

**A GLIMPSE OF
ANDERSONVILLE AND
OTHER WRITINGS**

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A Glimpse of Andersonville and Other Writings by Francis J. Hosmer

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View from Main Gate, Andersonville.
ISSUING RATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

The matter contained in this little volume has been previously published. Many calls for parts of it in permanent form has led to this result. Profoundly impressed with the importance of patriotic teaching, I have striven to entertain the young. Finding myself actuated and sustained through a long service in the army by those impulses which were planted and nurtured in my youth, I have hoped to implant in the breast of another a germ of the same flower—it is one of the few whose fragrance grows sweeter with life's declining sun. If I succeed, it is all I hope for and much more than I have reason to expect, but the effort shall be no longer deferred.

I have inserted two half-tone views of the only lot that were ever taken of Andersonville, and they will be of interest. They were made by order of the Confederate War department, by A. J. Riddell of Macon, Ga., on the 17th day of August '64, while I was an inmate. The pictures of my companion and myself, were taken in the uniform in which we were captured.

THE AUTHOR.

ANDERSONVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPTURE AT REAM STATION JUNE 23^d, 1864.—THE ANNIHILATION OF THE 4TH. VERMONT REGIMENT.—TRANSFER TO LIBBY PRISON.—THE MARCH TO DANVILLE.—THE PLAN TO ESCAPE.—THE PERPLEXITIES OF A DULL TABLE KNIFE.—THE HOLE FINALLY CUT IN THE DOOR.—THE JUMP FROM THE TRAIN.—SAFE SO FAR.—BUT WHAT NEXT.—THE NORTH STAR, NOT WHERE IT USED TO BE.—AT LAST IN TOUCH WITH THE INFINITE.

["Thousands of our boys in blue were prisoners of war and suffered privations, in southern prison pens, that form the darkest chapter in the history of the great rebellion. Occasionally there were attempts at escape, but rarely did these breaks for freedom succeed. The following narrative, which has been written at our request, is the experience of a veteran of Edwin E. Day Post, and will be read with interest."]

About 6 o'clock p. m., on the 23rd of June, 1864, a small scouting party of about 400 men, of whom the writer was one, was surrounded by Mahone's division and captured while in the act of tearing up the Weldon railroad at Ream Station, about six miles below Petersburg, Va. One hundred and thirty-nine of the number were from the 4th Vermont Regiment and it was substantially all there was left of a regiment, which fifty days before had crossed the Rapidan with about five hundred and fifty men present for duty.

It seemed to be a fit sequel to the history of the old regiment, whose every move on that campaign had brought it one step nearer annihilation. Of that one hundred and thirty-nine men of the 4th Vermont, seventy-one of them never returned, and it was in view of some such probable outcome that I decided at once not to report at Andersonville, if there was any way to prevent it. A few days later that detachment of prisoners was quartered in Libby prison, awaiting orders for transportation south. Hunter at this time had destroyed the bridge at Branchville and made it necessary to proceed via Lynchburgh, and accordingly, on June 30th, the detachment was sent to Lynchburgh and from there required to march to Danville, a distance of sixty miles. On July 2d the column was well under way and while speculation as to our destination was rife among the men, it disclosed the fact that I was not alone in my determination to escape.

Among those most likely to be in earnest in the matter was my old friend H. I. Gorham, a corporal of our company. I think we were each a little surprised at the audacity of our undertaking as we began to formulate plans, and measure as near as we could the chances of success. Neither was disposed to be rash, but each was willing to take an even chance with death in preference to the hospitality of the Confederate authorities.

We toiled along that sultry road and watched our opportunity both day and night, but the guards were too vigilant. July 4th, the last day of the march, brought us into Danville just at night. Two nights in one of the tobacco warehouses, awaiting transportation, and on the night of the 6th the journey is resumed. About 6 o'clock p. m., a train of cars, consisting of an engine, tender, and one box car at the head, followed by about twenty flat cars, was backed in for its load of prisoners. It happened that my companion and myself, were near the head and were placed in the box car with ninety-three others beside the guards.

The flat cars were quickly loaded, a guard placed on each of the four corners of each car and the relief guard mount to the top of the box car we were in—and the train starts for the