There is much of daily prison routine in the months at Douglas, but there is also much interesting material about Burke, health conditions and practices, and events and attitudes which are probably most characteristic of a Civil War prison. Burke records much detail about documents, men alive and dead, events in the prison, and war news which was usually available through the Chicago newspapers sold by the sutler—except apparently when the Confederate army had a significant victory. After October, 1864, daily entries almost always mention the prevalence of smallpox in the camp; on December 8 Burke wrote: “I understand the prisoners are dying at the smallpox hospital at the rate of 8 per day” (p. 374). Besides sickness there are also the pervading frustrations of exchange rumors, frequent inspections, and the constant threat of confiscation of clothes. Although the hardship of short rations is also present, it seems typical of Burke that he manages to pull together a sumptuous Christmas feast, the leftovers of which serve him and his friend Henry White for a week.

Perhaps most typical of Burke, however, is his frequently mentioned ardent anti-North sentiment. He ridicules the inept Yankee guards and expresses scorn for prisoners who take the Federal Oath of Allegiance and for the Confederate workmen for “humbling themselves to the Yanks” (p. 340). When his mother moves to Ohio, Burke writes that it was “for the present only, as Pa says he cannot live north and will not! And I say the same” (p. 321). Whether or not he had mellowed with age, Burke much later did move north to Indianapolis, that city which initiated his long acquaintance with Federal prison camps.

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1 Information about Morgan’s Raid and other episodes of Morgan’s life is available in Basil W. Duke, A History of Morgan’s Cavalry (Bloomington, 1969).

Thursday July 21st, 1864. Weather windy and a little cool. The health of the camp has been tolerable good for the last month or so, but there is a good many of the new prisoners sick, and there is no medicines in the drug store, and the Yankees say that they cannot furnish any. There is some talk in camp of raising a collection and send to Chicago for medicines. I have a bad cold and coughed nearly all night.

Friday July 22d, 1864. Weather pleasant. We are having very light breakfasts and not much heavier dinners. I bought a lot of note paper at the sutler at the rate of 40 cents per quire. Some of the men with permission gave our leaky roof a fresh coat of pitch. The following is a notice copied from the Chicago Tribune: A Washington dispatch says that Capt. A. H. De Land and Lieut. Moses A. Powell 1st Michigan sharpshooters, arrived here on the 15th. under guard from Gen. Grant’s army, under sentence of court martial for cowardice in the face of the enemy. The sentence cashiered both, with the loss of all pay and allowances due them, and ordered their shoulder straps and buttons to be cut off in the presence of the troops. Capt.

1 In editing this journal the typescript has been followed exactly except as here indicated. Dates for the entries in the typescript are located on the right side of the page and divide the entries; dates are relocated in the text published here. Primarily to save space. When possible without distortion, Burke’s lists have been divided and appropriate punctuation has been added. Reproduced notices, ads, and documents in the journal have been set here in reduced type. Only a few obvious typing errors have been corrected; otherwise mispellings have been allowed to remain. Confusing spellings usually have a suggested alternative in brackets. Capitalization has been changed. Burke’s use of the apostrophe in the possessive is quite erratic; the typescript is followed without change. Occasional repetitions have been omitted. Names and place names supplied or identified from an outside source are given correctly in notes. Where text has been omitted in the journal published here, significant events are briefly summarized within brackets. These summaries include only events which Burke’s journal relates. Page numbers from the typescript are indicated in parentheses when the journal is quoted in the summaries. A row of spaced periods indicates that entries have been omitted and that summaries have been judged unnecessary. The consistent dating readily indicates the total time lapse of both summaries and omissions. Notes are entirely omitted for various names and events which could not be accurately identified.

“A medical report of July 24-25, 1864, indicates that hospital supplies, including medicine, were “good.” However, by September 4 an inspection report indicates that supplies of medicine were deficient. Another report from October 31 indicates that in August at Camp Douglas “The requisitions for medicines for the prisoners of war were not promptly filled; the consequence, more sickness and more death.” The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Series I, Vol. VII, 496-98, 767, 1967. The set is cited hereafter as Official Records.


3 Federal General William T. Sherman was in Georgia conducting the campaign to seize Atlanta. Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 214.

4 On June 28, 1864, Burke notes that “The Yanks have fixed a frame near the gate with a scantling across it, a half options, and about four feet from the ground, which they made our men ride whenever the men do anything that does not please them. It is called ‘The mule.’ . . . It is like riding a sharp top fence.” Pamela J. Bennett (ed.), Curtis’ Burke’s Civil War Journal (Indiana Magazine of History, LXVII (June, 1960), 164.

England. The day has been very warm. In the night Ben. Watkins Co. A became very sick and Pa went in search of one of the rebel Doctors, and soon returned with Dr. Flag who came in grumbling because he was called on. He said that he had no medicine and left hardly giving his advice. All of our Doctors deserve censure for their neglect of duty for some time past. They might advise if they were short of medicines.

Wednesday July 27th, 1864. Weather warm. Confederate bonds in England went up to 78 and 80 cents. Grant has not taken Petersburg nor Sherman Atlanta. Almost every article in the paper winds up with a pitiful howl for more men and money, men especially. The flux epidemic is increasing. The prison rules are getting more rigid.

Thursday July 28th, 1864. Weather warm. I got my trimmings, and was surprised when the sutler told me that the bill took all I had given him. I was satisfied that they did not cost more than half of what I had given him allowing more than twice their usual price, but I had to be satisfied, or as the Yanks say, “I want to be satisfied.” He took the opportunity of paying himself well for his trouble. I bought some note paper, blacking, and a tin cup, which finished my five dollars in a hurry. 175 new prisoners arrived today. Gen. Hunter has been defeated again. Mrs. Wm. Brown arrived at headquarters with her children to see her husband who belonged to Barnes Battery, but she came too late. The green sod has just been turned over her unfortunate husband. By some means she was out of money and unable to get back to her home in Georgia. The prisoners heard of it and determined to assist her. David Hickey, Levi Hickey, Winder Monroe and others interested themselves in her behalf by soliciting subscriptions from the prisoners. They raised $116.35, which was sent to her and she received it with many thanks, expressing a hope that she might have the opportunity of returning the favor to some of her kind friends. She took the list of the donors also.

Friday July 31st, 1864. Weather pleasant. Ben. Watkins of Co. A died at the hospital last night. I learn that there were thirteen deaths of rebs at the hospital last night. The workhands and public details do not work on Sundays. It rained a little before dinner. I hear singing in the infantry barracks nearly every Sunday. I suppose they have preaching. I have never visited them to see. We have not had a sermon or even a hymn since we moved into this barrack. It rained part of the night.

Monday August 1st, 1864. Weather cloudy and raining a little. About 400 more prisoners arrived. They are from our army in Georgia and are in better spirits than the previous lots. They say that they got plenty to eat and coffee every few days, with whiskey in bad weather. They say the army is in good spirits.

Thursday August 4th, 1864. Weather pleasant. It is the Fourteenth’s writing day. I wrote to Dr. John R. Desha of Lexington, Ky. Mrs. Sarah B. Waller of Chicago sent a letter to John Waller of my company requesting the prisoners to contribute some curiosities of their own manufacture to be sent to a fair to be held in Liverpool, England for the Confederate prisoners benefit.

Saturday August 6th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I got Pa (an ex-tailer) to trim my uniform. Rumor says that 30,000 prisoners are to be exchanged soon. There were two candles burning all night, and several of the men sat up with the sick flux patients. The barrack assumes the appearance of a hospital. Permission to have a light is often given in cases of extreme illness. I did not sleep much.

Sunday August 7th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Everybody walks light and speaks in whispers on account of the sick. About 11 o’clock John Duckworth of Co. D died, and about 3 o’clock Jesse T. Hunter of Co. D died. Both died in their bunks of the flux. They were good soldiers and gentlemen. Duckworth is from Bath Co. Ky. and Hunter is from Wilkerson Co. Miss. They received all the attention that could be
given them under the circumstances. Medicines of the right kind could not be procured. The hospitals are crowded and that is the reason why the men are allowed to die in the barracks. There are a good many more sick but none dangerously. This barrack raised $14 by subscription and got a small basket of medicines from the city with it. Several other barracks have bought medicines for their own use, to be kept in their barracks. After the bodies had been washed and laid out, an ambulance came for them. They were put in rough coffins and taken off.

[On August 9 Burke reports that “There is a large stone observatory and building being erected near the camp as an addition to the Douglas Institute. The observatory is already higher than the Institute” (p. 326). On August 10 all benches and stools are taken from the barracks. Walking around the prison camp is a widespread exercise according to Burke. Burke mentions on August 12 that an express box in camp “is always full of notice of all kinds miscellaneous letter lists, articles lost or found, wanted or for sale, inquiries for friends, etc.” (p. 328). Each barrack kitchen is getting a brick chimney.]

Sunday August 14th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Gen. Prentiss visited the camp and I heard him chat awhile with a small crowd of the prisoners. He said, “It will not last long,” in answer to a remark that we were very tired of this place. I suppose he thinks the rebels will soon give up. He was accompanied by an officer from the other square, and as he turned to go he dropped the Chicago Times in the crowd either accidentally or intentionally, we could not determine which. At least it furnished quite a discussion whether Gen. Prentiss was a copperhead or not. 5,000 Yankee troops are reported coming to Chicago. Part of them have already arrived. The Times thinks they are to be used to awe the coming convention of Democrats.

Monday August 15th, 1864. Weather warm. I succeeded in getting off a letter to John Cantillon of Richmond, Ky. that I wrote on the 4th inst. Some of the new prisoners still hang around the barracks begging the refuse meat and bread. They have not worn the wire edge off of their appetites yet. In my evening walk I visited the barrack No. 44, where the workhands eat. I saw six long tables and benches. They get coffee, sugar, etc. regular. I notice a good many puny-pale-glooming looking boys on guard on the parapet. I understand they are one hundred day men.

Tuesday August 16th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Some of the prisoners threw a deserter by the name of Burns, who has been recruiting secretly in prison for the Yankees. I saw some prisoners walking back and forward across the square with their heads sticking out of boxes and barrels with a large placard on each for different offenses, viz: “For disobeying orders.” “For washing in barrack.” “Lousy.” “For meddling with other people’s business.” “For going to the other square”. etc. About 12 o’clock it clouded up and became very windy. The card fever broke out this evening. There is six games now going on in the barrack.

Wednesday August 17th, 1864. Weather windy and a little cool. I received a letter from Uncle Wm. H. Burke of Canton Ohio. The papers have a great deal to say about the coming Chicago Convention. The Confederate ship Tallahassee lately captured 31 ships on the coast. Most of them small crafts. There was a good many visitors from the city in Camp with guard escorts, late this evening.

Thursday August 18th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I was knocking around the sutler store to see what was going on, when a Yank stole a m农户 on myself and three others and conscripted us to pile up some loose bricks near the gate, which took about ten minutes. An order was issued to take the stoves from the barrack kitchens. The Con-

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11 The “stone observatory and building” at the “Douglas Institute” refers to the Dearborn Observatory for viewing the heavens being built at the old University of Chicago. Larry A. Viskochil to Pamela J. Bennett, August 22, 1970. Mr. Viskochil is reference librarian for the Chicago Historical Society.


13 The Democratic party held its convention in Chicago on August 29 and nominated General George B. McClellan and George H. Pendleton of Ohio to run in the November presidential election. J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston, 1961), 474.

14 In April, 1864, the governors of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin worked out an agreement to supply a certain quota of fully equipped troops for 100 days' service in order to relieve more experienced troops for combat duty. See W. H. Terrell, Indiana in the War of the Rebellion (Indianapolis, 1960), 42-45.


16 Apparently, “young people would spend Sundays taking horse cars out to the camp. If one could get a pass to enter the gates, one could actually see the prisoners close up.” E. B. Long, “Camp Douglas: A Hellish Den?” Chicago History, I, n.s., (Fall, 1970), 87.

17 Colonel William Hoffman, Federal commissary general of prisoners, ordered the use of Farmer’s boilers for barracks cooking on October 24, 1863. Although the commander of the camp, Charles V. De Land, preferred brick ranges, the boilers were adopted for their ability to provide heat for the Federal government. Hoffman described the method to De Land: “The Farmer boilers ... are found to be the most convenient mode of cooking. A sixty-gallon boiler, which will cost $25 to $30, will cook for 120 men with a very small supply of wood, and there can be no pain so cheap. By this mode the cooking is all done alike, at the same time, and by two or three men. ... [avoiding] the use of camp kettles, pots, frying pans &c. and the annoyance at the range of a crowd of men cooking for themselves. Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. VI, 417, 462-63, 496. No mention of this later order has been located in the Official Records.
federate sergeants of the barracks and also the doctors signed a petition to Major Skinner to keep the stoves, as follows:

Major Skinner
Commissary of Prisoners.

The undersigned Sergeants for the several barracks for themselves, and, for their fellow prisoners confined in Camp Douglas, would most respectfully represent unto the Authorities in charge, that they have heard with the deepest regret that it is intended to take away from them the cooking stoves, thereby reducing them to one boiler in each kitchen for cooking purposes. It is known to the authorities, that a large number of sick is now, and has been for some time, in consequence of the crowded state of the Hospital, left to the kindness and care of comrades in barracks.

By means of the cooking stoves, delicacies suitable to their condition can be prepared. But the boiler would be wholly inadequate to this purpose! and even in the event of the enlargement of Hospital accommodations, or an improved state of health in the Camp, there will always be a number of prisoners whose condition might not demand treatment in the Hospital, yet require delicacies which cannot be prepared for them in the absence of the cooking stove. The undersigned, therefore, most respectfully petition the authorities to allow them to retain one cooking stove to each barracks.

[Burke indicates the signatures of forty-one men representing forty-four barracks. The majority are from Kentucky regiments, but also represented are Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.]

We the attending Surgeons to prisoners in barracks would especially ask permission that one cooking stove be allowed to remain in each kitchen for the following reasons: The Hospital is so crowded that not more than eight or ten men can be sent out of the barracks a day. Those that remain are generally too sick to eat the diet cooked and it is almost essential to have a stove to cook something a sick man can eat.

Respectfully,
John L. Cook
Surgeon to Prisoners
C. S. Brunson, M. D.
T. P. Holloway, M. D.

Answer! Respectfully returned. This petition cannot be granted.
L. C. Skinner
Lt. Col. & Com. of Pris.

It is one year today since we entered this camp, and it seems as if we were never going to get out again.

Though prison walls now hold we fast,
In dreams, I wander to the past
To places near and dear to me;
To places where I would be free.

Friday August 19th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Pa and myself received a box containing a cheese, some pickles, potatoes, dried fruit, etc. Late in the evening two Yanks came around to most of the barracks and read an order of which the following is a correct copy.

Office of Inspect. Gen. of Prisoners
Camp Douglas.
Chicago, Ill.

Aug. 19th, 1864.

Notice to Prisoners of War.

A circular has been issued by the commissary of prisoners, to the effect that no supplies of any kind will be allowed to prisoners of war by their relatives or friends, except in cases of illness, when near relatives will be permitted to send them such articles of food as the Surgeon of the hospital may approve, the articles to be addressed to him, necessary clothing furnished by relatives to destitute prisoners must be subject to the approval of the commanding officer of the post where they are confined. Outer garments must be of gray or dark mixed color, or of inferior quality, only one suit of outer clothing and a change of under clothing will be allowed prisoners of war. Will be allowed to receive clothing or other articles from relatives and friends residing beyond the lines, when forwarded by a flag of truce, so long as the prisoners of war held at Richmond and other southern prisons are permitted to receive the same articles in the same manner from relatives and friends in the loyal states. No articles above referred to will be delivered to prisoners of war at this post after Aug. 25th, 1864.

Well[s] Worable Capt. &
Inspector Gen. of Prisoners.

[On August 22 Burke reports that "A good deal of flour, cabbage, potatoes, and pickles was sent to the prisoners through the kindness of Mrs. Norrus of Chicago from some person or persons yet unknown" (pp. 331-32). He mentions that "The papers say the advance guard of the Chicago Convention has arrived" (p. 332). Yankee doctors are reportedly vaccinating for smallpox on August 23.]

Wednesday August 24th, 1864. Weather pleasant. 480 prisoners arrived from the Alton, Ill. prison, twenty escaped on the way here. 18 They are a good looking lot of men and bring exchange rumors. They were quartered in barracks 41, 43 and 44. The workhands dining room being broken up to make room for them. The workhands had their coffee, sugar, etc. issued to them at the gate uncooked. The barracks on both sides of us drew plates, etc. but some person told the Yanks that we had plenty and none were issued to us. Report says that they are not going to give Kentuckians any. We hardly need them anyhow for the rations we are getting. I and Henry washed 8 pieces of clothing today.

18 This is a paraphrase of Circular No. 4 of August 10, 1864, from Hoffman. Part II of the circular limits cutters to "writing materials, postage stamps, tobacco, cigars, pipes, matches, combs, soap, tooth brush, hair brushes, clothes brushes, scissors, thread, and needles, handkerchiefs, towels, and pocket looking- glasses" for sale to prisoners. Ibid., Vol. VII, 573-74.
19 One of the principal twenty-three Federal military prisons at this time was at Alton, Illinois. Records indicate that 503 prisoners were transferred from Alton in August, 1864. Ibid., Vol. VIII, 997.
Friday August 26th, 1864. Weather pleasant. It was rumored that we would be searched, so we all dressed up, but the day passed off as usual. I heard car bells and trains running nearly all night. When the nighs are clear I can distinctly hear some of the City clocks strike.

Saturday August 27th, 1864. Weather a little cool. After roll call all of the bottles and old cloths that the guard could find in the barrack was thrown out, and the barrack scoured by a detail. The Inspectors said we had the cleanest kitchen and barrack in camp. In the front part of camp a fire plug was put in between two of the hydrants, and a small force pump attached with about 700 feet of gum hose and a small nozzle. Its trial attracted a large crowd of prisoners and the Yankee amused himself by wetting a good many of them. It could only throw about 50 feet. We are all ordered to dress up tomorrow. Jas. McDevitt bet Hiram Arnett $100 in Confederate money that we will not be in this camp two months from today. Jack Curd holds the stakes.

Sunday August 28th, 1864. Weather pleasant. At roll call we were notified to fall in line again at 8 o'clock a. m. with our best cloths on under penalty of loosing them if found in the barrack. The bugle sounded at the appointed time, and we fell in line and were looked at by Capt. Sponsable and a Lieutenant as they passed in front of our lines. The kitchen and barrack was examined by other Yanks and the inspection was soon over. Our kitchen and barrack received the name of being the cleanest in camp. In the evening Gen. Rosecrans and others rode through the camp in a barouche. The Union Observatory near the Cottage Grove Hotel on Lake street opposite the camp, has been unusually crowded today. They are having a look at us. The convention tomorrow serves the whole trope of conversation in camp today. I saw some rockets go up late in the night.

Monday August 29th, 1864. Weather pleasant. For some time past there has been from 10 to 15 men in the barrack unable to attend roll

Tuesday August 30th, 1864. Weather pleasant. A scaling ladder nearly finished was found in barrack No. 1 and the whole squad was marched to the gate. The man that made it was found and made to finish it. It was then placed against the express office and he was sentenced to climb up and down it eight hours every day for thirty days as a punishment. I noticed while taking my morning walk a good many tents through the crevices in the fence on the west side of camp. I understand there is artillery placed at several points outside, bearing on the camp. The sutler has nearly played out. He has nothing to eat except sugar at 70 cents per pound. We are getting boiled beef and sour light bread six days out of ten, and boiled pickled pork and sour light bread the other four and coarse hominy for dinner extra. A Yankee came around with some requisition papers and all the men in this barrack signed them twice for plates, cups, knives and forks, which the Yankee said we would draw soon. The Convention has not nominated their candidate yet. We cannot hear anything satisfactory from it.

Wednesday August 31st, 1864. Weather pleasant. Nothing of interest. Most of the prisoners seem to think that Seymour[22] will be nominated. Of course, we have no choice but will throw up our hats for any man that brings about a general exchange and get us out of this place. We have seen rockets from the city for the last three or four nights.

Thursday September 1st, 1864. Weather pleasant. At roll call notice was given to have all of the long hair cut by next Sunday. The guard appointed John Curd barber, with the understanding that for every ten men he operated on he was to be excused from detail one day. The papers say that Geo. B. McClellan and Geo. H. Pendleton are the Chicago nominees for the next President and Vice-President of the United States. My rations have taken a notion to disagree with me, causing me to feel unhappy all day.

[20] Interestingly, a January 18, 1864, inspection report complained that “The barracks and grounds in the northwest corner, occupied by Morgan’s men, were pre-eminently filthy.” Ibid., Vol. VI, 849.


[23] Presumably this refers to Horatio Seymour, then governor of New York, who was opposed to the Lincoln government. Randall and Denard, The Civil War and Reconstruction, 316-17.
Tuesday September 6th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I am on the waste water detail today. Nothing of interest. Chas. Byrnes and six or seven others were slipped upon by two Yanks about dark and taken down to ride the mule for talking in their bunks. In about an hour after we all heard a great racket. I looked out thinking the Yanks were on a spree, and were kicking down some kitchen or barrack doors. I saw the flash and heard the reports of five or six pistol shots between the kitchens in the next row. All of this time I heard the guard on the parapet yelling for the corporal of the guard at the top of his voice. By this time the noise at the fence ceased and all was quiet except the guard on the fence who was still calling for the corporal of the guard. In a few minutes the Yanks were going around with lamps in camp and outside the fence also. I heard none of them and concluded that no one was hurt. We could not tell how many escaped.

Wednesday September 7th, 1864. Weather cloudy. Six men reported to have escaped last night. They charged the fence with two axes and one striking right handed and the other left handed soon broke a plank in two large enough to get out. I only saw two shots that were within three feet of the hole. Bad shots for fifty yards. This is the Fourteenth writing day. I wrote to Norris & Bro. of Lexington Ky. Our regiment was vaccinated and I washed mine off and squeezed it to keep it from taking. For I would rather run the risk of the smallpox than have the sore that some of them have on their arms. It rained most all day.

Thursday September 8th, 1864. Weather pleasant. At roll call notice was given that no more pardoning around the camp between the barracks and the dead line would be allowed, and all persons caught on such ground will be liable to be shot without notice, so our morning and evening walks are played out unless we choose to walk up and down the streets. It is reported that an agreement had been made between both governments to release all men in dungeons and chains. Our dungeon was emptied and Jos. McCarney of whom I spoke some time ago had his ball and chain taken off. Some times we hear reasonable exchange rumors, but they are as often dashed to pieces in an hour, yet we hope for.

Hope! is the watchword of the heart;
Before it sorrow flies!
In life it bears a noble part,
With death alone it dies.

Friday September 9th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Most of the men that have escaped lately have been recaptured. There is a report in the papers that Gen. John H. Morgan was killed at Greenville, Tenn. and all of his staff captured by a surprise attack. We are not inclined to believe it yet.

Saturday September 10th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Six shots from artillery just out side the camp was fired. I supposed at first the Yanks had some good news, but as only six were fired we concluded that they were only clearing out their guns. The Barrack received a good scorrung from the detail. It is two years today since I took the Confederate oath, signed the roll and donned a gray uniform, fully equipped, and I have never for one moment regretted that act of my life. There is another large hospital in progress of erection in the other square near the Confederate hospital and is about twice as large. It is to contain eight or ten wards and is for the Yankees.

Wednesday September 14th, 1864. Weather pleasant. At roll call two orders were read to all the prisoners, 1st. That all prisoners of war who wish to join a regiment of United States Cavalry, to fight the Indians can do so by reporting at the express office. 2d. That all prisoners of war who are mechanics and workmen who have applied for the oath or will apply and who desire to work can do so by reporting at the express office. There was a large crowd around the express office all day. I cannot learn how many joined.

Thursday September 15th, 1864. Weather a little cool. One half a bushel of potatoes were issued to this barrack for 170 men for five days. We are inclined now to believe that Morgan our general is dead. All the men call for Basil Duke the next in command to lead us here-
We all have a great deal of confidence in him as an able and worthy leader. We deeply mourn the loss of John H. Morgan.

Friday September 16th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Old Red alias O’Hara broke up religious meetings in barracks 13 and 25, and said that he caught any more singing and praying in the barracks he would put them in irons. Some of the men then saw Capt. Sponable about it, and he told them that the guard had no orders to break up such meetings, but that he left such things to the guards and if they choose to break them up he would not interfere. O’Hara was put in prison in Chicago for some reason last spring and only returned a short time ago, but to our delight he was put to guard another barracks instead of coming back to us. I saw several wagon loads of straw taken to barracks 41, the convalescent hospital, and counted 300 workmen or men that have applied for the oath, as they marched through the gate to their work in the Yankee square. They work every day except Sunday.

Saturday September 17th, 1864. Weather pleasant. The barracks was scoured out. We had hash for dinner, but hardly enough to do any good. We are getting boiled beef for dinner and breakfast eight days out of ten, and as we draw beef at dinner for breakfast also, we eat it all up for dinner without trouble and have bread and water for breakfast. Each kitchen is having a ventilator on top and the barracks two, and two brick chimneys for coal stoves this winter. A good many new two barrel boilers are being put in the place of old ones worn out, in the kitchen. It rained during the night.

Tuesday September 20th, 1864. Weather pleasant. It seems the Yankees were badly scared last night thinking that there was a plot among a good many of the prisoners to break out.29 I see notice of it in the papers today, also a notice that all prisoners of war unfit for the service are to be exchanged.30

27 Burke describes O’Hara, one of his guards in April, 1864, earlier in the Journal. Bennett, "Curtis R. Burke’s Civil War Journal," 146.
28 A weekly inspection report dated September 4, 1864, indicates that many “of the Farmer’s boilers used for cooking are unfit for use.” The September 22 report mentions that ventilators were being installed. The October 6 report states that “The chimneys are completed.” Official Records, Ser. II, Vol. VII, 857, 804, 994.
29 Sweet corresponded with Hoffman on September 32 about “a plot . . . discovered on the part of the prisoners of war here to make a concerted and combined attempt to overcome the guard and escape at sundown” on September 19. Sweet had “determined to let them make the effort, punish them in the act, and make dispositions accordingly. They suspected as much and failed to carry out their designs.” Ibid., 861.
30 Apparently the impetus to set up an exchange of unfit for duty prisoners

Wednesday September 21st, 1864. Weather pleasant. Craven Lane of Co. A died at the smallpox hospital last night. He is from Meade Co. Ky. He joined us on the last raid at Brandenburg, Ky. and was captured with us at Buffington Island, Ohio. Papers say that 1000 Confederate prisoners in two boats stopped at Fortress Monroe on their way to James river for exchange, also that 1200 more had left Nashville Tenn. for exchange at Atlanta Ga. and all others between the two places turned back to be exchanged.31 There was a delegation from the Federal prisoners at Andersonville, Ga. at Philadelphia on their way to see President Lincoln the other day about the prospects for an exchange. What success they met with has not been reported yet.32

On September 22 Burke asserts that the prisoners hate the Confederate workhands “nearly as bad as Yankees for humbling themselves to the Yankees” (p. 340). Colonel Sweet comes into the camp on September 26 but is “soon driven out by the prisoners crying ‘More bread; ’More bread’ at him” (p. 340).

Wednesday September 28th, 1864. Weather pleasant. We had a long roll call. All letters for express good now has to be approved by Lt. Fife before the goods will be allowed to be shipped or received. A large lot of lumber is being hauled into this square. Some orders printed on stiff paper were put on doors of the different barracks. I neglected to secure a copy, but the following is the substance of the orders.

1st. That prisoners would, when destitute, be allowed to receive clothing to such an amount, that, what they had, and what they may receive, shall only make one suit of gray or dark goods of inferior quality. One change of underclothing also allowed.

was a letter from General Benjamin F. Butler, Federal commissioner of exchange, to Gould on September 9, 1864. It suggested “that the belligerent parties, waiving all other questions, shall from time to time exchange all sick and invalid officers and men who from wounds or sickness shall, in the judgment of the party holding them, be unfit for duty and likely to remain so for sixty days.” Ibid., 785. A report of September 22 indicates that 500 Confederate prisoners unfit for duty were taken to Fortress Monroe or the steamer Dictator on September 18. They were exchanged at Bermuda Hundred, Virginia, on September 20. Ibid., 859. There was a Federal military prison in part of the Nashville Penitentiary. Ibid., 862. Sherman was in possession of Atlanta after the "Atlanta Campaign," which ended September 8. Ruttenber, The Civil War Dictionary, 34, 39-44.

2d. Prisoners of war will be allowed to receive ticks, when straw will be furnished them.
3d. Prisoners of war will be allowed to receive overcoats, with this understanding, that in the event of an exchange, such overcoats will not be allowed to be taken to the Rebel Army.
But a few prisoners will write for overcoats on such terms, but a good many will write for ticks. Some have them already and others can make them out of extra blankets.

Friday September 30th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Wm. Irvine of Co. I. 2d Ky. (Duke’s) regiment made his escape in a singular way last night as follows: Yesterday he was lightly nailed up in a vinegar barrel in the kitchen belonging to his barrack, and a stout man carried it down to the gate with apparently as much ease as if it was empty, where he was told to put it on a pile a little distance inside the gate in the Yankee square. After dark Irvine kicked the weak head out and found but little difficulty in escaping from the lightly guarded square. He was dressed for the purpose, and was a light made man. The Yankee doctors are examining and taking down the names of the prisoners sick or unfit for the service to exchange them. A good many of our boys are sounding about for some kind of an excuse that will get their names on the list. I did not rest well during the night.

Sunday October 2d, 1864. Weather cool and cloudy. I felt very weak. I and my partner concluded that we would finish our job in one load, so we filled our barrel and before we reached the sink it became too much for me and I took the blind staggerers for a few minutes. After we were counted off at roll call I obtained permission to leave the line and enter the barrack. My breakfast of cold bread and water did not help me any, so when inspection came I stood in and had a light chill. The inspection was a long one. After dinner a Yankee doctor came in to examine the sick. The well men were turned out of the barrack into line. I felt too unwell to stand out and stood in my bunk, not intending to try to pass examination for the exchange list, but all were ordered to fall in line on the floor inside that were able to stand. I fell in line and gave in chills and fever as my complaint, and as I expected did not make it. John Curd, John Gravis and others in all thirteen or fourteen got their names on the list. There was a scare-crow list of military orders in print on stiff paper posted in a conspicuous place in the barrack, reading as follows:

came and examined me and pronounced it a light case of smallpox and gave an order for the (red) ambulance which soon drove up to the door. I put on my worst cloths taking an extra check shirt and jumped in with seven others, myself making the eighth. We moved off stopping at the gate long enough to be counted. We stopped again at the Yankee Doctor’s office near the Hospital in the Yankee square and were inspected by a Doctor a few minutes, and then moved through the south gate out of camp to the smallpox hospital which stands about four hundred yards from the fence on the south side of camp and near the Douglas Institute and monument. We jumped out and went in to the stove. The building is long but larger than our barracks. I saw the patients had frightful looking faces and hands and some were very lightly broken out. I half recognized one of the Reb nurses and asked him to see that I got a good clean cot. He said he would and started off. In five minutes another nurse told me a cot was ready and I followed him into the next ward which also appeared to be crowded with patients on both sides. The nurse stopped at an empty cot and told me to take that. I thought it was the cot I had spoken to nurse No. 1 for, but on looking at it I could see old scabs sticking all over the blankets, and I began to wonder how I could lay under blankets full of scabs. I turned the cover back and the smell nearly staggered me, but I though[t] if I must, I must! So I undressed and got in. Just then nurse No. 1 (John Craig, Woodford Co. Ky.) passed with some blankets for a cot for me not knowing that I had been accommodated. I concluded as I was in bed I would try it where I was. Everything appeared to have a mean smell. I noticed the floor was still damp from being scoured. I felt damp sticky spots on my blankets. Most of them are sticky and feel disagreeable. The roof is very open and airy. There is two holes that I could crawl out, besides numerous large cracks near the center of the roof. There were two stoves and but one in use. Something was the matter with the pipe of the other. I saw no other prospect than to freeze if the October weather turned very cold. I had but two blankets to cover with and one between me and the cot with no tick. I heard a coffee mill in the next room which indicated that dinner time was near at hand, also that said room was the kitchen. I had a very bad case on each side of me and they smelled very bad. The flies annoyed them a great deal. My covering disgusted me so that I could not bear it as high as my chin, so I took my extra check shirt by the arms and turned it over and over till it made a roll and wound it around my neck to keep from catching a cold. I knew that I would have to get used to it and concluded to watch what was going on around me. I noticed that the patients and especially the bad cases, called often for water, and the nurses did not like to give it, often telling them that they were killing themselves drinking water, so I made up my mind not to take a single drink of water during my sickness or so long as I kept my right mind. I resolved also to stay in my cot till the Doctor said I was well enough to get out. A small table was set out in the middle of the floor and the nurses came in with a wailer of sliced bakersbread, several large coffee pots, a pitcher of milk and a tin cup of sugar, also a few soda crackers and roasted potatoes. The patients that were able sat up in their cots, and I followed suit protecting myself the best I could. A plate with a slice of bread on it and a tin cup half or two thirds full of weak coffee was given to each. The worst cases got toast and a cracker or potato. My appetite was good and I went through mine in a hurry. As soon as all were done the plates were gathered and the table and contents moved into the first ward. I could feel the cool air coming through the canvas in the bottom of my cot and noticing that all the other cots had mattress on them. I spoke to Mr. Jackson, one of the head nurses about it and he raised one for me which made my cot feel much better. There are ten nurses in all and a Yankee steward that they call “Napoleon”. Supper came and we got the same as at dinner. At dusk an oil lamp swinging in the center of the room was lighted. My head felt very light and I was afraid that I might get out of my mind. When I looked at the lamp my fancy turned certain rays and shades into a lady dressed in black with a white handkerchief to her eyes. If I looked at the roof or wall the rain stains transformed themselves into something hideous and if I shut my eyes I would instantly imagine I saw funeral processions, grave yards and other things that I did not wish to see. I was very restless and did not know what to do. I did not feel sick, but I could not sleep. I was very nervous. Several persons died during the night. I was glad when day light began to appear.

Thursday October 6th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I feel better than I expected to feel. I have no pains or sore throat, but a very good appetite. Chas. M. Byrnes came out with a light case from my company. A milk woman comes within a few yards of the hospital every morning and evening and sells milk at 10 cents per quart and 10 per gallon for butter milk. The nurses go out and purchase for those patients that have the change. During the day apples and cakes come to the door for sale. I crave milk more than anything else and I am without a cent. I have been looking for Pa to send me some change from camp. Our breakfast and dinner and supper are the same. I passed another sleepless night though not so restless as the night before.

Friday October 7th, 1864. Weather a little cool. I feel that I am
getting along fine. The bumps are coming out on my face, but not very thick. There is but few on my hands and on the rest of my body they are very scattering. I find it necessary to spit a great deal to keep my throat and head clear in which the spit box about two feet from my face on each side is very handy. The nurses appear very kind and often tell me that I have a very light case, but I must wait patiently and let it have its way. I take a couple of spoonfuls of light looking fluid that has but little taste to it, two or three times a day. They call it No. 2.41 I received a letter from my cousin Mrs. R. M. Delaplain of Wheeling W. Va. and a notice from Pa that he had left $2 with Mr. Bushnell to be sent to my order. A nurse got me pen and ink and I gave Dr. F. A. Emmons an order on Bushnell for the money. During the night the man on my left died without making any noise. I slept none.

Saturday October 8th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I feel in fine spirits. My face is but little swelled and everybody says that I have a light case. Dr. Emmons returned my order on Bushnell with the news that he could not draw the money as an order had just been issued prohibiting the patients from drawing any more money. I was disappointed very much. The floor was scoured but we staid in our cots and let them move us to suit them.

Sunday October 9th, 1864. Weather cool. The open state of the roof makes the room cool altho the stove is kept hot. I borrowed a pencil and wrote Pa a note advising him of the failure of my order on Mr. Bushnell, also a letter to my Aunt Mrs. Annetta Burke of Canton, Ohio for a small box of nourishments and writing material. I found my hand very unsteady for writing. I thought I could not get money to buy something extra I would try to get it in box. Boxes are not allowed to prisoners in the square, only to sick in the Hospital. A religious paper with the Stars and Stripes in color at its head was given to each patient. We used them mostly to cover our faces to keep the flies off, but few of them were read. I am getting pretty well used to the ways of the place, and do not mind the nurses tramping back and forth with coffins. We had some dried apples for dinner extra. My appetite was not satisfied with the one slice of bread, so I called for the second slice and got it. About an hour after the lamp was lit two of the nurses by the names of Wm. Jones of 7th Ky. (Chenaughts) and Sam'l Crawford of 15th Tenn. (Wards) escaped or run away. Several Yankees looked for them awhile and returned

without them and all quieted down again. I did not think it right for the nurses to escape and leave so many sick behind them that were depending on them for everything. Of nights my eyes keep as wide open as a pair of owl eyes. They never appear to get dry and sleepy.

Monday October 10th, 1864. Weather cool. I hear a good many complaining this morning about the nurses running off with their money and tobacco. Chas. Byrnes says he lost $1.60. There is now only eight nurses and a doctor (Reba) and the Yankee steward to wait on the men. A Yankee and a Reb does the cooking. It is intended to move the smallpox hospital out in the country about a mile from camp soon. A long building standing near this one is being put on rollers to be moved to the place chosen for the smallpox hospital.42 A few Yankees that have the smallpox, moved into the lower end of our convalescent ward today from the building. I had a little milk given me several times by Charles Byrnes and others. The nights appear very long. I slept none.

Tuesday October 11th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I feel all right, that is I don't feel sore at all. I have nothing to complain of. I received an order from Pa on headquarters for $5.00, but it was of no use to me as I could not draw a cent of it where I was, but I could buy anything in the prison sutler store with it by or through the Doctor, but as the sutler kept nothing edible. He had nothing that I wanted. I had orders now for $7.00 and could not move a cent of it. I felt very much like tearing them up. I wanted the shinplasters to buy milk, etc.

Thursday October 13th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I was surprised to see my bunk mate Henry White come out with the new arrivals today. He has a very light case of the veryploid43 and went at once into the convalescent ward. The bumps on my face are getting dark spots on them showing that they are drying up. The nurse says that in nine days they will all be dried up and scaled off and I will be well enough to return to camp. My medicine was changed to a dark looking fluid that tastes bitter. They call it No. 1. It is to make me dry up and to give a good appetite. I am as patient as could be expected. There was thirteen new cases arrived during the day. The nurses say it is

42 Smallpox is also called variola. Varioloid is a mild form of variola occurring in a person who has previously had smallpox or been vaccinated.
43 A letter from Hoffman to Sweet on September 9 indicates that plans had been made to remove the smallpox hospital farther from the camp and to make improvements in ventilation and protection against cold weather. Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 796.
more than ever came out in one day before. We are beginning to be crowded.

Friday October 14th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I feel tolerable well and am always glad to see meal time come. I eat the second slice of bread two meals out of three. I noticed several cases where the patients had eaten too much rich food causing their bums to look red. There is several kinds of smallpox. The common, the black and a fine kind that comes out very thick about the size of a pin head. Chas. Byrnes has a light case of this last kind. After dark a man by the name of Price of 8th Ky. (Clukes) escaped. At first the Stewart did not know who it was, that the empty cot belonged to, and he had the roll of the whole hospital called and found out. Then some Yanks went in pursuit but returned in an hour or so without the prisoner.

Monday October 17th, 1864. Weather pleasant. My face and hands are drying up fast. A great many have already come off of my face without forcing them, but instead of leaving pits they left light red raised places. I endured the itching torture than scratch them. Henry White received a small box of delicacies, fresh grapes, crackers, lemons, etc. I felt a great deal better than usual and the nurses told me that I might walk about awhile, so I visited Henry who I found out of bed and helped him eat his extras. His sister Mrs. Wm. T. Crode of Memphis, Tenn, was at headquarters, but could not get to see him, but she sent him the box and a suit of clothes. I am anxiously looking for my box. Elijah Watkins of Co. A. 14th came out and brought a note and fifty cents in shinpasters to me from Pa. I bought four large apples for ten cents and a quart of sweet milk for ten cents. I spent part of the time while I was up waiting on the patients in my ward. I slept about an hour during the night.

Tuesday October 18th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I feel pretty saucy. When the cooks went to camp to draw ration I got one of them to buy me a dimes worth of sugar and I got three or four times as much as the sutler in camp sold for a dime. My coffee does not come quite as sweet as I like to have it. I also add a little more milk. The nurses told me that I was well enough to wash my hands and face and sit up. I had not been allowed to wash since I broke out with the smallpox and I was glad enough to avail myself of the opportunity to get the dirt off of my hands and face, which I did with warm water and felt a great deal better. I waited on the patients awhile and then begged pen, ink and paper and wrote to my Cousin Mrs. R. M. Delaplaine of Wheeling, Va. I sat by the stove and eat my dinner and then returned to bed again. I thought my box certainly would come during the day as plenty of time had elapsed since I wrote. I began to fear that I would be discharged as well and sent to camp before it come and so loose it. Dr. Emmons starts them to camp as soon as they are able to travel fairly. Henry White returned to camp today wearing his new suit instead of the ridiculous looking blue suits they now issue. Every patient when discharged is made to bathe all over and leave all his clothes and put on one of the blue suits. They also receive a small new thin blue blanket each. After supper I made some hot toddy in partners with one of my regiment. He furnished the whiskey and I furnished the sugar and lemon. The stewart came along and saw me up and told me I was well enough to go into the convalescent ward and that he would give me a cot there. I went to the ward and it was late before a cot was given me. I went to bed and found only one thin blanket to cover with and no tick. There was three stoves in the ward and I thought that they would keep the room warm enough, so I did not complain. Everybody was required to throw their pantaloons on the floor at the foot of their cot and the stewart gathered them up and locked them in a little room to keep us from escaping. A new comer talked rather saucy or foolish to the Steward and the Steward took all of his clothes. All finally retired and the fires died out. The night was cold and I soon became chilled through. They kept laughing and talking till late. At 12 o'clock I had occasion to go out and when I returned I found a fire in one of the stoves. I went to it to get the chill off of me and found Elijah Watkins warming also. I did not say much to him but soon got warm and went to bed again covering up my head to keep as warm as I could. In about ten or fifteen minutes I heard one of the Yankees remark, “That rebs stayed too long”, at the same time getting up and going out. The Yankee returned in a few minutes and said that he could see nothing of him. Then several Yankees got up and went out. I then learned that they were talking about a prisoner that had gone to the sink and failed to return. The cots were looked over and Elijah Watkins was missed. Then some of the rebs spoke up and said that Watkins went out with his boots on and a blanket over his shoulders. The Yanks soon returned without Watkins, all agreeing that it was a pretty cold night for a man to escape in his drawers. The clock struck one and no sleep for me. I had to rub my feet together until I thought I would rub the skin off for fear they would freeze, for several hours before day. I counted every stroke of the clock during the whole night, which was a miserable one.

Wednesday October 19th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I rose before
sun up got warm at one of the stoves and went out and took a wash. The milk woman was announced and I went out and bought a quart of sweet milk in a bottle. I felt sure that when Dr. Emmons came out and learned of the escape of Watkins he would get out of humor and send a lot of us convalescents to our quarters in camp and I also had a presentiment that my box would certainly arrive some time today or tomorrow morning and if I could pass the Doctor till tomorrow I would get it. I almost made up my mind to ask the Doctor's permission to remain another day, but my aversion to asking favors of Yankees was too great. I went to the convalescent table, which is set in the kitchen, to breakfast, and got coffee without sugar or milk, but as I had both I soon made the coffee right. I got also a moderate supply of cold beef and bread. The cooks, nurses, and Yankees eat at the first table and the convalescents at the second table. After breakfast I bucked pen, ink and paper from the nurses and stamps from Chas. Byrnes and wrote to Ma, Medina Co. Ohio. I was sitting at the stove with several others when Dr. Emmons came. He immediately took the names of eight of us to be sent to camp after dinner without any examination and there was three of the number not dried up yet. I asked the Doctor if he had heard anything of my box, and he said he had not; if it had come it would be sent directly to his office. I visited our men in the other wards and received sundry messages to deliver when I got to camp. Most of them appeared in good spirits, and I cheered them up all I could by telling them that they were getting along fine, etc. altho I was satisfied that several of them would never recover. After all I was glad to leave the place made horrible by the dying groans of so many of my comrades in adversity. Poor fellows! some of them would get out of their heads and die raving, cursing, praying and making speeches, etc. I often saw men out of their heads gather all of the blankets of their cots under their arms and start out saying that their friends were waiting at the door for them. Different reasons were given by them for wanting to leave, but the nurses would most always stop them before they got to the door. A few nights ago Richard Allen of Co. D. my regiment made an eloquent speech defending himself against an accusation for which he supposed he had been tried and sentenced to be hanged. He also made a long prayer speaking of his mother, sister and sweetheart in the most touching terms imagined declaring his innocence and bidding them and the world farewell. I thought he was dying but the nurses said he was only out of his head, but that he was very low. About 11 o'clock we discharged men filled a large two barrel boiler sitting outside with water from a well nearby and heated it. We then got four tubs, two to a tub and took a bath in an old roofless shed or sink which was a very chilly operation. We then had to throw away our old, but warm cloths and put on our new suits of blue, consisting of thin shoes without socks, unlined pants without drawers, a good gray shirt and a thin frock coat with the tail trimmed with scissors or a knife into a clavahammer or spade tail, looking very odd. Every other button was also cut off. All kept their old hats. Our toilet at last completed by tying our cravats (if we had one) A La Brummel. We returned to the house and sat around the stoves till dinner was announced. I got bread, beef, and a plate of vegetable soup and then by way of a delicacy finished with my cup of milk, which I relished very much as I knew it was the last I would get for some time. After dinner the eight discharged men were called up and each of us received a new blue blanket and Napoleon (The Stewart) started with us to camp. He halted us in the Federal square at the Doctor's office next to the Prisoners hospital and a reb Doctor by the name of Gray who was also staying there, came out and asked if there was a man by the name of Burke in the crowd. I answered and he told me that a box had just arrived for me. I told him that it was lost to me as I would not be allowed to take it to my barrack in the prison square. He then told me to come in, and I went in and saw it was a large square cracker box well filled. It had been opened. He told me to take such things as I thought I could get through the gate with, so I first gave my friends at the door their hands full of soda crackers, dried cherries, etc. and then handed one a paper of prunes another a glass of jelly and a third a paper of white sugar to take through the gate for me. While I took a prayer book, paper of tea, 1/2 doz of crackers, a suit of undercloths and some soft rags for bandages, etc. A Yankee sergeant was hurryimg me so that I did not have time to explore the box further, and I thought it best not to try to pass with any more. Doctor Gray promised to send the remainder of the things to the smallpox hospital where I had left a note to Dr. Emmons requesting him if the box came to let Charles Byrnes and John Travis have it to distribute among the 14th, Ky. sick and others as they saw fit. Then we moved on to the gate with an addition of three convalescents from the Prisoners hospital, and were searched at the gate and turned into our square without having anything taken from us. The men promptly refunded my extra things prunes, etc. and I went to my barrack rejoicing. The camp looked strange to me. There was so much new work, barracks and other alterations.17 I was kept busy for awhile receiving the congratulations of my friends on my recovery and in answering questions concerning the remaining boys of the regiment. I took a good drink of water for the first time in two weeks. I felt

17 Weekly reports during October indicate that many repairs were being made; new barrack near the wash house were constructed. Official Records, Ser. II, Vol. VII, 955, 994, 1026.
a little weak, but all right otherwise and was congratulating myself on my good fortune, but I had not been back more than two hours when I commenced feeling soreness and slight pain on the left side of my neck under my jaw between the ear and apple of the throat. It increased so by night that I could hardly eat a couple of biscuits and cup of tea that Pa brought me. The outside of my throat was swelling and the inside was sore so that it pained me to swallow. I passed a sleepless night with it.

Thursday October 20th, 1864. Weather pleasant. My throat is considerably swollen on the left side I cannot eat anything but hot tea or coffee with a little bread crummed in it. Dr. Pettus examined me and says that the left tonsil of my throat is swollen and gave me a prescription for some potash [potash] to gurgle my throat with. Henry White carried my prescription to the drug store and got the medicine. I received two letters from Canton, Ohio. One from my cousin Mrs. T. Myers and one from my uncle Wm. H. Burke both giving a list of the contents of my box. I also received a note from Charles Byrnes at the smallpox hospital saying that he had received the box with only one paper of dried cherries, a lot of dried apples and crackers. The balance 5 glasses of jelly, 2 cans of peaches, one paper of tertia, one paper of corn starch, paper, envelopes, ink, underclothing and a few other articles were taken out. So I or my friends did not get much from my box. Byrnes would have sent me the writing materials or brought them when he was discharged had he received them. The night was cool. I did not rest well.

Friday October 21st, 1864. Weather cool. I feel about the same as I did yesterday. Nightingale the sutler commenced selling the Chicago Tribune, Evening Journal at 10 cents a piece. I kept very close in my bunk. I find great difficulty in eating, and passed another sleepless night.

Sunday October 23rd, 1864. Weather cool. I put a lie [lye] poultice to my throat and waited very impatiently for Dr. Pettus to make his morning call. When he came he said there were some ulcers in my throat that needed burning, and gave a prescription for nitrate of silver to burn them with. Henry got the medicine and Wm. Gibbons burned the ulcers for me. I also still continued to gurgle my throat every hour or two with the potash. The paper said 800 Yankees have taken the Confederate oath from Southern prisons.\(^{28}\) At inspection the officers surprised a good many of us by taking all the extra boots and shoes found in the barrack. I suspicioned the cat was up and remained in my bunk on the sick list and was not disturbed, thereby saving some boots and shoes that were hid in my blankets for other fellows. The men out in line had to stand and see their extra boots and shoes thrown out in a pile and hauled off to the gate where they were either burned or issued out to others. Pa gave me an order on the sutler for $2.00 and Henry got me a small bottle of ink and a small fine tooth comb for 70 cents.

Tuesday October 25th, 1864. Weather cool. Mr. Nightingale the sutler brought in a lot of sugar, coffee, tea, apples, etc. for sale. Henry got me 1 lb. of coffee $1, nine envelopes and nine sheets of note paper for 30 cents which took up the balance of my order. Nearly everything is of inferior quality and sells at the highest kind of prices. Black Tea $2.50 per lb., common brown sugar 60 cents lb., Strong Butter 80 cents per lb., small onions 25 cents per doz., small apples 5 cents apiece and other things in proportion.

Thursday October 27th, 1864. Weather pleasant. Several prisoners escaped from the hospital in the federal square by means of a tunnel. Edwin W. Lonney Co. B. died at the smallpox hospital last night. He is from Lexington Ky. and was one of the first members of Morgan's old squadron. This is the first loss by death my company has sustained since our capture. The water pipes on north side of camp are undergoing repairs and the hydrants have stopped running.\(^{29}\) Barrels were sunk in the sandy earth, but the water thus obtained was very muddy and indifferent, and that necessary article became very scarce.

Sunday October 30th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I received a letter

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\(^{28}\) One report of October 12, 1864, from Florence, South Carolina, indicates that

\(^{29}\) In October the water system consisting of three inch main pipe was being replaced by six inch pipe, which was expected to fill the need for more water. Official Records, Ser. II, Vol. VII, 694, 1027.
from Brother William Burke of Medina Co., Ohio. At roll call an
order was read that every man must take all of his effects out in line
at inspection and lay them at their feet. When the bugle blew I re-
mained in my bunk and hid some things for Henry White and others.
The inspecting officers took a large lot of blankets, clothing, etc. from
the prisoners. I lost nothing. There was more than a two horse
wagon load of confiscated goods taken from the camp. The men were
then dismissed and all hands breathed free once more. A discussion
arose between the men in my barrack whether the cooks should issue
the bread in two doses, that is at dinner and breakfast as usual, or all
at once at dinner. A vote was taken and the majority 116 to 16 de-
cided to have it issued as usual.

Monday October 31st, 1864. Weather pleasant. It is the 14th writ-
ing day. I wrote to Ma, Medina Co., Ohio. Yankee and rebel doctors
are vaccinating the next barrack to us (Ward’s 55th Tenn). Our
guard had all shelves except light slated work knocked down. Two
Yankee privates made a sudden raid on our barrack and got extra
clothing from about a dozen of the men who were unprepared for
them. The Yanks seem to be determined to reduce us to barely one
suit and we are kept in a stew all the time dreading searches. Two
men were caught talking after the retreating bugle sounded and taken
to the wooden mule for a ride of an hour or so. When the men see a
Yankee coming they give the alarm consisting simply of kist, kist,
which can be heard on all sides.

Tuesday November 1st, 1864. Weather tolerable pleasant. The pa-
sers say that a fleet of 16 vessels are collecting at Fortress Monroe
to be commanded by Lt. Col. Mulford U. S. A. to exchange 10,000 pris-
oneers at Savannah, Ga. About 760 new prisoners arrived from
Hood’s Tenn. army, and one of Capt. Quirk’s scouts a Tennessean is
among them.

Thursday November 3rd, 1864. Weather pleasant. We drew out
first coal today. The papers say that Gen. Buregard and Hood are
across the Tennessee river in the rear of Sherman who is leaving
Atlanta and coming north again. Gen. Breckinridge is to enter east-
ern Kentucky and form a junction with Buregard and Hood. The
bread question was agitated again and a vote taken. The majority
this time decided to have all the rations of bread for the day issued
at dinner time. "7 [77] new prisoners arrived and were furnished
with quarters in this magnificent establishment the Hotel De Ganee. The
bakers say that they allow 2 lb. of flour to make 4 loaves of bread,
that is 4 oz to the loaf, and we draw 3/4 of a loaf per man per day.
The bakers sell the same size loaves to us when they come from work
at 25 and 30 cts. and I have known them to get as much as 50 cts. per
loaf in U. S. shiplasters. They do their best to keep the price of
bread up, and nothing but U. S. Shiplasters will buy it, and that is
not easily obtained unless we sell orders or numbers on Headquarters
or the sutler at a heavy discount, or buy things at the sutler's on our
orders or numbers and peddle them through camp for shiplasters.
And as I make a poor peddler I always discount. The sutler brought
in some flour at $20 per barrel. I gave my blue hospital coat to Pa to
make him a vest of as I cannot hide it much longer in the strict
searches the Yankees have been making lately for extra clothing, etc.
After the bugle for retiring had sounded two patrol guards came in
and caught several of the men sitting around the stove which at the
time was very hot. They cursed the men to their hunks and ordered
no more fire and started out, but one of them remained in the little
passage about 6 long by 4 wide between the outer and inner door.
The men thinking they were gone commenced talking and in popped
the guard again, but the alarm was given so quickly that the guard
could not determine what men were talking. He hauled out three or
four men, but they were the wrong men. Then he swore he would
take every man in the barrack out and he would get the right men.
He ordered us all to get up but before we got our clothing on two of
the guilty men owned up and we were ordered back to bed again, and
the guard marched the two men off to ride the wooden mule. All was
still again. Nothing could be heard except now and then a low whisper.
We saw the light of a large fire on the west side of camp in
Chicago. The night was cool and rainy. I did not rest well.

Friday November 4th, 1864. Weather cool, dark and rainy. The

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41 Confederate General John B. Hood was conducting his invasion of Tennes-
see called the Franklin and Nashville Campaign. It was an attempt to pull Sher-
man north after he had gained Atlanta from Hood. Sherman moved north from
Atlanta early in October but retained control of the city. He soon left defenses
against Hood to General George H. Thomas and moved south for his “March to the
Sea.” Boattier, The Civil War Dictionary, 305-309. Hood was forced to retreat to
Mississippi and the Army of Tennessee was shattered. General Pierre G. Beaure-
gard was in command of the West, created October 8, and coordinate Hood’s proposed invasion of Tennessee. Ibid., 241. General John C. Breckinridge was presumably in the Department of South West Virginia at this
time. He is not mentioned in connection with Hood’s campaign. Ibid., 25, 205-209.
ground is muddy. Our roll call sergeant let the men in as soon as he got through and we had breakfast nearly over before the regular bugle blew to dismiss the prisoners from roll call. I had more difficulty than usual in getting through with my breakfast of bread and coffee. I have been burning the ulcers in my throat with nitrate of silver and gurgling with potash. Also keeping my neck well bundled up with politics made of bread and vinegar which I change several times during the day. John T. McGaw of Co. C, died of the convalescent ward today. He is from Columbus Ky. I received a letter from brother Alonzo Burke at Lexington, Ky. The sutler’s stock is getting better. He brought in soda crackers at 25 cents per lb. Morning papers say that the fire last night was a large Glue Factory.42 A new lot of prisoners arrived captured near Decatur Ala. from Hood a few days ago. The night was the coldest we have yet had this fall. I was very restless all night.

[Burke can eat only hot liquids because his throat is so swollen on November 5 and 6. Newspapers are stopped on the sixth.]

Monday November 7th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I could not eat anything for breakfast, and at dinner pork and no soup was issued. I felt very hungry so I cut up some pork and bread very fine and made a substitute for soup. It takes me some time to eat as I have to bring every muscle into action to swallow and never get through without a great deal of choking, puffing and blowing and a sweat. Since I returned from the hospital the men or a good many of them have been busy increasing the warmth of their socks by knitting them with yarn obtained from worn out socks. They use a darning needle and a small stick about the size of a lead pencil. The stick is sewed to the sock the stitches being close together the whole length, then the stick is cut out by running a knife across the yarn the whole length of the stick. This operation is repeated till the whole sock is covered or as much of it as is desirable. There are plenty of rumors about arms, etc. being found near camp. At night we had unusually strict orders to keep quiet. The Yanks seem afraid of the rebs making a break.43

Burke's Civil War Journal

Tuesday November 8th, 1864. Weather rainy. My throat is some better. This is the day on which the next president of the United States is to be elected for the next four years of the war! The prisoners generally take the part of the Chicago nominee Geo. B. McClellan as they think his election is the only thing that will bring about an early exchange of prisoners. I received a letter from my cousin Alonzo Miller, Medina Co. Ohio. He has just returned from the Yankee army; his time three years being out. He says that he has had enough of it and wishes the war was over. We can hear nothing from the election. It rained hard nearly all night.

[Entries from November 9 to 20 provide little new information. The plank fence is still reinforced around the camp, and guards are putting up “a large reflector lamp at the end of each street to light up the streets extra from the lamps on the fence” (p. 365). New and larger water pipes are put in providing more water. Burke reports several more smallpox deaths among his acquaintances. The first snow falls on November 10. Burke’s throat is still bad; he tries painting with iodine for three days and then turns to onion poultices, which apparently do little good either.]

Monday November 21st, 1864. Weather tolerable pleasant. The Yanks took the skillets from all of the kitchen and ordered the cooks to use the private flour belonging to men in the barrack for the whole barracks, but the reb cooks did not do it. The flour owners make flat cakes which they bake by holding them near the red coal stoves in the barrack till one side is done and then turn them over. At the same time keeping a lookout for the Yanks. We are all pretty well satisfied by this time that Old Abe is re-elected and the chances for an early exchange very meager. My throat is doing very well today. 15 or 20 prisoners went out on the Oath in the last two or three days. The prisoners are not allowed to receive writing materials or tobacco today. Returning convalescents from the smallpox hospital report over 200 cases there. Some of them are in a deplorable condition, lying on the floors without sufficient blankets and fire to keep them from frost biting. Some are lying in a circle around the few stoves which are miserably short of coal, while others lay begging the nurses to take them to the fire to keep them from freezing. There is not enough cots. There is an average of eight deaths per day. The night was very cold.

Tuesday November 22d, 1864. Weather cold. I received a letter from Brother Alonzo E. Burke at Lexington, Ky. A load or two of express boxes arrives for the prisoners every day, but they are all examined and many things taken out. The regiment furnished a detail to fill up the ditch where the water pipes were put in. The men in the barrack that can knit have been busy for several days past.
not go to roll call. Some flour was stolen the other night from Thos. Ballou, Co. A and this morning he and several others suspected and accused one of the newcomers by the name of Thos. Ireland, Co. E 4th La. Battalion. After questioning him pretty close he acknowledged that he was very hungry and stole it but was sorry for it. The men became interested in the affair and some was for handing him over to the Yankees for punishment and some were for trying him and punishing according to law. The prisoner was asked which he preferred, and he said that he was willing to receive any punishment a fair trial might inflict. So a court was immediately organized and witnesses on both sides collected. The officers chosen were as follows: John Waller, Judge; John Curd, Sheriff; A. W. Cockrell, Prosecuting Attorney; Wm. McConathy, Attorney for Prisoner. A jury of 12 men from this and other barracks was solemnly sworn in. The witnesses were also sworn with uplifted hands. and the prisoner pleaded guilty and requested the court not to be hard on him. The witnesses were examined and cross examined by the Attorneys on both sides. McConathy and Cockrell spoke about an hour each. A large crowd was collected, but perfect silence was maintained, and things went on in the same manner as a regular court. The jury retired a few minutes and returned with the verdict that the prisoner was guilty and ought to have one side of his head shaved, and his name, company and regiment placed on the bulletin board as a thief, between the hours of 12 and 6 o’clock P. M. The judge read the sentence and the court adjourned. After dinner the sheriff (John Curd) cut the prisoner’s hair short on one side, and the sentence of the court was put on the bulletin board. He submitted quietly to the sentence. The night was cool.

Wednesday November 30th, 1864. Weather pleasant. I visited Pa at the masonic barrack (49) and learned the names of the officers, and the object of the association, which is as follows: To aid and assist any sick and needy masons. To dispense charity, and receive donations from lodges outside of the Prison for that purpose. To attend in person the hospitals and bury their dead. The officers of the Prisoners Masonic Association of Camp Douglas, Ill. A. W. Cockrell, President; John Peters, Vice President; O. T. Miller, Secretary; R. F. Gordon, Corresponding Secretary; E. D. Raylan, Treasurer; J. E. Atkins, Stewart; W. C. Dickey, Tyler; W. C. Arnett, Sergeant Major; S. M. Price, Com. Sergeant. The guard is a mason, and they all appear to be getting along as well as could be expected under the circumstances. Nearly all of the new barracks have been completed. I have got so that I can eat my rations and then feel hungry. I and Henry White saved our meat and part of our bread and made hash to

44 Shackelford of Company D had been arrested on October 29 for an attempted escape the previous night.

45 No records have been found related to this particular incident. Such an occurrence seems not unusual in light of events recorded in Allen E. Roberts, House Undivided: The Story of Freemasonry and the Civil War (Pulton, Mo., 1961).
eat with our bread in the morning. We made the hash in a small stew pot that Pa gave me, and cooked it on the coal stove.

Saturday December 3d, 1864. Weather rainy. I staid in from roll call. After breakfast I paid Pa a visit and saw a guard kicking a crowd away from one of the hydrants. I spilled some water on the floor, but made haste to hide it before any of the guards came in, as the penalty is a ride on the wooden mule. I swept it as dry as I could and put hot ashes on it, then swept it clean again and sprinkled fresh sand over it and all was right again. The guards make a great fuss about a little spit on the floor, and try to make the men go to the spit-boxes to spit instead of spitting at them from the bunks or at a distance. Just now I hear the men in a warm discussion over the question whether a man can eat four hard-tacks (crackers) in five minutes, also whether a man can eat three loaves of soft bread in 3 hours. A good many express a willingness to make the trial if the bread or crackers are furnished. A doctor came in and vaccinated every man that has not been vaccinated lately or wanted to be vaccinated over again. Just before day I heard the men of a whole barrack out in line stomping to keep their feet warm. Some guards took them out for making fires in the stoves before the bugle blew to rise.

[On December 4 Burke reports that there are new officers and a Captain McDonald is now “Inspector of the prison square” (p. 372).]

Tuesday December 6th, 1864. Weather cold. I went to roll call and got permission to go in as soon as the count was over. There is fresh snow about 3 inches deep this morning. It is reported that a prisoner froze to death last night. Henry Allen of Co. B was staying at the sutler store and escaped rather mysteriously. The other clerks five in number were arrested and locked up in the express office to make them tell how Allen escaped, and how much money he took. Report says that he was hauled out in a barrel and that he took two or three hundred dollars from old Nightingale, who believes it all, and also that the other clerks have been robbing him too. The store is closed. Clothing and blankets are still received by express. After dinner the whole row (four barracks) prepared to wash at the wash house. Henry White and myself borrowed a tub and washboard and repaired to the field of operations. We found the house already very much crowded and about three inches of water all over the floor. The troughs that the tubs set in were full of tubs, so we sat our tub on the floor and got hot water from one of the eight large two lb. boilers and went to work on our bag of duds. I counted a hundred tubs all in use.

After we had given our cloths one rubbing we put them in one of the boilers and boiled them. By this time it was late in the evening. We had washed 29 pieces. A hydrant was put in the middle of the wash house. Leaven W. Young returned from the smallpox hospital in a very bad fix, being covered with large boils. A patrol guard came in soon after the bugle blew at dusk and drove the men to their bunks, and ordered them to let the fires die out. The night was cold.

Friday December 9th, 1864. Weather very cold. We were marched in again as soon as counted. I think this will be repeated through the cold weather. A man froze to death in barrack 28 last night. Albert and Joseph Stanhope were permitted to see their father in the office at the gate. 47 new prisoners arrived captured from Hood on the 4th inst., a mile and a half from Nashville where Hood is fortifying. One of the prisoners says that he saw Gen. Pat. Clabourne laid out. The guards here have frequently given orders for the men to keep away from the stoves. Today old Socks 46 came and saw a crowd around the stoves and he lit into them with a stick till he broke it and then said “Some of you play-offs give me a stick! Some of you play-offs give me a stick!” at the same time striking them over the shoulders with the pieces till he cleared the crowd. John Shackelford returned from the smallpox hospital with his ball and chain still on. On his way in the 64 lb. ball rolled out of the old ambulance nearly jerking his leg off before the ambulance could be stopped. At night he suffered a great deal with his leg. The night was cold.

Monday December 12th, 1864. Weather cold and windy. There was a great sensation created in camp at seeing the following printed article posted on the bulletin board and other places.

New York City, Dec. 9, 1864.

To the Confederate Prisoners of War at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Ill.

Under the late arrangements made between the Confederate States and the United States to each supply their own Prisoners of War with necessary supplies, I have been selected to carry out on the part of the Confederate States this arrangement. I therefore desire that you will at once determine by a committee or other.

46 Confederate General Patrick R. Cleburne, born in Ireland, was killed on November 30, 1864, at Franklin, Tennessee, Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 189-90.

47 Old Socks is described as “a tall rawboned longlegged hump-shouldered, green looking Yank” who punished two prisoners in Burke’s barrack on November 28. The guard’s answer “I’ll sock ye!” to one man’s plea for time to don his socks earned the Yankee his nickname.
wise the supplies (Clothing, blankets, etc. provisions you must need; give the number of blankets and each amount of clothing, namely those articles first that you need most. 2d. Give the number of officers, privates and citizens separate. 3d. Select four officers and give their name, rank and regiment, in full, who you desire to receive and issue to you the supplies on their arrival.

Your Obedient Servant,

Wm. N. N. Beall,
Brig. Gen. P. A. C. S.

Capt. & A. A. A. Gen.

The men in my barrack (27) elected Wm. J. McConathy as a delegate to meet with elected delegates from other barracks. Each barrack electing a delegate and those delegates to elect four of their number with authority to receive and issue the Confederate rations, etc. on their arrival. The sutler sold over 40 barrels of flour at $21 (Greenback) per barrel today. He sells a good many every day. The kitches are several days behind in receiving their beans and vinegar for the ten days and there has been a strong rumor in camp all day that our rations were going to be cut shorter. Some say that its in the papers and others say that the Yankees are its author. Henry White and myself got into an argument over it. Henry affirming that he believed the rumor and proposed the following trade to me on the strength of his belief, which I accepted, as we get a whole loaf of bread for breakfast and two thirds of a loaf for dinner. Henry agreed to take my half of the bread for his choice of soup for the ten days. And I run the risk of loosing the soup by the kitches not drawing beans. By this trade I give my rations of bread for one day for his rations of pot-liquor or soup for ten days.

Tuesday December 13th, 1864. Weather cool. At breakfast I let Henry have all the bread as per agreement, and burned enough from one of the cooks for my breakfast. Just before dinner I paid Pa a visit and found him baking biscuits. He gave me enough for my dinner and supper, but I did not tell him of my trade. At dinner we drew a half pint of pot liquor each. Henry laughed as he poured his.

The circular from Beall, Provisional Army, Confederate States, was enclosed with a cover letter from Halbert E. Paine, United States Volunteers, that directed Federal prison officials to have the circular “presented to the prisoners of war, and forward the report called for through me [Paine] made over to the authorities and suggestions as may be of service.” Burke reproduces the circular with minor differences in punctuation and wording from the copy in Official Records, Ser. II. Vol. VII, 1206-1207.

There apparently was no official intention to reduce the ration at that time. In fact, an inspection report of December 4 indicates that the quantity of food was “hardly sufficient” and recommends “that during the winter months the ration of meat be increased two ounces.” On December 18 food is still “insufficient for the winter season.” In October Hoffman had suggested reducing the meat ration to save money for vegetables, but Sweet declined the suggestion because “in this climate during winter it is not advisable.” Ibid., 1125, 1242, 1209.

I said nothing as I still thought we would draw beans yet and the laugh would be on my side. The delegates elected yesterday met today at 2:30 p.m. at Barrack No. 53. They organized and adjourned till tomorrow.

Wednesday December 14th, 1864. Weather cold and windy. It was reported that Lt. Fife would be in at the express office to approve letters for money and clothing. I commenced drawing my bread at breakfast again as usual. After breakfast I repaired to the express office to get a letter approved, and found a line of two ranks already formed waiting. I fell in at the rear end of the line and we stamped to keep our feet warm till 12 o'clock, but the Lt. did not make his appearance and we gave it up and dispersed to our quarters. The kitchen drew beans at last and we had bean soup at dinner. I eat both cups of soup and turned the laugh on Henry who acknowledged that he was beaten in the trade. The delegates met and after a good deal of considering elected the following committee. A. W. Cockrell (Chairman of Committee), Hos. D. Hunt, Thos. J. Chambers, W. T. Brantly. A masonic came in and called for all that wanted Testaments or Bibles to form a line. About 60 men fell in line. The masonic counted them and left. There are a few rebs taking the oath (or the doy as the men call it). The Hydrants have been stopped nearly all day. The snow is melting. The guards fired several times at prisoners gathering snow too close to the dead line. Snow fell during the night.

Thursday December 15th, 1864. Weather dark and cloudy. Two inches of fresh snow and still snowing. Gen. Beall reported in Chicago. I fell in again with a line of about 300 at the express office and waited till dinner time and was again disappointed in getting my letter approved. A few bales of hay were rolled inside the gate and the hay grabbed for. I saw two bodies nearly nacked hauled out in the old smallpox wagon. They had died in some of the barracks. In the night a crazy prisoner in Barrack No. 15 got up and walked up and down the barrack saying “I see Jesus, I see Jesus!” He then bolted out into the street and saw the lamp on the fence and said “There’s Jesus, I see his light”, and making for the lamp at the same time he tore it from the fence and run with it saying “Glory! glory! I have got Jesus’. A guard fired at him. The ball smashed the lamp and knocked it out of his hand. He then run down to the gate where the guards caught him and took him back to his barrack.

Friday December 16th, 1864. Weather cold. Snowing during the fore part of the day. I thought I would try my luck once more at the
express office, so I fell in line and waited till near dinner and a Yank came out and told that the Lt. would not commence approving till one o'clock p. m. So we dispersed and at the time appointed about 250 of us formed a line of two ranks and the men went in with their letters open two at a time, and two employed rebs read them out to a corporal who told them what articles to cancel off as contraband. The letters were only allowed to be five or six lines long, so it did not take more than two minutes to two men or letters. My letter was to Dr. Jno. R. Desha of Lexington, Ky. I saw another body half naked hauled out like a dead horse or dog, and old Red (O’Hara) marching a squad around for grumbling about their bread rations. About 60 sick prisoners arrived from the Nashville Hospital. They say that when they left they could see the Confederate skirmishers from the hospital.

I heard several shots in camp during the night.

[On December 18 Burke returns Henry White’s “soup being satisfied with four cups of bean soup and one of pot liquor for my one days’ ration of bread, and not wishing to carry so heavy a joke any further” (p. 380).]

Monday December 19th, 1864. Weather cold. There is some ice and sleet on the ground. After dinner I got two letters approved one for myself to my Uncle Henry S. Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio and the other for Pa to his Bro. Wm. H. Burke of Canton, Ohio, both for undercloths. I obtained the copy of the transactions of the four committee men from A. W. Cockrell. The following letter was started with other papers to Gen. Beall and returned by Col. Sweet with a letter from Col. Sweet requiring the committee to correct the papers.

Camp Douglas, Ill.
Dec. 16th, 1864.

Gen. W. N. R. Beall
New York City.

Acting under the authority vested in us by an election held in accordance with instructions, published to us in your circular dated New York City Dec. 9, 1864, and addressed to the Confederate Prisoners of War Confined at Camp Douglas, Ill.: A certificate of said election being herewith enclosed. We beg leave to lay before you the accompanying report exhibiting the necessities and condition of the said prisoners at Camp Douglas.

As we have not seen a copy of the late arrangements made between the Confederate States and the United States to each supply their own prisoners of War with necessary supplies. We are left to infer that the terms “necessary supplies” refer to the deficient between present allowances and actual wants. This report then is based upon that construction of those terms.

Since about the first of last March our supplies of medicines have been entirely inadequate to our wants, and these scant supplies very irregularly furnished. This scarcity exists even now. The Confederate physicians, pris- ones, who attend our sick in barracks have received assurance from the Post Surgeon of this Camp of such a satisfactory Character as to induce us to withhold from you any application for medical supplies. At the request of these Medical gentlemen we direct your attention to the necessity of providing us at once with the vegetables mentioned in the accompanying report. As a persistent use of a uniform diet almost wholly unrelieved by vegetables has created strong Scorbatic tendencies among us–which unless checked may lead to alarming results. It will be of first importance and indeed indispensable, that the officers who are to receive and distribute these supplies, should be furnished a building for the storage thereof. General Beall’s experience as a prisoner will suggest to him the expedience of having these officers paroled to enable them properly to discharge the duties of the position.

There are three kinds of prisoners as to whom doubts have been suggested, as to whether they are proper objects of Confederate bounty. 1st Deserters, those who openly avow themselves as such. 2d. Those who have applied for the Oath, under President Lincoln’s amnesty proclamation. 3d. Those who are now at work for the United States Government. In the absence of positive instructions from you the first class can not receive the bounty of a Government whose claims upon their allegiance they disown and repudiate. As to the 2d and 3d class there is more difficulty. As it is the intent which fixes their character and that is a question of fact to be determined for itself in each individual case—we may remark that there is no disposition upon the part of our Commissaries to have the paternal care of our Government extended to those however they may at present be classified who are unwilling to share the fate of that Government be it for weal or woe. In addition to the heavy estimate of supplies now furnished, a large margin must be made to accommodate the almost daily accession of new prisoners contributed from the active campaign now going on. The imperfect character of report General Beall will have the goodness to attribute to the haste with which it is gotten up, and scarcity of stationery which may be supplied to us upon the basis of an entire destitution in that respect.

Respectfully submitted
A. W. Cockrell,
Chairman
Jos. D. Hunt
Thos. J. Chambers
W. T. Brantly
Board of Officers.

Table showing the number of commissioned officers, citizens and privates held as “prisoners of war” at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Ill. Dec. 16th, 1864. 1st Sergeants, 163; Sergeants, 508; Corporals, 406; Citizens, 32; Privates, 917: Aggregate, 9216 (10,216).

Articles required for “Confederate Prisoners of War” confined at Camp Douglas, Ill. Dec. 16th, 1864. Blankets, 6971; Coats, 3652; Pants, 4767; Shirts, 8052; Drawers, 8269; Socks, 13006; Shoes, 3599; Hats, 3032.

Present allowance by U. S. Government per man per day 30c. 10 oz. In lieu of fresh beef

Fresh beef 14 oz.

Soft bread 16 oz.

Beans or Peas 12 lbs. to the 100 rations

Rice or hominy 8 lbs. “ ” “ (In lieu of Beans or Peas)

Soap 4 lbs. to the 100 rations

Vinegar 3 qts. “ ” “


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White sold a gray jacket for $1 and got 1 qt. molasses, 75 cts. and 18 onions 25 cts.

Saturday December 24th, 1864. Weather cold. A little snow still remaining. The mail again fails me, so I came to the conclusion that I must do something or else miss a good Christmas dinner tomorrow. My only chance was to borrow as I had nothing that I could afford to sell. I tried to borrow a dollar in shinpasters (greenbacks) from my orderly sergeant Wm. Miller but was refused. I then tried my friend Hiram Arnett, Co. A and received it with the offer of more. I also got eight lbs flour at 10 cents per lb. on credit from one of the cooks (Farwell alias Gunner). I took half of it over to No. 49 to Pa and he made me some well shortened pie dough, and I spent most of the day making pies, etc. The cooks barked them for me. I tried to get Smiler the guard to get me a quarters worth of raisins at the sutler store in the Federal square, but he refused saying that it was positively forbidden to buy anything for the prisoners. I made my purchases of our sutler. Another lot of new prisoners arrived and about 40 crowded into our barrack. All of the bottom bunks and some of the middle and top bunks had to double up three to the bunk. I and Henry did not have to take an extra man in. The men call the new prisoners “The new issue”. They brought a good deal of the new issue of Confederate money. It only sells for a cent on the dollar in green backs, as there is no prospect for an exchange.51 We sang. The Girl I Left behind Me.

Sunday December 25th, 1864. Weather cold. Thawing a little under foot.

’Tis the glorious Christmas day.
When Christ our Lord was born they say
Hence everyone should love the same
And honor this the day he came.

I heard but two or three persons catching Christmas gifts. Things went on in the same dull monotonous way as usually characterizes the daily pursuits of prison life, but few even thought of having anything extra for dinner. The barrack was cleaned out and everything hanging up had to be taken down and laid in the bunks. There was no in-

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51 The “new issue” is apparently the paper currency issued as part of the Funding Act of February 17, 1864. This measure, which failed, was designed to reduce the amount of currency in circulation and authorize new notes and bonds to help curb rising prices by contracting the currency. John Christopher Schwab, The Confederate States of America, 1861-1865: A Financial and Industrial History of the South during the Civil War (New York, 1961), 64-75.
spection and we hung our things up again. When dinner was ready I
sent Henry over to invite Pa and his bunk mate Fleming Rice to din-
ner. Dinner over, and my guests expressed themselves well pleased.
I had plenty and enough left for Henry and myself to snack on for the
next week. My Bill of Fare was as follows:
Boiled Beef
Biscuit with shorting Molasses
Tea " sugar Chip beef
Potatoes " butter Cheese
Soft Bread Salt, pepper & vinegar.

Delicacies.

Prune Pie Tarts
Apple " Ginger cake
Onion " Spice "
Potatoe " Apples
Vinegar "

In the evening some of the men borrowed a fiddle and had dancing for
a couple of hours. We had tea, biscuits, and spice cake for supper.
Capt. McDonald has been superseded by Capt. Hastings, who now
takes charge of the prison square. The committee for the prisoners
revised their papers and got them forwarded to Gen. Beall. They say
they expect to receive some of the things by the first of June next.

Thursday December 29th, 1864. Weather cold. Nothing of interest.
We save the beef we get at breakfast and dinner and cut it up fine
with an onion and a potatoe or two in a half gallon stew pot then add
a pint and a half of water and cook it, thickening it with flour and
bread. It is then set aside and warmed up for breakfast next morn-
ing, as breakfast is issued immediately after roll call.

Friday December 30th, 1864. Weather cold. Every morning as soon
as the fires are made the men that have hash to warm up for break-
fast commence speaking for a place on the stove. The man that makes
the fire always comes on first, and the balance come on as they speak
first as 2d, 3d, 4th, etc. We eat our half gallon of hash with the two
thirds of a lot of bread we draw. For dinner we have a snack of pie
and biscuit extra and save one third of a loaf of bread for our break-
fast dish. (the hash)

Saturday December 31st, 1864. Weather dry and cold. The butler
has sold out or removed all the eatables and other things that the regu-

lations do not allow him to sell. The U. S. Inspectors are expected
here to inspect the camp for the next two or three days. When they
are gone the Butler will commence filling up the store again. As it is
now it looks like a Yankee peddler stand. Stock light and easily moved.
As I have some materials left from our Christmas dinner I concluded
to have something extra for a New Year’s dinner. Pa made me some
well shortened dough and I spent part of the day making pies, etc.
Henry and myself have had onions and potatoes in our hash all week,
also a piece of pie and a couple of biscuits each every day at dinner for
a week, making our rations hold out so that we had plenty to eat.
Smiler (the guard) came in and raised a terrible fuss about the barrack
being dirty. He made us fold our ticks back and fold our blankets
nicely on top of the ticks. We also took down everything hanging up
the carpet bags, cloths, etc. and pack them in our bunks. All of our
cookery ware, such as tin stew pots, plates, cups, etc. had to be
scoured a new and taken to the kitchen. Then the detail cleaned the
barrack and we waited for the U. S. Inspectors, but dinner time
passed and the guard said that we would not be inspected today. The
night was milder than it has been for a month. Farewell to 1864.
Long to be remembered by the prisoners now at Camp Douglas.

The old year is dying
Its breath comes faint and slow
And its aged form on the cold earth lying
Is wrapt in a sheet of snow
Then 'at the bells toll for its weary soul is ebbing fast away
And its lonesome ghoul is by its side
While the death pans play with the old man's frame and he smiles with pride.
At each painful moan, each rattling groan
For the grinning watcher is waiting its own.

52 Joshua H. Hastings was captain of Company B, Fifteenth Regiment, Veteran