

Columbia Jail, S.C. January 20, 1862

General Huger: Commanding Confederate Forces, Norfolk, Va

Dear Sir:

I have just received a note from my wife which greatly increases my anxiety for an immediate exchange. I have received an appointment to the presidency of a college in Oregon which I propose to accept. I wish to make arrangements for a early removal thither as possible.

Can you do anything toward obtaining my release. If you are unable to do anything yourself will ~~me~~ you please communicate the facts to the authorities at Richland and likewise at Washington? Captain ~~Shiver~~ Shiver will add a note to this upon the same subject. Hoping for a favorable and speedy issue of the matter, I am etc.

Geo. W. Dodge, Chaplain, Eleventh
Regiment, New York Volunteers

Jan. 27, 1862

Respectfully referred to Major General Wool who has been previously informed that the Government of the Confederate States is ready to exchange prisoners on the usual terms of civilized nations

Benj. Huger,
major-general, commanding.

Columbia Jail S.C. Feb. 6, 1862

Hon Elijah Ward:

My Dear Sir: Having been a prisoner of war nearly seven months I have thought proper to address you on behalf of my fellow prisoners and myself..

Until recently the field officers particularly were confined in the condemned cells at ~~Charleston~~ Charleston jail. In the way of comfort the Tombs in New York are a palace compared to them; our fare coarse but good.

We have been thus confined on account of the privateers in ~~retaliation~~ retaliation for the treatment they experienced at the hands of our government. Now I have nothing to say in regard to their reputation or conducts but this I will say is the first case of the kind where colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors have been held for common seamen,

There are a number of New York City officers...As for the field officers who are at present confined with me, viz Col. Michael Corcoran, New York City; Colonel Woodruff, Kentucky, Lieutenant Col. Neff, Col. O.B. Wilcox, Michigan and myself, hailing from New York and California - we neither expect an exchange or release from our present most unpleasant position until the privateers are placed in same relation as other prisoners of war.

If the Government intends to hang them (the privateers) you will oblige by ascertaining about the time this happy event for us is to take place, for in that case we can look forward to something definite and besides I require a short time for preparation.

P.S. Anything would be preferable to this most intolerable suspense which we have been in for the last four months. ...James D. Potter

Major, Thirty-Eighth New York
Volunteers.

Maryland:

War of ^Rebellion, Series II, Vol III

p 243

Fort Lafayette, February 6, 1862

Hon William H. Seward, secretary of State:

Dear Sir: I was captured on the privateer , Petrel, and being a native of Western Maryland I do not desire to again go South on any condition and am willing to take the oath of allegiance in order to be released.

I was in Charleston, S.C. when the war commenced and was cut off from all communication with my friends in Maryland, and the consequence was

I had to do something for a living and joined the Petrel, for if I had even so much as spoken in favor of the United States Government I would have been tarred and feathered and cast into prison and otherwise treated badly, as the feelings in the south at the time was very strong against Union Men.

My Uncle, Col. Thomas Hammond is a member of the Maryland Legislature at present and ex-Governor Thomas, now a member of Congress from the Sixth District of Maryland is also previously acquainted with Colonel Hammond.

There are also there others here who desire to take the oath, and request me whilst writing to you to also mention their names, Richard Lewis, a native of New York, and Thomas A. Brookhanks, a native of Philadelphia. They are both from the Petrel and joined through motives similar to myself. The other is Thomas Quigley of the Jeff Davis, who was previously on board her.G.H. Marriott

New York, February 26, 1862

Hon E.M. Stanton, Secretary of War: Sir: Having just returned from the South where I was for more than three months a prisoner of war, I deem it my duty to inform you how (p 324) I and other prisoners similarly situated were treated during the term of our imprisonment.

I left New York on the 24th October in command of the steamer Osceola, a transport belonging to the Sherman expedition. The steamer foundered in the gale of November 2.

With the crew I landed in two boats at Georgetown, S.C. We were taken prisoners on landing by Captain Godbold of the South Carolina troops. After remaining two days on North Island I was transferred to Charleston and my men to the Marion Court House jail. While in the Charleston guard house I had good quarters and could get anything that I ordered.

The commanding officer was brutal in his treatment; the others were kind and gentlemanly.

I was transferred to the jail about the 27th November and put in a room with three Federal officers. The others who belonged to our mess, Colonels Willcox, Woodruff, Neff and Major Potter, were kept in their cells (the condemned) in the tower. Our fare consisted of half a pound of meat (bone included) and three biscuits daily; two ounces of coffee for five days and other small stores in proportion; the fuel was altogether insufficient to cook our provisions, being one small stick of yellow pine for two days for the whole mess. Those of us who were not in the condemned cells had the run of the yard from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; those of our number who were in the condemned cells had not the use of halls, nor were the rest of us allowed to go to visit the tower.

When the fire occurred in Charleston we were locked in our cells and remained unvisited and without food until 5 o'clock of the next day. We all suffered from the smoke and confinement. It was so light during the night that notwithstanding the smoke I could read fine print.

In cells next to ours were confined five murderers, condemned. They were offered their liberty if they would join the Southern army but they refused. Our treatment was severe and when we were ordered to be transferred to Columbia we were told to expect still worse fare and greater privations. But in this we were happily disappointed.

We reached Columbia on the 1st of January and at once marched to the jail of the town. It is an ordinary brick building, three stories in height and twenty by forty feet. The outer windows are well barred and secured. The yard in the rear, surrounded by a fence twenty feet high, is twenty by fifty feet. Confined in this building were including myself 310 Northern citizens. Thirty two of our number, ranking as officers had the lower floor and occupied its six rooms, the remaining 278 of our number occupied the other two stories less two small rooms devoted to other purposes. Extreme ventilation was necessary for comfort. Our rations of meat and bread were double what they had been at Charleston but we had no coffee or vegetables. Our treatment was good and the officers were kind and gentlemanly. While there \$300 was sent me from New Orleans by a friend and \$300 from New York. If these sums I was allowed to receive \$100.

Among our prisoners was Captain Nichols of the brig E.K. Eaton who was taken prisoner by the privateer Sallie which it is well known had no commission. Captain Nichols had been very badly treated, being kept on low rations, being furnished with bread alone which he was expected to trade off for bull beef.

He intrusted his sextant with an officer named McDowell who was at times in charge of the jail, which he was to sell. He did so and never returned the proceeds to Captain Nichols. The same dishonest practice was exercised upon Colonel Corcoran as regard to a watch he wished to dispose of for the benefit of himself and his fellow prisoners.

Lieutenant Dempsey of the Sixty ninth New York Volunteers was also the victim of their special ire on account of a letter which he managed to send out of the prison" through the underground."....

they are especially afraid of Colonel Corcoran on account of his influence among the Irish. It was the impression of the South Carolinians whom we saw and Irish soldiers who stood guard over us said "that Corcoran could rally the Irish of Charleston to fight with him under the old flag."

...I left 307 in the jail at Columbia and ^{none} ~~more~~ of the names of my fellowprisoners have appeared in the last two lists of returned federal soldiers....

J.T. Morrill, Late Master of

Steamer Osceola

War Department, Washington D.C. April 5, 1862

Ordered: That Maj. Gen. John A. Dix, commanding at Baltimore, be and he is authorized and empowered at his discretion--

1-to assume and exercise control over the police of the city of Baltimore; to supersede and remove the civil police or any part thereof and establish a military police in said city.

2-to arrest and imprison disloyal persons, declare martial law and suspend the writ of habeas corpus in the city of Baltimore or any part of his command, and to exercise and perform all military power, ~~and~~ function and authority that may he may deem proper for the safety of his command or to secure obedience and respect to the authority and Government of the United States.

By order of the president

Edwin M. Stanton, secretary of War.

miscellaneous. War of Rebellion, Series II, Vol III p 449

Headquarters District of Central Missouri

Jefferson City Mo, April 13, 1862.

Thomas Stone, Esq. Jefferson City Mo.

Sir: The provost marshal has been authorized to release you from arrest.

You are cautioned that entertaining rebels is punishable by death by the laws of war, and that anything of that sort which may be hereafter found as being committed will be cause for arrest and trial.

The law makes no distinction of sex in these matters and accordingly both sexes are cautioned to conduct themselves with circumspection in such matters.

James Totten

Brigadier-General, Commanding district.

1...the entire camp (Morton) will be divided into thirty divisions, each under charge of a chief selected by the companies composing the division from among the first sergeants of companies.

At the bugle call for first sergeants they will report themselves at headquarters.

These chiefs of divisions will draw up the provision returns for their divisions, care for and be responsible for the general appearance police and welfare of their divisions.

The first fifteen will constitute a board of appeal for hearing of grievances, settlement and punishment of misdemeanors, subject to the approval of the commander of the post. The other fifteen will form a like court for the remaining fifteen divisions.

3-Among crimes and misdemeanors against which first sergeants are expected to guard and which they will punish on detection are counterfeiting the commandant's, doctor's adjutant's or chaplain's hands for requisitions, making improper use of premises, refusing to take a reasonable share in the details according to the roster, selling to the sutler any articles issued to them as clothing, appropriating things belonging to others or insulting sentinels.

The prisoners' returns will be handed in for approval at 10 a.m. each alternate day previous to the one on which the issue is made.

The issue of tobacco and stationery will be made on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m. by the chaplain, as well as the distribution of the reading matter. Letters will be given out between 2 and 3 p.m. and mailed between 3 and 4 p.m.

5-Daily inspections will be made by the commandant or officer of the day to see that the policing so essential to health has been thoroughly performed.

the inside chain of soldiers, except a small patrol with sidearms, will be removed and the quiet and good order of the camp as well as the policing for health and comfort for construction of new sinks when necessary and the daily throwing in of lime and mold to prevent bad odors will be entirely under the supervision of the sergeants of prisoners.

Vessels for the washing of clothes and ropes for clotheslines will be furnished and no bed or other clothing will be put on roof tops or on fences.

Prisoners will be carefully ~~xxx~~ avoid interrupting sentinels in the discharge of their duty, and especially will not curse them, use abusive language or climb onto fences or trees, as the sentinels are ordered to fire if such an offense occurs after three positive and distinct orders to desist, even in daytime. At night only one warning will be given to any one climbing on the fence tops.

A prisoner's fund will be created by the deduction as heretofore of small amounts from the rations of beef, bread, beans etc. a schedule of which will be placed at the commissary department. This fund will be used for the purchase of tobacco, stationery, stamps and such other articles as the chiefs of divisions may report and which should be drawn on requisitions handed in by first sergeants between 9 and 10 a.m.

Every ~~one~~ endeavor will be made by the commandant to give each and every prisoner as much liberty and comfort as is consistent with orders received and with an equal distribution of the means at disposal provided such indulgence never leads to any abuse of privilege.

(Camp Morton, Indianapolis) April 18, 1862.

Johnson's Island--raid..War of Rebellion, Series II, Vol III, p 657

Sandwich, June 6, 1862, James Gordon Bennett, esq. New York City

Sir: The contents of this letter I wish you would forward to the Secretary of War if you think best. Th

There is a scheme on foot here and on the otherside of the river between some Southern sympathizers and Marylanders to liberate the rebel prisoners on Johnson's Island. They have agreed upon a plan at last. Their first plan was to charter a steamcraft and the boat was actually fitted up for ~~the~~ the purpose as far as running was concerned, she not having been in commission for some years. This plan, was , however abandoned on account of its being necessary to let the crew in the secret and for the large expense the loss of the boat would entail upon the party besides implicating the owner. Attention would be drawn more to a steamer entering the bay than a sail vessel etc.

Their plan now is to purchase an old sail vessel which one of their party is to own and which he is to say was stolen. This vessel is to be placed at some point in or near the River Detroit. T

One of the party disguised is to engage a powerful tug to go for this vessel so as to arrive alongside after dark when a party from the vessel are to board the tug, make prisoners of the crew, take charge, tow the vessel to Sandusky Bay, surprise the guard, liberate the prisoners who are to be informed beforehand if possible, place them on the vessel, tow her to Canada where they will be landed.

The vessel will then be set adrift the tug's crew liberated and the tug given up to them again. This plan will be carried out as soon as things can be gotten in readiness.

Canadian

N.B. For strong prudential reasons I must use a nom de plume. I will however call at the Herald office in autumn when my business will take me to New York. This will be mailed at Detroit or Niagara Falls.

Johnson's Island

Series II, Vol III, p 985

Washington City, D.C. , October 14, 1864 Col. W. Hoffman,
commissary-general of prisoners. Sir: The Secretary of War directs that
you open a telegraphic communication with Major-General Dix on the subject
and if Fort Warren in Boston Harbor is available for the confinement of the
rebel general officers now confined at Johnson's Island, you are
instructed to remove them from the latter to the former place, taking
~~xxx~~ especial care that they do not escape.

Very Respectfully, your obedient
servant, , E.A. Hitchcock , Major-General of volunteers.

Prisoners: War of Rebellion Series II, Vol III p 8
Quartermaster-General's Office, Washington, July 12, 1861
Hon. Simon Cameron, Secretary of War:

Sir: As in the conflict now commenced it is to be expected that the United States will have to take care of large numbers of prisoners of war I respectfully call to your attention to the propriety of making some arrangements in time.

At present persons arrested on suspicion of disloyalty are kept in in the common jail at Washington. I am endeavoring to procure some building here more suitable for their temporary safe-keeping. Prisoners of war are entitled to proper accommodations to courteous and respectful treatment, to one ration a day and to consideration according to rank. Heretofore when the government has had prisoners to care for a commissary of prisoners has been appointed. He keeps the muster list of prisoners, negotiates exchanges according to the cartel, sends funds to the commissary of the enemy for use of our friends in their power, and should be an accomplished gentleman, as his office is of high power and importance.

General John Mason of Virginia, father of the ex-United States Senator was commissary of prisoners for the United States during the last year. Mr Barclay, father of Mr. Harry Barclay, and the British consul at New York was the British commissary of prisoners.

The provost-marshal is the chief superintendent keeper of prisoners, but in rank and position the commissary of prisoners is much higher than the provost marshal. Large sums of money may pass through the hands of the commissary of prisoners. The negotiation of exchange of prisoners is important. A lieutenant-colonel has been exchanged for a captain and ten privates; a general for a certain number of other officers. Knowledge of military law and custom is needed in order not to offend by errors of ignorance in treating these delicate questions.

I respectfully recommend that some person be designated as commissary of prisoners, and charged with the care of the prisoners now in our hands and preparations for those likely to fall into our possession. I also recommend that one of the islands off Sandusky, known as the Put-In-Bay Islands of Lake Erie, be rented as a depot and place of confinement for prisoners of war. Arrangements should be at once made for their accommodation to avoid great embarrassment when they begin to come in.

I remain sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant

M.C. Weigs, quartermaster general

(Preliminary to Johnson's Island)

Prisoners: (Pegram)

War of the Rebellion Series II, Vol. III, Prisoners of War (shaken book)
 Beverly, Va. July 13, 1861 Col E.D. Townsend:

Have received from Pegram proposition for surrender with his officers and remnant of his command, say 600 men. Have accepted surrender agreeing to treat them with the kindness due prisoners of war, but stating that it was not in my power to relieve them from any liability incurred by taking arms against the United States. They are said to be extremely penitent and determined never again to take arms against the General Government. I shall have nearly 900 or 1,000 prisoners to take care of when Pegram comes in.

The question is an embarrassing one. Please give me immediate instructions by telegraph as to the disposition to be made of officers and men taken prisoners of war. I recommend that course as many instances calculated to produce an excellent effect upon the deluded masses of the rebels. The latest accounts make the loss of the rebels in killed some 150.

G.B. McClellan, major-general, U.S. Army

Prisoners (Oath on discharge) War of Rebellion, Series II, Vol III

p. 9

Washington, July 14, 1861

Major General McClellan, U.S. Army, Beverly Va.

You have the applause of all who are high in authority here.

Discharge all your prisoners of war under the grade of commissioned officers who shall willingly take and subscribe a general oath in these terms:

"I swear (or affirm) that I will not take up arms against the United States or serve in any military capacity whatsoever against them until regularly discharged according to the usages of war from this obligation."

As to officers among your prisoners permit all to return to their homes who willingly sign a written general parole in these words:

"We and each of us for himself severally pledge our words of honor as officers and gentlemen that we will not again take up arms against the United States nor serve in any military capacity whatsoever against them until regularly discharged according to the usages of war from this obligation."

But you will except from this privilege all officers among your prisoners who have recently been officers of the U.S. Army or Navy and who may have reason to believe left either with the intent of bearing arms against the United States. The captured officers of this description you will send to Fort McHenry.

Winfield Scott.

Quartermaster-general's office, Washington, October 3, 1861

Hon. Simon Cameron, secretary of war: Sir: I have to acknowledge the instructions of the Department to prepare a project for establishing a depot of prisoners upon one of the islands at the west end of Lake Erie and having consulted with yourself and the adjutant-general I respectfully recommend that Lieut. Col. William Hoffman, of the Eighth Infantry, an officer of rank and experience whose misfortune in having been placed in parole renders it impossible for him to take the field, be appointed commissary of prisoners and charged with the details necessary for establishing the depot.

It will be necessary for the commissary of prisoners to visit the islands and quarters, and to ascertain whether any of them of suitable size and location can be obtained on reasonable terms. If disappointed in this he should examine some other site, perhaps Madison Barracks, the barracks near Buffalo, and other points.

A guard which can perhaps be detached from the troops on parole with proper officers and an assistant quartermaster can be detailed after the site is fixed on definitely. I am etc.

M. C. Meigs, quartermaster-general.

Prisoners: Johnson's Island, War of Rebellion Series II Vol III p 49

Quartermaster General's Office , Washington, Oct. 7, 1861

Lieut. Col. William Hoffman, Eighth Infantry, New York.

Colonel: Having been appointed (Special Orders No. 284, Oct. 23, p 121) commissary of prisoners and having reported to this office for instructions by order of the Secretary of War I have the honor to request you to proceed to the group of islands known as the Put-in-Bay , and Kelley's Island, off Sandusky, in Lake Erie, and to examine them with reference to the lease of the ground upon some of them for a depot for prisoners of war. You will report which of the islands affords on the whole the greatest advantage for the location of such a depot, the price at which a suitable tract of land can be leased during the war and such other matters as may be of importance. Should other localities in that vicinity appear to you to be better fitted for the purpose you are authorized to visit them also.

You will complete this duty as soon as practicable , and returning to this city report in writing the result of your examination, making a report, also upon the steps necessary to establish a depot and prepare it for the reception and safe detention of prisoners. The locality selected should not be in a higher latitude than that of the west end of Lake Erie in order to avoid too rigorous a ~~xxxx~~ climate,

M. C. Meigs, Quartermaster-General .