. West's farm.

Luther Yount, private, Company C, Poague's Artillery; died 
June 2; buried at P. West's farm.

A. Campbell, private, Company B, Eighteenth South Carolina; 
died June 3; buried at P. West's farm.

A. E. Williams, private, Company A, Eighteenth Virginia Bat-
talion; died June 3; buried at P. West's farm.
Samuel Sheckard, sergeant, Company H, Twenty-fourth Virginia; died June 4; buried at P. West’s farm.
W. D. Wright, private, Company K, Eleventh Virginia; died June 4; buried at P. West’s farm.
L. W. White, private, Company A, Eighteenth Virginia; died June 4; buried at P. West’s farm.
J. W. Wooten, private, Company E, North Carolina Infantry; died June 4; buried at P. West’s farm.
T. W. Johnson, private, Company H, Forty-sixth Virginia; died June 4; buried at P. West’s farm.
A. Fransort, private, Company D, Fifth Louisiana; died June 1; buried at P. West’s farm.
H. V. Dudley, private, Company H, Fifty-seventh Virginia; died June 2; buried at P. West’s farm.
B. B. Boykin, private, Company H, Fifteenth North Carolina; died June 6; buried at P. West’s farm.
Robert McEllmerry, private, Company K, First South Carolina Engineers; died June 7; buried at P. West’s farm.
M. A. Ellis, private, Company G, Forty-eighth Georgia; died June 7; buried at P. West’s farm.
L. W. Robertson, private, Company H, Twentieth Virginia Battalion; died May 27; buried at P. West’s farm.
P. Marten, private, Company D, Nineteenth Virginia Regiment; died May 29; buried at P. West’s farm.
George Brockwell, private, Company C, Eighteenth Virginia; died May 29; buried at P. West’s farm.
James Oakley, ———, Hampton Legion; died May 31; buried at P. West’s farm.
W. L. Shelton, private, Company H, Thirty-eighth Virginia Regiment; died May 24th; buried at P. West’s farm.
Jas. H. Chapman, private, Company E, Sixth North Carolina; died June 8th; buried at P. West’s farm.
Thomas Goodwin, private, Company A, Third Georgia; died June 9th; buried at P. West’s farm.
M. C. House, private, Company K, Third Arkansas; died June 9th; buried at P. West’s farm.
C. Staten, private, Company C, Eleventh Florida; died June 9th; buried at P. West’s farm.
B. B. Jackson, private, Jeff. Davis Artillery; died June 10th; buried at P. West’s farm.
W. S. Crimes, private, Company E, Thirteenth Alabama; died June 10th; buried at P. West's farm.

J. Lindsey, private, Company I, Eleventh Virginia; died June 10th; buried at P. West's farm.

Lewis Riute, private, Company K, Thirtieth Virginia; died June 10th; buried at P. West's farm.

David Sweet, private, Company E, Seventh Tennessee; died June 10th; buried at P. West's farm.

William Rinsley, private, Company E, Fourth North Carolina; died June 10th; buried at P. West's farm.

D. Ray, private, Company C, Fifty-seventh Virginia; died June 11th; buried at P. West's farm.

W. G. Andrews, lieutenant, Company C, Tenth Virginia Battalion; died June 11th; buried at P. West's farm.

J. D. Rice, private, Company —, Sixth North Carolina; died June 11th; buried at P. West's farm.

E. W. Lane, private, Company C, Eighteenth Virginia; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

C. P. Fox, private, Company F, Eleventh Virginia; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

J. L. Davis, sergeant, Company C, Eighteenth Virginia; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

R. M. Hudson, private, Company D, Nineteenth Virginia Battalion; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

Andrew Wills, private, Company B, Ninth Florida; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

S. S. Nunn, private, Company K, Thirty-fourth Virginia; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

F. M. Stone, private, Company B, Hampton Legion; died June 12th; buried at P. West's farm.

W. J. Waters, private, Company K, Sixty-six Georgia; died June 13th; buried at P. West's farm.

Jacob Fitzgerald, private, Company A, Thirtieth North Carolina; died June 14th; buried at P. West's farm.

James Clontz, private, Company B, Eleventh North Carolina; died June 14th; buried at P. West's farm.

A. Redding, private, Company H, Fifty-sixth North Carolina; died June 14th; buried at P. West's farm.

J. C. Kent, private, Company E, Cobb's Legion; died June 14th; buried at P. West's farm.
D. J. Smithson, private, Company H, Fifth-siixth Virginia; died June 14th; buried at P. West's farm.

E. A. Murrel, private, Company C, Eleventh Virginia; died June 14th; buried at P. West's farm.

M. F. Wills, private, Company B, Tenth Virginia; died June 15th; buried at P. West's farm.

J. R. Carmicle, private, Company K, Thirty-second North Carolina; died June 15th; buried at P. West's farm.

J. R. Dennis, private, Company F, Eleventh South Carolina; died June 16th; buried at P. West's farm.

David Foley, private, Company A, Fifty-seventh Virginia; died June 16th; buried at P. West’s farm.

T. R. Huffman, private, Company I, First Virginia; died June 16th.

James E. Guthrie, private, Company B, Nineteenth Virginia Battalion; died June 16th.

Andrew Lee, private, Company D, Forty-first Alabama; died June 17th.

W. L. Manly, private, Company E, Twenty-fifth North Carolina; died June 17th.


W. Rousey, private, Company H, Thirty-eighth Georgia; died June 17th.

J. B. Cook, private, Company A, Thirty-fourth Virginia; died June 17th.

C. Simmons, private, Company K, Thirtieth North Carolina; died June 17th.


The topography of the surroundings of the Baptist College has very much changed since we first went into camp there. For instance, there was at that time, on the right of the college, Schad's lager-beer garden. It was separated from the college grounds by a very tall close-board fence, built enthusiastically high, to keep the dear little boys who went to school there in