

**THE PRISONERS' MEMOIRS: OR, DARTMOOR  
PRISON; CONTAINING A COMPLETE AND  
IMPARTIAL HISTORY OF THE ENTIRE CAPTIVITY  
OF THE AMERICANS IN ENGLAND. ALSO, A  
PARTICULAR DETAIL OF ALL OCCURRENCES  
RELATIVE TO THAT HORRID MASSACRE AT  
DARTMOOR**

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The Prisoners' Memoirs: Or, Dartmoor Prison; Containing a Complete and Impartial History of the Entire Captivity of the Americans in England. Also, a Particular Detail of All Occurrences Relative to That Horrid Massacre at Dartmoor by Anonymous

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**ANONYMOUS**

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RELATIVE TO THAT HORRID MASSACRE AT  
DARTMOOR**



THE PRISONERS' MEMOIRS,  
OR  
DARTMOOR PRISON;

CONTAINING A COMPLETE AND IMPARTIAL HISTORY OF

*The Entire Captivity of the Americans in England,*

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE LAST WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED  
STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN, UNTIL ALL PRISONERS WERE  
RELEASED BY THE TREATY OF GHENT.

Also, a particular detail of all occurrences relative to the  
HORRID MASSACRE AT DARTMOOR,

*On the fatal evening of the 6th of April, 1815.*

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THE WHOLE CAREFULLY  
COMPILED BY A PRISONER IN ENGLAND.

Who was a Captive during the whole War.

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*Quæque ipse miseris vidi,  
Et quorum pars magna fui; quis talia fando,  
Temporet a lacrymis? Virg. I., li., v. 5.*

"These sufferings I myself have seen, and to the greater part of which I was a principal party. Who can relate such woes without a tear?"

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NEW YORK:  
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1852.

## P R E F A C E .

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The following pages are presented to the public by one of the survivors of this worst of prisons, believing it will be read with deep interest by every American, and by every relative and friend of those who happened to be one of the unfortunate inmates of the Dartmoor Prison.

If any part of the work should be found languid and tedious, it must be wholly attributed to the suffering situation of the author; the vigor and vivacity of whose mind was greatly affected by those of the body. If misery is less interesting collectively in groups than when viewed individually, let the reader single out one, and view him, separately, through the iron grating, and see him, pale and feeble, leaning upon a stick, with a rusty nail, another notch, which adds to his calendar another of those dismal days and nights he had spent in confinement; he may view him till he sees the iron enter his soul before he turns from him, and then say—it was my son, my brother, or my friend!—he will then have a picture interesting enough to his feelings.

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CERTIFICATE.

WE, the undersigned, late prisoners of war, having been confined the greater part of the last war between the United States of America and Great Britain, and having carefully perused and examined the following Manuscript Journal, kept by Charles Andrews, our fellow-prisoner at Dartmoor, in the County of Devon, in the kingdom of Great Britain, do solemnly declare, that all matter and occurrences herein contained, are just and true, to the best of our knowledge and belief; and that this is the only Journal kept at Dartmoor.

|                               |           |                     |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Capt. Joshua Wnit,            | - - - - - | New-York.           |
| Capt. Samuel H. Ginnodo,      | - - - - - | Newport, R. I.      |
| Capt. Frederick H. Coffin,    | - - - - - | Hudson, N. Y.       |
| Mr. Joseph C. Morgan,         | - - - - - | Newport, R. I.      |
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| Mr. Jacob Evans,              | - - - - - | Baltimore, Md.      |
| Capt. Benjamin F. Chesbrough, | - - - - - | — Conn.             |
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| Mr. John Merrill,             | - - - - - | Portland, Maine.    |
| Capt. Charles Bennet,         | - - - - - | Hudson, N. Y.       |
| Mr. William Griffin,          | - - - - - | Salem, Mass.        |
| Mr. James Bowie,              | - - - - - | do. do.             |
| Mr. John F. Foster,           | - - - - - | Gloucester, Mass.   |
| Mr. Joseph Clark,             | - - - - - | Cape-Elizabeth, do. |
| Mr. John Stafford,            | - - - - - | Boston, Mass.       |
| Mr. Charles Whitewood,        | - - - - - | New-York.           |
| Mr. Reuben Bunn,              | - - - - - | do.                 |
| Mr. Samuel Rossett,           | - - - - - | do.                 |
| Mr. Jacob F. Taylor,          | - - - - - | Philadelphia.       |
| Mr. William Conklin,          | - - - - - | New-York.           |
| Mr. Samuel S. Brush,          | - - - - - | do.                 |

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|                         |           |                     |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
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| Mr. John Maigh,         | - - - - - | Boston, Mass.       |
| Mr. Edward Shaw,        | - - - - - | Baltimore, Md.      |
| Lieut. S. S. Fitch,     | - - - - - | —— Connecticut.     |
| Mr. Samuel Correy,      | - - - - - | —— Vermont.         |
| Mr. Samuel Howard,      | - - - - - | Baltimore, Md.      |
| Mr. William Clark,      | - - - - - | Boston, Mass.       |
| Mr. Joseph Pondick,     | - - - - - | do.                 |
| Mr. Samuel Morrison,    | - - - - - | New-York.           |
| Mr. William Hull,       | - - - - - | do.                 |
| Mr. William Atkins,     | - - - - - | —— Connecticut.     |
| Mr. Daniel Hotchkiss,   | - - - - - | Salem, Mass.        |
| Mr. Thomas Carlton,     | - - - - - | Boston, do.         |
| Mr. John Migat,         | - - - - - | Warren, R. I.       |
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| Capt. James McQuilter,  | - - - - - | do. do.             |
| Mr. John S. Miller,     | - - - - - | do. do.             |
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| Mr. Frederick G. Low,   | - - - - - | Cape-Ann.           |
| Mr. Henry Ball,         | - - - - - | —— Connecticut.     |
| Doct. Benjamin Mercer,  | - - - - - | New-York.           |
| Mr. Reuben Sherman,     | - - - - - | —— Mass.            |

N. B.—Out of the above list there are, at this time, only nine survivors, as far as can be ascertained.



## THE PRISONERS' MEMOIRS,

OR

# DARTMOOR PRISON.

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THE war between the United States of America and Great Britain, which has been so costly in blood and treasure, and agonized the hearts of so many thousands of our fellow-beings, was formally declared, by a proclamation issued by the President of the United States, in conformity with a solemn act of the supreme legislature of the nation, on the eighteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twelve. The nations were, by this act, at open hostilities, and began to capture each other's vessels upon the high seas, wherever found. I myself happened to be so unfortunate as to be among the first captives brought into England. On our first arrival there, we were all collected from different ports, and confined in different prisons. Some were sent to Chatham, some to Hamoze, and others to Portsmouth; where a strict examination took place as to their nativity and citizenship. After the examination, the officers who were entitled to their parole, (such as commanders and first lieutenants of privateers mounting fourteen guns, commanders and first mates of merchantmen, non-combatants, &c.) received it, and were sent to the little village of Ashburton, in Devonshire, or Reading, in Berkshire; the former is situated about twenty-six miles inland from Plymouth, and the principal place of confinement for paroled officers. The town of Ashburton is pleasantly situated in a healthy and fertile part of the country, where every article of provision is more easily obtained and at a much cheaper rate than in many other parts of the kingdom. Here all the officers on parole had their names registered, and particular personal description taken of them. They had allowed them by the British government one shilling and six pence, which is equal to thirty-three and a quarter cents, money of the United States, per day each man. With

this small allowance, great numbers of paroled officers were compelled entirely to subsist, for having no other dependence and no friends in this country, they were obliged to purchase clothing, board, and lodging, and all other necessaries of life, and to make use of every economy to prevent themselves from suffering, notwithstanding the cheapness of provisions, and the facility of obtaining them. They were permitted, during the day, to walk one mile on the turnpike road towards London or Plymouth, and at a certain early hour every evening they had to retire to their respective lodgings, and there to remain till next morning; those were their general restrictions for all the days in the week, except two, on which every officer must answer at a particular place appointed by their keepers, in the presence of their agent or inspector. In this manner some hundreds of officers were compelled to drag out a tedious existence in a state of painful solicitude for their country, their homes and families, during the greater part of the late war.

But the condition of the officers on parole was enviable indeed, when compared with that of the officers and others not entitled to that privilege. Every such person taken under the flag of the United States, were sent to some one of the places before mentioned, and confined on board prison ships. The greatest number were sent to the *Hector* and *La Brave*, two line of battle ships which were unfit for his majesty's service at sea, and were now used for the confinement of prisoners of war. These were placed under the command of a lieutenant, master's mate, midshipman, and about twenty invalid seamen; there is also a guard under the command of a lieutenant, ensign, and corporal, consisting of thirty-five soldiers to each of these ships.

The *Hector* and *La Brave* lie about two miles from Plymouth, well moored by chain moorings. Captain Edward Pelew, of the royal navy, the agent for prisoners of war, resides at this place. On the reception of all prisoners into their respective prison ships, they were obliged to undergo a strict examination concerning their birth, place of residence, and age; a complete and minute description of their person in all respects was taken down in writing. After the examination, there was delivered to each man a very coarse and worthless hammock, with a thin coarse bed-sack, with at most not more than three or four pounds of flops or chopped rags, one thin coarse and sleazy blanket; this furniture of the *bed-*

*chamber* was to last for a year and a half before we could draw others. After the distribution of the bedding, we were informed of the rules and restrictions which we must strictly observe. Every ship has a physician attached to it, who is ever to be on board, and when any prisoner is sick, he is to repair immediately to a certain part of the ship for medical aid; but seldom has he any attention paid him till the moment of dissolution, the doctors paying but little attention to the suffering prisoners, although a prisoner is seldom or never suffered to expire on board; for at the moment death seems inevitably approaching, the prisoner is removed to a ship lying near by, called the *hospital ship*, where if he happen to survive the removal, he receives much better treatment and attendance; but when once removed to that ship, they may bid adieu to their fellow-prisoners, and most of them to sublunary things; for not more than one out of ten ever recovers.

We were then informed, that the Transport Board had most *graciously* and *humanely*, for the health and happiness of the prisoners, imposed on them the following duty; to keep clean the ship's decks and hold; to hoist in water, provisions, coal, and every other article expended or used in the ship; and also to permit the prisoners to cook their own victuals, which consisted of the following rations allowed by the English government: To each man one pound and a half of very poor coarse bread, half a pound of beef, including the bone, one-third of an ounce of salt, and the same quantity of barley, with one or two turnips, per man. These were the rations for five days in the week; the other two were fish days, the rations for which were one pound of salt fish, the same weight of potatoes, and the usual allowance of bread.

The confinement, and this scanty and meager diet for men who were brought up in a land of liberty, and ever used to feast on the luscious fruits of plenty, soon brought on a pale and sickly countenance, a feeble and dejected spirit, and a lean, half animate body. This bad state of living, I solemnly believe, has been the serious cause of inducing many valuable citizens of the United States to enter the king's service, to the great injury of their country.

The prisoners are counted every night as they are ordered below by the guard; and every morning, about sunrise, each prisoner is obliged to "take up his bed and walk;" for he is ordered to shoulder his hammock and go on deck, and\*be-