

**LIBBY, ANDERSONVILLE, FLORENCE.
THE CAPTURE, IMPRISONMENT,
ESCAPE AND RESCUE OF JOHN
HARROLD, A UNION SOLDIER IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION**

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JOHN HARROLD

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THE

CAPTURE,

IMPRISONMENT, ESCAPE AND RESCUE

OF

JOHN HARROLD,

A UNION SOLDIER IN THE WAR OF THE REBELLION.

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF PRISON LIFE AMONG THE REBELS
—THE TREATMENT OF UNION PRISONERS—
THEIR PRIVATIONS AND SUFFERINGS.

PHILADELPHIA:

WM. B. SELEWICK, Printer, N. W. cor. Fifth and Chestnut Streets.
1870.

1874
DEDICATED,

WITH RESPECT AND WARM FEELINGS OF GRATITUDE,

TO

General William T. Sherman,

NEW YORK, N. Y.

WHO RESCUED ME IN MY FLIGHT FROM THE HORRIBLE PRISON
PEN OF FLORENCE, BROUGHT ME WITHIN THE LINES
OF THE UNION ARMY, AND ENABLED ME TO
REACH MY

HOME AND FAMILY IN SAFETY.

JOHN HAROLD.

INTRODUCTION.

I have often been solicited to publish the details of my experience in the army during the Rebellion, including an account of my capture, imprisonment, and the perilous incidents connected with my escape; but a feeling of diffidence long restrained me, until I reflected that the record of a father's services, in the trying scenes of that period, was the only legacy I could leave to my five boys—four of whom were born before I enlisted.

I shall enter into no description of the battles in which I participated, because I know that abler historians have performed that task better than I could. Nor can I give precise dates of all that occurred, from the fact that I was robbed of my diary by a rebel officer while a prisoner.

My ignorance of the country through which I traveled prevents me from naming counties or districts; and I could only guess at distances, except where I received information from others.

My purpose is, to give a plain and truthful narrative of facts as they occurred, and as they were seen

from a soldier's stand-point. I might have added a great deal that was irrelevant, but none the less interesting, to this sketch, by commenting upon much that I saw and heard; but so much has been written by others that I deemed it unwise to make the attempt. I only seek to discharge a duty I owe to my children in penning this narrative; but if its perusal should serve to add to the pleasure of an idle hour, or give the public a higher appreciation of our citizen soldiery—their patriotism and devotion to the Union—it will prove as gratifying to myself as to my friends, who induced me to make the venture.

JOHN HARROLD.

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

THE
Capture, Imprisonment, Escape and Rescue
OF
JOHN HARROLD.

CHAPTER I.

ENLISTMENT—DRILLING—PICKET DUTY.

In common with thousands who left home, family and friends, I responded to the call of President Lincoln for volunteers, in July, 1862. I was but a journeyman mechanic, with a wife and four small children dependent upon me for support. I confess I was unpleasantly situated to think of entering the army, and many pronounced me rash and thoughtless to leave them partially unprovided for; but, after consulting with my wife, whose patriotic feelings seemed to overcome all apprehensions, she gave a reluctant consent. "Wait till you are drafted," was the advice of many warm friends, as they pointed to a toiling mother and four almost helpless children.

This agreed with my notions of interest and comfort, but not with my sense of duty to my country. No matter what may be a man's position in life, he must be callous, indeed—dead to every patriotic impulse—if he can passively witness gigantic efforts to destroy this Union without extending an arm to save it.

Feeling thus, I made what provision I could for my family, and volunteered under the first call for three years' service—joining the 138th Pennsylvania Regiment, which was organized August 16th, 1862, at Harrisburg, under the command of Col. C. L. K. Sumwalt. I was enrolled in Company A, M. R. McClellan, captain.

From the 16th to the 30th of August, the regiment was drilling, equipping, and making the necessary arrangements to take the field, for which we started on the day last mentioned, and reached Baltimore on the 31st. Our colonel reported to Major General Wool, who assigned us to duty at the Relay House, known as the junction of the Washington and Baltimore and Ohio Railroads.

It was here that my first experience as a soldier commenced, by going on picket duty in regular order. In this capacity there is much of exposure, no little danger, and many privations to be endured,—including loss of sleep, hunger, wearing wet clothes, &c., all of which is readily comprehended by those familiar with a soldier's life. On one occasion, I was detailed, with some twenty others, for special duty of a confi-

deputal character. We accomplished all that was required of us to the satisfaction of our superior officers, and returned to our command in safety. But, in the nine months we remained at the Relay House, we had many pleasant seasons of relief, which we seldom found afterward. False alarms, the sudden call to arms, and the jokes incident to these "camp scares," afforded the "boys" no little amusement.