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CAMP CHASE, COLUMBUS, OHIO, 1861-1865:
A STUDY OF THE UNION'S TREATMENT OF CONFEDERATE
PRISONERS OF WAR

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by
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B.A., The University of Alabama, 1978

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1990

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement).

ABSTRACT

CAMP CHASE, COLUMBUS, OHIO, 1861-1865: A study of the Union's treatment of Confederate prisoners of war, by Major Jack Morris Ivy, Jr., USAF

Camp Chase, four miles southeast of Columbus, Ohio, began in May 1861 as a mustering center for units entering Union service during the American Civil War. By June 1861 it picked up additional responsibilities of housing Confederate prisoners captured by Ohio units during the earliest military actions of the war. It eventually expanded to hold 9,423 prisoners in January, 1865, which made it one of the larger Union prison camps.

The earliest prisoners were afforded extraordinary leniency by state authorities until the Union government stepped in with rules and regulations. By October 1862, an effective system was in place to secure and care for prisoners. Success continued despite fluxuations in prison population, disease and a constant influx of captured wounded, until August 1864 when rations were reduced in retribution for Confederate treatment of Union captives.

Ration reduction caused prisoners hardships but did not markedly increase mortality. Quality medical care and sanitation kept mortality below Union Army deaths from disease.

As prison population soared during the last months of the war, increasing numbers of wounded, severely exposed and weakened captives joined Camp Chase. Reduced rations continued to pose hardships but ration reduction was offset by superb medical care and sanitation which continued to keep mortality below that experienced by the Union Army from disease.

The study confirms William B. Hesseltine's study of prisons in his book, Civil War Prisons: A study in War Psychology, and examines Confederate prisoner of war mortality, comparing it to Union soldier mortality from disease. The thesis concludes that William B. Hesseltine's thesis is partially correct when applied to Camp Chase. Prisoners were well treated up to the time rations were reduced in retaliation for alleged Confederate cruelties to Union prisoners. In spite of this, Camp Chase officials continued to stress sanitation and provide clothing late in the war even though they were not obligated to do so. This demonstrated that officials at Camp Chase were successful in managing a prisoner of war camp, even during the period of Union retaliation.

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In memory of Private Barry J. Raley, 7th Mississippi Infantry Battalion, Army of Tennessee, Confederate States of America. A brave soldier and kinsman who still rests in the soil of what was once Camp Chase.

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CHAPTER 1

THESIS AND OUTLINE

The Civil War was and still is a controversial period in our nation's history. Reasons for the war and policies of the opposing governments continue to stir interest and debate among scholars even today, 135 years after the issue was "resolved". During the war, newspapers carried headlines of atrocities, especially in the Union, after the exchange of prisoners halted and misery multiplied in Confederate prisons not equipped to handle increasing populations. Emotions and tempers flaired, then resulted in retribution on both sides.

Treatment of prisoners evoked much emotion from veterans in the years following the conflict. Personal accounts and memoirs were written by former prisoners on both sides. These accounts survived in the form of autobiographies, and articles written for veteran's magazines.

Though personal accounts abound, the victor demanded the most attention to the plight of its former prisoners. The Confederacy operated prison camps which are infamous to most Americans. The prisons at Andersonville and Libby stand out as examples of the horrors of prison life in a besieged country. Prisoners suffered because of overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, and especially from the chronic Confederate shortage of such basic supplies as food, and clothing.

The Union also operated prisoner of war camps. The names Elmira, Johnson's Island, and Camp Chase, however, are unfamiliar

to most, even many historians. The purpose of this thesis is to examine one Union camp, Camp Chase, Ohio, to determine how successful officials at Camp Chase were in managing a prisoner of war facility.

How may success be measured? Camp Chase was successful as a detention facility with 38 escapes throughout the war. Its success in this area is unquestioned. That being the case, what other measures of success may be used? Care provided for humane treatment of prisoners, evaluating such factors as food, clothing, medical care, and sanitation is an effective measure. Success in this area may be measured by subjective evaluation of historical facts and an objective evaluation of prisoner mortality, comparing it with Union armies in the field and with other Union prisoner of war camps.¹

The most balanced and credible study of prisoner of war camps during the American Civil War is William B. Hesseltine's book, Civil War Prisons: A Study In War Psychology. His basic thesis is that:

...prisoners [both North and South] were well treated by their captors in the early days of the war. But after the cessation of exchange...the prisons of the South became crowded, and the poverty of the Confederacy resulted in excessive suffering among those unfortunates who were confined in the stockades of Andersonville, Florence, Millen, Macon, and Columbia, or spent dreary days in the famed Libby prison or on Belle Isle. These conditions, being reported in the North created the belief that the prisoners were ill treated through a deliberate purpose; the inevitable hatred engendered by the war made such a belief readily credible. The result of this psychosis was that prisoners in the Northern prisons were forced to suffer in retaliation

for the alleged Southern cruelty. 2

This thesis is designed to test Hesselstine's thesis by making a detailed examination of one prison camp, something Hesselstine was unable to do because he surveyed them all, both North and South.

This study is organized into five chapters:

This chapter defines purpose, limitations, and research methods used in the study and defines terms.

Chapter 2, background, contains background information essential to the reader. It briefly describes the development of prisoner of war procedures and customs prior to the Civil War. It summarizes prisoner exchange agreements between Union and Confederate officials and describes the founding and early history of Camp Chase.

Chapter 3 covers the first surge of prisoners between February 1862 to August 1862. As the prisoner population increased dramatically, control procedures and standards developed. From August 1862 to June 1863 Camp Chase was a temporary holding facility for prisoners awaiting exchange.

Chapter 4, the final surge of prisoners, from July 1863 to the end of the war, covers a period when the population soared because the prisoner exchange ended. During this period, standards and procedures developed early in the war had come to fruition, only to be marred by restrictions imposed in retaliation for Union prisoner of war sufferings in Southern camps.

Chapter 5 analyzes data, evaluates events, and draws

conclusions.

The following definitions will assist the reader in understanding material presented in this study:

Prisoner: a Confederate prisoner of war.

Political prisoner: Private citizen placed in prison because of suspected disloyalty to the Union. Many were detained temporarily while investigations were completed, while some were detained throughout the war.

Parole: Prisoner released on oath of honor not to take up arms and fight against the releasing government. Paroled prisoners were not allowed to perform military or military related duties.

Parole arrangements: Captives were released on parole immediately after surrender; after serving some time in a prisoner of war facility; for a limited time to temporarily perform a duty outside the prison gate or for a limited time to visit friends, tend to business, etc.

Exchange: By custom and agreement, prisoners would be swapped according to a mutually agreeable formula. Paroles would often proceed exchange.

Mustering: The rallying into service of volunteers to form state or Union units.

Sutler: Private businessman authorized to sell goods within a garrison or prison camp. Goods were often sold at inflated prices.

Limitations of this study of Camp Chase as a Confederate

prisoner of war detention facility, 1861-1865, include the following:

Security procedures, escapes, and escape attempts are not addressed unless they influence attitudes, care, or otherwise had a direct impact on prisoner well being. Camp Chase was a successful detention facility. The most escapes (19) took place in September, 1863, and had an impact on all prisoners. The largest escape attempt took place on July 4, 1863, and also had an impact on the treatment of prisoners. These two events are addressed in detail within this study.

Interesting stories occur throughout diaries, letters, and memoirs of prisoners. They tell of prison life, amusements, comradery, and despair. These stories have been avoided unless they illustrate results of policy or reinforce or dispute items contained in official reports.

Political prisoners who shared the prison with Confederates at Camp Chase are not directly addressed by this study except when their numbers are used to analyse prison death statistics. Also, a few political prisoners wrote accounts of prison conditions during 1861-1862 which were used to help illustrate points.

This study illustrates and analyzes how prison commanders at Camp Chase grappled with problems of establishing a management system, dealt with conflicting guidance, and provided care for prisoners. It provides an example of how a prison system and facility came into existence during the first great war in which

Americans dealt with large numbers of captives. By studying examples taken from history, military leaders and field commanders may better understand and be better prepared to deal with problems they will face during future conflicts.

Literature and sources for information on Camp Chase may be found in the bibliography of this study.

Sources used in this study are as follows:

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Forces forms the basis of this study, supplemented by other reliable primary accounts found in records of the Ohio State Adjutant General's file, contemporary newspaper articles, prison diaries, letters, and post-war memoirs. Memoir accounts were used when they specified periods of time or referenced identifiable incidents which allowed them to be placed in chronological sequence. Secondary sources were used infrequently. When used, they were used for clarification, explanation, or for information from primary sources which were unavailable to this researcher because of time or distance.

CHAPTER 1

END NOTES

1

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CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND

As long as there has been battle, the dilemma of what to do with those captured existed. The ancient Greeks killed prisoners, while Romans made them slaves. Early Europeans held prisoners hostage for ransom.¹ Ransom ended by the American Revolution, as major European powers began following the practice of exchange. As a prelude to exchange many were paroled until the warring governments made an exchange. Imprisonment was less frequently used than parole or exchange.

By the War of 1812, the British administrator for prisoners of war was called the commissary general of prisoners. Americans adopted this office and placed it under the quartermaster general's department.² This system worked well and was formalized into army regulation and military custom. It formed a basis for the Union to deal with the prisoner of war problem during the American Civil War.

By 1861, the ideals of parole and exchange were well established but these ideas succumbed to the opinion that the war would end quickly and Lincoln's refusal to deal with the Confederacy. Lincoln was careful not to imply recognition of the Confederacy by negotiating with its officials. This included policies of exchanging prisoners of war.

In the earliest military operations in western Virginia Union militia units from Ohio captured prisoners. State authorities took charge of them and freed most on their oath not to fight again unless exchanged. All this took place despite the

Lincoln administration's stance early in the war not to parole or exchange.

After the loss at Bull Run, the Union became interested in negotiating the exchange of prisoners, and appointed Brigadier General John Ellis Wool to deal with the Confederates. On February 13, 1861, Wool invited authorities in Richmond to discuss prisoner exchange. The Confederate government appointed Brigadier General Howell Cobb as its spokesman. The two officers decided on a cartel by which prisoners taken by either side would be paroled within ten days of capture and delivered to their front lines. Both parties agreed to this, but could not agree on who would pay the expense of transporting prisoners for exchange. The Confederates insisted that the receiving army pay the costs while the Union insisted that the losing army bear the expense.³

When Forts Henry and Donelson fell in February 1862, a large number of Confederate prisoners fell into Union hands. The Union broke off negotiations to gain time to handle this challenge. Prisoners captured in the Henry-Donelson campaign were incarcerated at such places as Camp Chase.⁴ An agreement reached in July, 1862, between Major General John A. Dix and Confederate Major General D.H. Hill stipulated that:

All prisoners of war [are] to be discharged on parole in ten days after their capture, and the prisoners now held and those hereafter taken [are] to be transported to the points mutually agreed upon, at the expense of the capturing party. The surplus prisoners, not exchanged, shall not be permitted to take up arms again, nor to serve as military police, or constabulary force in any fort, garrison, or field work, held by either of the respective parties, nor as guards of prisoners,

deposit, or stories, nor to discharge any duty usually performed by soldiers, until exchanged under this cartel. The exchange is not to be considered complete until the officer or soldier exchanged for has been actually restored to the lines to which he belongs. 5

Until July 1863, the Confederates had the largest number of prisoners, most of whom were released on parole shortly after capture. In July, the Union declared paroles granted by the Confederacy void, because both sides disputed the number of paroles granted by the Confederacy. The Confederates claimed the number was larger than the Union claimed. The Union stated its intention to limit exchanges to such equivalents actually held in confinement on either side. This gave advantage to the Union because of the Confederate practice of paroling prisoners immediately. The disagreement served to render the previous exchange agreements ineffective. ⁶ The exchange process slowed as prison populations increased.

While the issues of parole and exchange of prisoners made an impact on Union prisoner of war camps, so did the administrative apparatus set up to deal with these issues and care for prisoners. Union officials looked back to the War of 1812 for regulatory precedents for the establishment of a commissary general of prisoners.

Army regulations and historical precedent charged the quartermaster general with the responsibility of handling prisoners of war. Union Quartermaster, General Montgomery C. Meigs, established an assistant as commissary general of prisoners. This officer was charged with accounting for

prisoners, handling parole, exchange, and monitoring the security,
health, and welfare of prisoners.⁷

During the summer of 1861, Meigs wrote Secretary of War Simon Cameron about establishing the position, which was unofficially filled in October when Cameron appointed Colonel William Hoffman, 8th Infantry Regiment Commander, still on parole from the surrender of Union forces in Texas, to assume responsibility of caring for prisoners as the U.S. Commissary General of Prisoners. Hoffman assumed his duties on October 7, 1861, but his position was not officially established until April 2, 1862.⁸

Hoffman faced formidable administrative problems. Many prison camps were established by state adjutants general under the direction of governors, and served solely as mustering in points for state troops. They were generally regarded as state installations. Some camps housed prisoners of war sent to them by either the military department commanders or regional military commanders operating near the camp. One of these military posts was Camp Chase, Ohio.

Camp Chase did not begin as a prisoner of war facility. It assumed that role while primarily functioning as a mustering in center and training camp. War caught the country unprepared and the federal government turned to the states to raise, organize, and train fighting units.

Some states assumed responsibility for housing prisoners captured by their militia. A few Union camps, such as Camp Chase, later become major prisoner of war facilities. Camp Chase also retained its role as a mustering in center and training camp for

soldiers from Ohio.

In Ohio, the news of Fort Sumter's surrender and the president's call for volunteers, followed by the quick secession of Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina, created excitement and patriotic fervor. Volunteers, not waiting for a formal call to arms, began forming into militia units. Hundreds of volunteers poured into Columbus. The state government found itself facing the problem of assembling these volunteers into state units and training them. The situation was chaotic. Governor William Dennison faced an influx of enthusiastic volunteers into Ohio's major cities. State officials were soon overwhelmed with the logistics of garrisoning and equipping units. Volunteers waited impatiently in hotels and makeshift camps and pressed state officials for action.

Eleven marshaling points were set up throughout Ohio to receive volunteers. In Columbus, they assembled in Goodale Park. Soon construction was under way to build barracks at this city park, renamed Camp Jackson. There men began organizing and learning the basics of military life.

Enthusiasm did not wane during the early months of the war and it was not long before Ohio met and exceeded its military quota for volunteer units. Volunteers poured in as state officials looked for a camp site that would relieve the serious overcrowding. As new sites were sought, Governor Dennison was finalizing the state military apparatus by appointing a commander to head the state militia. George B. McClellan, Ohio businessman

and division president for the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, was named commander of the state militia on April 23, 1861. He immediately set out to strengthen his command by enlisting the aid of such able men as Cincinnati businessman and fellow West Point alumnus William S. Rosecrans, who accepted an appointment as colonel of engineers in the Ohio volunteers on April 23, 1861. He joined McClellan as his aide-de-camp. These two men played an important role in the early development of Camp Chase.¹¹

The search for a new, larger camp site to muster volunteers centered on an area known as the race grounds, about four miles southeast of Columbus, a parcel of land owned by John G. Hallaway. The property was perfectly flat, provided room for expansion, and was located along the National Road, which provided access to the city, rail transportation, and Ohio's excellent road net. A sluggish creek ran nearby which could provide water. The site appeared ideal. Hallaway leased one hundred acres to the state to build a camp of instruction. Rosecrans laid out the new camp and supervised the engineers preparing the ground for the construction of barracks.¹²

Workmen began tearing down the barracks at Camp Jackson as volunteers moved into tents. Lumber was transported to Camp Chase and reassembled in accordance with Rosecrans' plan.

Demolition of Camp Jackson began on May 27, 1861, with construction immediately following.¹³ By June 12, 1861, the new camp contained 160 hastily constructed buildings and was alive with workmen and recruits.¹⁴ Recruits filled the buildings and

began training for war. A newspaperman who visited the camp on July 29 wrote "the tents and cantonments are very comfortable and kept in good order. The parade ground is the finest we have seen in any camp in Ohio." As men and material poured in state officials were deciding on an official name. On June 20, 1861, the new camp was named after the distinguished Ohioan, and Lincoln's secretary of the treasury, Salmon P. Chase.

Camp Chase soon became prominent among state garrisons. This post, along with Camp Dennison on the Little Miami River, northeast of Cincinnati, functioned as a marshaling center for mustering troops into Union service. It served as the rendezvous point for ten of Ohio's interior counties.

Camp Jackson, located in Goodale Park in Columbus, was never fully abandoned because the large number of volunteers kept it open. Eight other encampments served the state as military garrisons, enabling Ohio to oversubscribe her quota of volunteers. Thus, Camp Chase was hastily established as the primary state garrison and as a mustering in point for volunteers to be assembled into units and trained for war.

Ohio troops, hastily trained at Camp Chase, assumed the offensive across the Ohio river into western Virginia, producing the first military prisoners of the war. The main drive pushed toward Grafton, Virginia, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which was occupied on May 30, 1861. The supporting attack took the city of Webster, several miles to the west, then the two axes converged on Philippi, on June 2, 1861, and captured the first

Confederate prisoners taken in the war, recruits in training under Confederate Colonel George A. Porterfield. These captives began their trip to Ohio. They were the first prisoners of war for Camp Chase.¹⁹

McClellan wrote the governor of Ohio and asked what to do with his captives. Dennison sent instructions to bring the prisoners to Ohio. He regarded the jails of the state to be improper places of confinement, and directed the commanding officer of Camp Chase to build a prison within the garrison capable of holding up to 450 prisoners. The prison was located in an area of camp which could be expanded to hold more prisoners should the need arise.²⁰ The first contingent of 23 prisoners arrived July 5, barely fifteen days after the camp was named and less than the week after the hasty building of a prison.²¹

Early in the war, a majority of the prisoners came from western Virginia. Later, the armies in Kentucky and Tennessee furnished the larger proportion of military prisoners. At first, military prisoners sent to Camp Chase awaited parole, which was obtained by signing a promise not to take up arms against the U.S. government. This continued under Rosecrans, who succeeded McClellan, but was discontinued in October by General John C. Fremont who followed Rosecrans. Thereafter, the number of prisoners at Camp Chase increased.²²

Newspapers reported 138 prisoners at Camp Chase August 9, with some being paroled within two days of arrival. More arrived ten days later, only to be held two days before being

paroled. All this hardly seemed worth the effort and expense of transporting prisoners to Camp Chase.

On August 31, newspapers reported the capture of 16 Confederate prisoners including an officer who had previously been captured, brought to Camp Chase, and released on parole. These prisoners were taken to the state house, where they drew a large crowd of curious onlookers, then were sent to Camp Chase "for safe keeping." No record exists of these prisoners being paroled, though the newspaper unsuccessfully called for the officer's execution.²³

Prisoners trickled in during October until the population of the camp reached 240 prisoners. The last 1861 batch of eight prisoners arrived on December 28. The original prison, constructed in the summer of 1861, was too small. In fact, it encompassed less than an acre of the lowest, swampiest ground on post. By the end of 1861, the prison population became so large that Dennison asked Secretary of War Simon Cameron to improve the situation in Ohio by accelerating prisoner discharges. Instead of increasing prisoner paroles or exchanges, Brigadier General Ormsby M. Mitchell, commanding the department of the Ohio,²⁴ called for construction of another prison at Camp Chase.

Known as prison number two, the new facility was built adjacent to the first prison in an area that was even more marshy than the first. It was an enclosed area of about three acres, south of the original structure. Built on what was considered the lowest part of Camp Chase, soon many of its buildings began to

settle and sink into the soft ground. Later, a Union inspector reported that some buildings were lower than the surrounding land, making the floors below ground level and the interiors damp and unhealthy.
25

Expansion meant other problems as well. In late 1861 the food at Camp Chase was so bad it prompted advertisement for a new contractor for 1862. One prisoner who escaped in October 1861 reported the "food furnished the prisoners...was of the most inferior kind and in insufficient quantities for the sustenance of the famishing men." Although his bitterness implied the poor food was an intentional mistreatment, evidence indicates otherwise. Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners ate the same rations at Camp Chase. This prompted camp officials to allow the ration contract to expire at the end of 1861 and advertise for a new contractor.
26

When the notice was posted "quite a strife" developed among the "government jobbers" in Columbus to obtain the 1862 contract. Camp officials offered up to 14.5 cents "per ration" to feed the soldiers and prisoners in the camp. Prisoners were authorized and given the same rations as private Union soldiers. During the bidding process the local newspaper noted the old contractor "barely allows the [Union] soldier a good ration, and we hope for the good of the service and health of our soldiers, that bidding will be such as will justify the [new] contractor to deal out the very best."
27

January 1862 brought David Tod of Youngstown, Ohio into

office as Governor, replacing Dennison. Tod agreed with his predecessor that the prison was too small, and at once attempted to alleviate the crowded conditions by requesting releases for 95 military prisoners and 12 of the most elderly political prisoners. The requests sank into the federal bureaucracy and Tod found the federal policy of confinement nebulous and inflexible.²⁸

Tod was unsure of his responsibilities with Camp Chase, so on January 28, he wrote U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward, saying "I find myself embarrassed for want of knowledge and specific instructions as to the duties expected of me in relation to...prisoners sent to Camp Chase in this state." Washington offered no help to the perplexed Ohio governor, because at that time no definitive set of rules for military prison administration existed.²⁹

Historical precedent influenced Union attitudes towards prisoners at the beginning of the Civil War. The Union was slow to react and care for its prisoners because most thought the war would be short, and the Union administration was careful not to imply recognition of the Confederacy by exchanging prisoners. After Bull Run exchanges began and continued for 11 months before grinding to a halt.

Union administration of prisons developed slowly and took low priority. Ohio produced the first Confederate military prisoners of the war through aggressive action in western Virginia. Dennison took the initiative and ordered construction of a prison to house Ohio's captives. Ohio's military leaders

exercised initiative in paroling prisoners, even though they had no authority to do so.

Ohio had full authority over Camp Chase and its prisoners early in the war. They were well treated and received the same care and rations as recruits. The state experienced difficulty with food contractors in 1861, but responded quickly to correct the problems. Other problems developed as the Camp continued to expand and more prisoners were introduced over the next few months. The Union government would begin assuming greater responsibilities and Camp Chase would face a rocky transition of authority to Union control.

CHAPTER 2

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CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST SURGE OF PRISONERS

The period from February 1862 until June 1863 determined how well controls of administering a safe and effective prisoner of war camp were developed and applied at Camp Chase. William B. Hesseltine described it as a time when a workable prison system was established by the Union:

The [permanent] establishment of these new prison camps increased the problems of administration...regulations for the proper management of the various prisons had to be made...the problem of feeding and clothing the prisoners, and caring for the sick among them, added to his functions as general supervisor of discipline, gave to the commissary-general of prisons a variety of duties which would tax his ingenuity to the utmost. 1

The prisoner population of Camp Chase dramatically increased from February to August 1862 when the camp held a maximum of 1,961 Confederates. After exchanges began in August, the population dropped just as dramatically as it had risen, to a low of 756 in December. In the early months of 1863, the population fluctuated at low levels as prisoners were brought in, then quickly released as exchanges were made with the Confederacy.²

On February 16, Confederate General Simon B. Buckner surrendered at Fort Donelson, following the surrender of Fort Henry. General Henry W. Halleck, Union Army commander, wrote Governor David Tod asking if he could accept a large portion of the prisoners at Camp Chase. Governor Tod agreed. On February 28, Col. Granville Moody of the 74th Ohio Volunteer Infantry replaced the prison's first commander, Col. Ralph Buckland of the 72nd Ohio

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Volunteer infantry. The commander of the prison was also the garrison commander; dual duties assumed by one of the local regimental commanders. The garrison provost marshal came under his command and had control of the prison guard force.

In late February Col. William Hoffman, commissary general of prisoners, was prompted by the huge influx of prisoners to write instructions on dealing with the Confederates. Hoffman's position, authority, and budget had not been officially established, so he asked Tod if Ohio would pay for the "support and safe keeping of the prisoners just arrived...to be refunded by the Quartermaster's Department." Hoffman asked Tod to provide prisoners with "clothing, bedding and cooking utensils as may be absolutely required." He authorized purchases through a sutler and stated no objection to prisoners sending or receiving mail. He recommended caution in the granting of paroles, saying they should be granted "only in extreme cases."⁴

When prisoners arrived they found a concerned and humanitarian prison commander. Moody, a Methodist minister by profession, was a prominent citizen of Ohio. He had a reputation for kindness and fairness but was criticized by prisoners for launching off into long abolitionist sermons.⁵ He took care of prisoners but found it difficult to define his role or define clear standards of treatment for prisoners of war. In his inexperience and desire to do what he thought right, he found it difficult defining who constituted a prisoner of war and what rights prisoners had. For example, Moody was confused over

what to do with captured slaves who followed their masters into captivity. Should a slave captured with a Confederate soldier be left in the soldier's possession as property, sold, or set free? The Emancipation Proclamation later settled this question, but in February 1862 the dilemma of what to do with captured slaves was real.

The decision faced by authorities was that if captured slaves were freed in Tennessee or Kentucky, they would be subject to arrest by local civil authorities as slaves. They could then be held for a period of time and, if unclaimed by their imprisoned masters, be sold to repay the expense of holding them. If they were set free north of the Ohio river, they would be liable for arrest under current laws as runaway slave property.⁶ Moody therefore considered the black servants as prisoners of war and they received the exact treatment as white military captives,⁷ including paroles.

This caused excitement among the staunch Unionists of Columbus, especially those who saw the war as a crusade to end slavery. Protests were lodged to the Governor, Secretary of War, and President, which resulted in the slaves' release four months later.⁸

Halleck caused another problem by ordering General Ulysses S. Grant to send Confederate officers to Columbus on parole. Writing his General-in-Chief, George B. McClellan, Halleck stated that "we can afford to be generous. It will have an excellent effect. Let me carry out my plan and send all officers to Columbus, Ohio, on

parole. If they violate it I will hang them." Under the terms of
surrender, the officers had been promised they could retain their
side arms and swords.¹⁰

In February, Moody allowed liberal paroles to prisoners,
thereby violating Hoffman's directive that paroles should be
granted only in extreme cases. Moody followed directions given
by Halleck and others. Prisoners "have been paroled by the
commanders of the departments of the Mississippi and of western
Virginia and others by Governor Tod on account of sickness, an
extension of their limits having been recommended by the surgeon."¹¹
Reports circulated that paroled prisoners were taking full
advantage of the situation by strolling streets of downtown
Columbus, in full Confederate uniform, complete with side arm and
sword. Indeed, newspapers reported that local tailors made
Confederate uniforms "with all the gaudy trappings called for by
the rebel army regulations."¹²

Many stayed at the finest hotels in Columbus where they
signed themselves in as members of the "C.S. Army."¹³ They
lounged about town where they spoke freely of Southern rights and
secession. They made acquaintances among the citizens of Columbus
and were frequent guests at dinners and parties.¹⁴ They frequented
the bars where they "drank the mean whiskey for which Columbus is
famous" and impressed young ladies of the city with their
uniforms and bold speech.¹⁵

A reporter observed that the streets and hotels of this
abolitionist city resembled Richmond more than a city of the

northwest. He went on to say that "a stranger happening in at a hotels in view of the swarms of rebel uniforms and the fierce utterance of rebel oaths and threats might fancy himself set down at the capital of Jeff Davis' dominion instead of at the capital of Ohio." These reports outraged the people of the city.¹⁶

William H. Knauss, a resident of Columbus, related an incident which occurred:

Many Confederate officers in those days lived in Columbus. They had given their word of honor not to attempt to escape, and they kept their word. They were associates of the officers of the regular army, or such of them as were stationed in Columbus at one time or another. The Eighteenth United States Infantry was in that city for some time, and its officers and the paroled Confederate officers were conspicuous figures in the hotels and cafes. Among those whose intimacy was most marked were Captain Joyce of General Buckner's staff, and Captain Dodge, of the Eighteenth Regulars. One day these gentlemen were dining and drinking at Wagner's, the leading cafe of Columbus, when a private (Union) soldier a little worse from drink entered and saluted Captain Dodge. The Captain paid no attention to the salute. The soldier paused and addressed some remark to him, when Captain Joyce sprang to his feet and struck the soldier in the face. With his mouth bleeding he went out of the place and, meeting a number of his comrades, told the story of the assault.

A crowd gathered, as many citizens as soldiers, and a riot was imminent. Threats were made that the Confederate must die, and the crowd assumed a mob like aspect. When a number of soldiers entered the restaurant Wagner managed to get the two officers out, but the crowd surrounded them upon the outside. "Kill the d___ Rebel!" came the cries from every side. "Kill the other _____; he is no better!" cried others. As readily would they have killed Captain Dodge as his Confederate friend; but when they began to crowd upon and jostle the officers about, waiting and wishing that the Confederate would strike again, the police appeared and the officers were hurried to the American house. Here the crowd followed, and it was with difficulty they were rescued and taken to a place of safety.

The papers published the story, and both soldiers and civilians were excited; and had Captain Joyce appeared upon the streets again while the excitement was high, he would probably have been shot. 17

The situation got so bad that N.A. Reed, pastor of the Market Street Baptist Church, wrote Lincoln asking that something be done about these excesses. His letter complained and eluded to confusion prevalent at Camp Chase and within the state government
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over the prisoner of war issue.

In March, Tod issued detailed guidance to Moody, instructing him to confiscate, tag, and store all arms and weapons and began accounting for the prisoners whom he should divide into units, or "messes". He told Moody to maintain a strong guard, restrict visitors, and screen letters. The two important instructions were his directive that prisoners receive the same rations as Union soldiers and that a proper, well equipped and staffed hospital be maintained. He ordered that the sick "must be properly and kindly treated" and that if Moody lacked anything to properly care for the prisoners, he should only ask and the
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situation would be promptly corrected.

These requirements brought some order to Camp Chase but they did not go far enough. The number of prisoners still on parole in Columbus remained so great that Assistant Secretary of War P.H. Watson got involved and directed the postmaster of Columbus, Joseph H. Geiger, to institute proceedings to censor all letters to and from Confederate officers living in Columbus in addition to
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those still confined in prison.

Pressure mounted until March 30, when Secretary of War Edwin

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M. Stanton ordered Halleck to relieve Moody from command. At the same time, he wrote Governor Tod, telling him that "General Halleck has been directed to correct the evil." This surprised Tod, who was told by Hoffman on February 28 that the governor should direct prisoner operations at Camp Chase unless otherwise notified.²²

Angrily, Tod wrote Stanton that he had "no just cause for complaint of treatment of rebel prisoners at Camp Chase. The commander, Col. Moody, is a strong anti-slavery republican."²³ Instead of dismissing Moody, Halleck sent a strongly worded message to him directing that "these indulgences...cease." Moody forwarded the note to the adjutant general of Ohio, C.P. Buckingham, who reminded Halleck that he had set the conditions of surrender for these Confederate officers in the first place.²⁴

Stanton then sent Maj Roger Jones, the assistant Inspector General of the Army, to look into conditions. Jones reported "prisoners, numbering some 1,400, about 1,000 of whom are officers, are under the control of Governor Tod, of Ohio, who assumed charge of them in accordance with the written request of Colonel Hoffman." He went on to report that "shortly after the arrival of the Fort Donelson prisoners there was much sickness among them" and Tod allowed Moody to parole prisoners "on account of sickness, an extension of their limits having been recommended by the surgeon." After the parolees obtained care, rested, and recovered in Columbus, Jones found that they had been "remanded to the prison limits on their restoration to health."

Those who had been paroled by Halleck continued to remain at large. Jones found that "the prisoners on parole have the limits of the city of Columbus and report daily to the Governor who, 'under the belief that the secretary of war was ignorant of the state of matters'...that 'he will defer sending them to prison until he can hear further from the secretary'." Jones found that Moody "faithfully and humanely enforced" the "instructions for the maintenance of good order and discipline" he received from Tod. Jones found prisoners "well fed and sufficiently clad, and not-withstanding they were informed by Colonel Moody who accompanied me in my inspection of the prisoners that they were at liberty to make known to me any complaints they might have none were made worthy of being brought to the notice of the department."²⁵

The Ohio legislature refused to accept the federal inspector's report as conclusive, and appointed a special investigating committee which found many of the allegations of incompetence and lax discipline true.²⁶ The matter was brought to the attention of Ohio's U.S. Senator John Sherman, who denounced the lax discipline at Camp Chase before the U.S. Senate. The problem was introduced at the senate military committee where it quietly died after Tod assured that the situation would improve through greater controls on prisoners.

The situation was resolved a month later when most of the Confederates who were on parole in the city were rounded up and transferred to the prison at Fort Warren, Massachusetts.²⁷

New prisoners arriving in March met a kind reception from Moody. One reported his arrival thusly: "after remaining here for 2 or 3 hours, was served with coffee and some meats. The first meats we had since we left St. Louis [a stopover point in route to Camp Chase]. The people appear very kind under the circumstances." Arrivals spent the night in tents with straw for bedding until the next morning when officials assigned them to quarters.²⁸

Prisoners were placed in barracks and given lumber to improve their living spaces. One prisoner reported lumber was used to plank over the drafty barracks floors, which made it "much more healthy and comfortable." Another prisoner wrote that Moody authorized a meat ration of seven-and-a-half pounds of fatty bacon and twelve-and-a-half pounds of boney beef for each ten prisoners. Complete utensils were furnished including a tin plate and cup, fork, spoon, and knife. These liberal provisions were quite adequate.²⁹ Food was not an issue under Moody's command. The biggest complaint regarding consumables came when Moody almost³⁰ sparked a prison riot by prohibiting consumption of alcohol.

Moody made an effort to properly clothe his prisoners. Those who could afford it were allowed to have uniforms tailored. Those who could not were provided with federal issue or, if that ran short, received clothing and bed linen donated by the people of Columbus.³¹

In April the Army Adjutant General finally published orders making Hoffman's position and duties official. The duties were mostly those of a prisoner accountant and inspector. The only real authority given was to "recommend to the General whose guards

are responsible for them whatever modification in their treatment may seem to him proper or necessary and report the same to the war department." Official appointment empowered him to organize his office and draft enforceable regulations. He immediately organized a prisoner accounting system, had forms printed and distributed to the commanders so numbers of Confederate prisoners, political prisoners, and deaths could be recorded.³²

Moody asked to be relieved from command of Camp Chase so he could accompany his regiment into battle. Tod refused, telling him "you have now brought the responsible and delicate duty of keeping and humanely treating these prisoners to a perfect system, which without your personal presence may be placed in jeopardy." Moody agreed to remain in command for another three³³ three before joining his comrades at the front.

The April prison count reflected the dramatic increase which occurred over the past two months. In all, 1,400 prisoners were confined at Camp Chase. Nine prisoners died from disease, including one slave. This gave Camp Chase a mortality rate of .64³⁴ percent.

In May most of the remaining Confederate officers were transferred to the prison on Johnson's Island, near Sandusky, Ohio. Those who were too ill to travel were left behind with Confederate soldiers to join new prisoners arriving. In May, 15 prisoners died including one slave and one Confederate soldier who died from battle wounds. This gave Camp Chase a death rate³⁵ of approximately 1.07 percent.

In June the population rose slightly to 1,430 as prisoners continued trickling in. Only four prisoners died including one from battle wounds. This gave Camp Chase a .28 percent death rate. A smallpox epidemic swept the Union camp and prison this month, taxing the post and prison hospital. Moody turned to the Franklin County infirmary for help and contracted for the care of sick Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners that the Camp Chase hospital could not handle.³⁶

July witnessed a new commander in charge of Camp Chase. Moody, the kind parson who caused such a stir earlier with his liberal treatment of prisoners, was replaced by Col. Charles W.B. Allison, a prominent attorney and son-in-law of Ohio's lieutenant governor, a man with no previous military experience. Where Moody was perhaps too liberal and over-concerned with the prisoners' welfare, Allison knew nothing of his duties and preferred to remain detached from any responsibilities associated with the prison. As Allison took control, the population increased to 1,726, which posed a significant challenge to Allison who was not experienced or capable enough to deal with it.³⁷

Hoffman issued regulations in July establishing standards of care and treatment which remained essentially unchanged through April 20, 1864. The regulations established accounting, parole, and security procedures; allowed prisoners to trade with a sutler; authorized prisoners to receive packages and gifts; and restricted visitors, except in cases of illness, when a liberal

policy would prevail. Regulations established a "general fund for the benefit of prisoners" which would "buy any articles as may be necessary for the health and comfort of the prisoners." Funding was to come from food contract savings by selling excess rations back to the contractor.

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The most important part of the regulation provided for the sick; It stipulated:

The hospital will be under the immediate charge of the senior surgeon who will be held responsible to the commanding officer for its good order and the condition of the sick. "The fund" of this hospital will be kept separate from the fund of the hospital for the troops and will be disbursed for the sole benefit of the sick prisoners on the requisition of the surgeon approved by the commanding officer. When the fund is sufficiently large there will be bought with it besides the articles usually purchased all articles of table furniture, kitchen utensils, articles for policing, shirts and drawers for the sick, the expense of washing, and all articles that may be indispensably necessary to promote the sanitary condition of the hospital. 39

Virtually the same day the regulations were issued, Hoffman dispatched an assistant, Henry M. Lazelle, a captain in the regular army (Eighth Infantry), to Camp Chase to inspect and report what he found. The idea was to see how well Camp Chase was moving toward compliance with the regulations Hoffman issued.

Lazelle's inspection unveiled worsening conditions of mismanagement, sanitary problems, and fraud. Lazelle found the conditions and corrected them before they led to increased death rates.

Because of the large number of Union soldiers garrisoned at Camp Chase, confusion existed as to where to put soldiers confined

for minor offenses. Nothing existed that prevented Union offenders from being housed with the Confederates, consequently Allison had them serve time with prisoners of war. Reports of these incidents prompted Lazelle to order the practice stopped.⁴⁰

Lazelle wrote Hoffman assuring him that "no Union prisoners will under any circumstances be confined with the rebel prisoners whatever be their offense." He went on to add that such confinement "is always a matter of injustice to either one or the other class of prisoners, and those at present confined in [the prisoner of war] prisons will be immediately confined at the guard house instead."⁴¹

Lazelle found other examples of mismanagement such as the post visitation policy. Because Camp Chase served as a mustering in and training facility, state officials encouraged visitors. For months Columbus newspapers had reported the camp as a sight "worth going to see."⁴² Religious revivals were held among the Union trainees at the camp and were well attended by soldiers and curious citizens. Newspapers reported the events and encouraged attendance as being "well timed and commendable."⁴³ Lazelle reported these excesses to Hoffman. He believed it encouraged a far too liberal visitation policy at the prison and reported that each section of the prison had reception rooms for visitors to "converse with and hold interviews with the prisoners." He reported that on the average a dozen people visited each day. When the federal inspector complained to the governor about this, Tod refused to change it, saying that by "permitting visitors to

the camp and to see their friends [political prisoners and Confederate soldiers they knew] in confinement had been worth... one hundred tons of powder upon the enemy." Not only did visitors travel to the garrison to visit prisoners, they also came to see the pomp and ceremony of military life.

Camp Chase was located on the National Road and was easily accessible to the people of Columbus. Lazelle reported that "for the benefit of all curious people there is a regular line of omnibuses running daily from the capitol to the camp." These coaches could be boarded for twenty cents fare and, with the exception of inside the prison walls, visitors traveled where they pleased. As a result the camp was filled with "a great number of hacks, carriages and omnibuses laden with idlers and others who everywhere and at every turning infest the camp, inspect everything, interfere with the duty and very much with effective discipline." Allison and his officers were constantly on display, vain of their positions and anxious to exhibit arbitrary authority before curious citizens. As a result they spent time entertaining visitors to the neglect of other duties, and a general confusion enveloped every aspect of camp administration.

Because of frequent visitors the cessation of paroles to visit or live in Columbus, and a steady influx of new prisoners, conditions at the camp began to worsen.

Nearly every official report and personal account by prisoners speak of muddy, unsanitary conditions. Lazelle identified drainage problems that contributed to poor health and

sanitation. Shallow ditches designed to drain off water quickly filled in the rain and turned into stagnant, trash filled cesspools. Drains emptied into prison sinks which were "open excavations with a single rail placed over them lengthwise." Water accumulated, along with the waste of 1,726 prisoners, creating a foul smelling septic for the entire camp. If it rained particularly heavy, water would overflow the sinks, and refuse from more than a thousand men would backwash into the drainage system and into the large ditch which ran past the prison wall, through the entire garrison.⁴⁶

Poor sanitation combined with crowded prison conditions produced a horrid smell. Lazelle wrote that "a terrible stench everywhere prevails, overpowering the nostrils and stomach of those impermeated with it."⁴⁷ The stench was so offensive to the Union regiments in training at Camp Chase that regimental officers complained to the governor, who entertained the idea of moving the prison far away from the city and Camp Chase. Tod thought that moving the camp to higher ground would be better for the prisoners. Lazelle inspected the governor's proposed site and wrote Hoffman that he did not recommend moving the prison because the location was "of the same character and on the same level as the present camp, and the drainage is no better nor is the soil in any particular [way] better."⁴⁸

There was no effective trash collection system. Spaces between barracks were heaped with bones, food scraps and discarded

rags. Inside, damp trash and dirt accumulated, because there were no brooms to sweep it out. Cooking utensils and stoves were caked with grease. Barracks walls were unpainted and filthy with stove smoke. Wash basins were not provided for the prisoners to bathe in, "not even a basin or tub to wash their clothes." Soap was provided, but it was of the poorest quality.⁴⁹

Lazelle's astute observation was that the prison in its present location required "effective policy, good arrangement of the present materials and an energetic and intelligent commanding officer to carry out rigidly proper instructions." He further added that all if this were done "all of the conditions of a good camp may be fulfilled both of health and discipline."⁵⁰

Lazelle, finding many of the prisoners in rags, questioned Allison, who replied "it was his object to make their friends clothe them." He then questioned the post quartermaster who reported that he had enough clothing on hand to care for the prisoners. Lazelle submitted a requisition for the clothing and the situation was remedied.⁵¹

With the great influx of trainees and prisoners the opportunity for a contractor to take advantage of the situation was enormous. Camp officials did not monitor provisions and as a result the contractor, Jacob and Louis Zettler, provided sub-standard rations. Contract specifications called for one ration a day, at 12.5 cents per prisoner. Rations were to include beef, salt pork, bacon, dried beans and peas, bread, rice, potatoes, flour, coffee, sugar, molasses, and salt.⁵²

Lazelle wrote that there were absolutely no controls over the contractor at Camp Chase, and that "there is not nor has there been any commissary whatever at the camp to represent the government." He found the contractor issuing necks and shanks to both Union troops and Confederate prisoners when the contract specified meaty cuts of beef.⁵³

Beside poor quality, the contractor cheated on weight of rations issued by including the weight of wooden crates and containers in the weight of the ration. They were weighed by the contractor alone, "in the presence of no one representing the parties to whom they were to be issued." The food was then "pitched into a cart in the coarsest, roughest manner, which was driven off to the prisons or the camps." In the case of the prisoners, rations were turned over to the "care or rather questionable honesty of those non-commissioned three-months' stewards to be delivered to the prisoners under the supervision of no one." The result of this was not only poor quality food, but not enough food.⁵⁴

Lazelle brought order to the camp by ordering Allison to appoint a "high-toned and careful officer to act as assistant post commissary to receive the provisions from the hands of the contractors for the prisoners." Lazelle directed that beef be issued "five times a week instead of twice as heretofore, not only to the prisoners but to all troops at the post, and [specified that] necks and shanks...[would] not be issued."⁵⁵

Anticipating better rations were forthcoming, Lazelle

directed a slight reduction in food issued to each prisoner, taking them below the level of rations received by Union privates. His reason for doing this was that too much food was not good for men in confinement "taking little or no exercise." Probably a more compelling reason for this reduction was to provide funds through reselling the unissued portion back to the contractor. These funds would be used to purchase various items for the prisoners' comfort and welfare.

Rations were reduced on July 28, 1862, and six days later Lazelle wrote Hoffman that he had collected enough refund money from the contractor to purchase "fresh vegetables for the prisons and prison hospital." Hoffman wrote Lazelle and told him that it was a good idea and encouraged him to continue purchasing "a liberal supply" of vegetables for the prisoners.

Prisoners complained to Lazelle that there was not enough wood to cook rations. As a result, they ate poorly cooked food and experienced long waits before cooking. The influx of prisoners made the situation worse. Lazelle successfully dealt with the problem by having another of Hoffman's assistants, Captain Freedley, obtain "farmers boilers"--large stoves with built-in pots to cook provisions for up to 25 prisoners at one time. These proved successful in "economy of fuel, cleanliness in cookery, health of diet and economy of rations." Prisoners began cooking food in mass and Lazelle reported success to Hoffman, saying that "there is no doubt but that their cost would soon be replaced by immense savings of fuel over stoves." They were not

well liked by the prisoners because of the heat they produced inside the barracks. Prisoners complained they had to evacuate the barracks when a farmers boiler was in operation.⁵⁸

The boilers enabled prisoners to prepare food in bulk, saving time, firewood, and tempers. Food was prepared by boiling it into a soup. This soup was bland and prisoners soon found ways to spice it up by adding readily available ingredients. One recipe recorded in a prison diary called for adding a little lye to the kettle for extra flavor. Undoubtably this practice contributed to health problems.⁵⁹

In spite of these problems, many prisoners during this time were satisfied with the opportunity to eat better than they had in active Confederate service. A Confederate officer wrote in his diary that he enjoyed "plenty" of good food and went on to list what he considered to be an outstanding variety offered at Camp Chase.⁶⁰

Lazelle repeatedly spoke to Tod about Allison's poor administration of Camp Chase, but met little success. The governor did not understand the unique problems that a prisoner of war camp posed and was sympathetic towards Allison. Allison for his part was unable to understand what needed to be done, and was unable to carry out the improvements that Lazelle had written out for him in simple, step-by-step instructions. In frustration, Lazelle wrote Hoffman and asked to remain and personally direct improvements and clean up the administrative mess at the camp. Lazelle made major improvements to Camp Chase. On July 28, he

wrote Hoffman that "as a consequence [of my suggestions] a marked change is observed in the health, cleanliness, police and comfort of the prisoners and decidedly for the better." To get these results he personally took charge and implemented improvements. Using prisoners who were anxious to better their living conditions, he made tremendous gains without spending federal money, one of Hoffman's major concerns.⁶¹

The results of Lazelle's efforts were greatly improved sanitation, health, and morale among prisoners at Camp Chase. Prison grounds were graded so water quickly drained into newly completed ditches. Roads and walkways were constructed to facilitate passage through mud. Buildings that had sunk were raised. Structures were cleaned and whitewashed, new toilet trenches dug, and latrines built. A system of building maintenance and repair was begun, using available Confederate carpenters.⁶²

A liberal supply of lime was obtained and Lazelle issued instructions on its use in prison sinks. He also issued strict instructions to have prisoners police the prison twice each day, removing all trash, rags, and "accumulations of every kind... from within or about the quarters." These efforts virtually eliminated the stench that Union soldiers found offensive.⁶³

By the end of July only seven prisoners had died, giving Camp Chase a .41 percent death rate. Because of Lazelle's efforts officials at Camp Chase sent their first report to Hoffman indicating numbers of prisoners and deaths.⁶⁴

In August 1,961 prisoners were confined at Camp Chase, an

increase of 235 from July. Lazelle's efforts paid off handsomely because the camp was more capable of receiving and providing for them. This was the largest number of prisoners held to date in a facility which had held only 23 prisoners just eleven months before. Only four deaths occurred, giving Camp Chase a death rate of .20 percent, the lowest of any Union prison for August. Lazelle briefly returned to Camp Chase this month and found Allison was continuing to implement improvements he had directed in July.⁶⁵

On August 4, Dr. C.C. Brown, post surgeon at Camp Chase, reported on conditions of the camp and health of the prisoners to the Ohio State surgeon general. Brown, writing about his experiences over the last three months, reported that measles, pneumonia, and typhoid fever were most prevalent. His report indicated that measles were a recurring problem among Union trainees, guards, and prisoners. Once cases were brought under control and the epidemic was beginning to subside, new recruits would report in and reintroduce the disease to the camp. Measles were introduced by recruits and spread through the Union soldiers assigned to training regiments, then spread via guards to Confederate prisoners.⁶⁶

Close proximity among the camps, shallow wells, and sinks caused problems with the water supply. Brown reported that water "obtained from wells is saturated with lime and sulphur." Sulphur was produced by decomposing waste while lime had leaked into the water table through the practice of "liming" the sinks "every

other day, ...some limed daily." The result was a contaminated water system that caused both Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners to have frequent diarrhea. This problem was identified by Lazelle earlier, but due to prioritization of effort had not been remedied by August. This aggravated existing medical problems and contributed to illnesses Brown diagnosed as typhoid.⁶⁷

Brown reported damp conditions throughout the camp, including the prison, had led to a high rate of pneumonia and typhoid fever. Both prison buildings and Union barracks were damp and wet. Although they had been built on a higher portion of the post, Brown reported that the barracks, made of shanty boards with shingle roofs, had also sunk into the soft ground until "the floors [were] almost flat on the ground." This made Union recruits susceptible to colds and respiratory problems which, like measles, kept illness circulating among the recruits, guards,⁶⁸ and prisoners.

Many Confederates reported in sick, especially those captured at Forts Henry and Donelson who had been exposed to the worst conditions and weather for weeks prior to their capture. These prisoners, according to Brown, had been suffering from "dysentery, jaundice and pneumonia." Other prisoners arrived in equally bad health.⁶⁹

Brown reported when prisoners were paroled, exchanged, or moved to other camps, sick were left behind, adding to the number of ill and increasing the death rate. As healthy prisoners left the camp, "their places [were] again filled with new captives

suffering from exposure, fatigue, and disease."⁷⁰

A major problem facing health care providers was the fact that not only did they have to provide for Union trainees and Confederate prisoners of war, they also picked up responsibilities for the health care of Union soldiers paroled by the Confederates⁷¹ after these Union units had surrendered.

The Confederate practice of paroling men immediately after battle forced the Union administration to handle large numbers of parolees. Paroled soldiers had previously been sent home to await notification of exchange, the idea being that they would reform into units or rejoin new units after notification, but in practice, this was not happening. Men were not responding to notifications so the Union instructed all soldiers captured and paroled by Confederates to report to the nearest designated post to await exchange. Camp Chase was designed as such a rendezvous⁷² point.

These men immediately sought medical authorities and requested medical furloughs, certificates of disability, or⁷³ medical discharges, so that they could leave. Lazelle reported "the hospital is swarmed with them [furloughed and paroled or disabled Union soldiers] and about 100 were about the various quarters of the camp, most of them doing no duty." This posed a taxing problem for the post surgeon and a drain on post medical facilities. He went on to report that "the hospital, originally arranged for the close accommodation of fifty patients has treble⁷⁴ that number. This has been the case for forty days or more."

According to Lazelles' report, prisoners had lowest priority for medical care. He reported that the surgeon "has so much labor to perform that he does not visit the prisoners but once a week but leaves them to stewards and to inefficient rebel amateur⁷⁵ practitioners."

Brown reported his staff had worked hard to improve the situation. He reported hospital accommodations "only moderate, yet the best use was made of such as we had. Consequently none suffered for want of hospital room or medical⁷⁶ care."

Less than 30 days before, Lazelle had written a report which disagreed with Brown over adequacy of the prison hospital. Lazelle reported that hospital accommodations were "insufficient⁷⁷ for the camp even were there not more than 1,500 men present." Lazelle also noted that the hospital occupied the "lowest ground of the prison, all the refuse water of the camp is collected in its vicinity and it [was] immediately contiguous to one of the⁷⁸ vile sinks."

According to Brown's report, 38 deaths took place during May, June, July and early August. Of these, 30 were prisoners and eight were Union soldiers in training. Most of the prisoners were ill when they arrived and, being confined in a damp environment, died from typhoid, pneumonia, or wounds received in combat. Brown reported that in light of all these problems, the health of the camp had been remarkably good and "the percentage of deaths⁷⁹ very small."

In September the exchange cartel, effective in August, came into full force as Confederate prisoner population dropped to 668 as political prisoners arrived to take their place. For the first time, political prisoners outnumbered captured soldiers at Camp Chase. Total population was 1,367 with political prisoners comprising 51.13 percent. The prison death rate remained low at .37 percent. Allison, the commander characterized by one officer⁸⁰ as "the most miserably incompetent officer I ever met", was relieved and mustered out of service. Tod sent Maj. Peter Zinn, an officer of his personal bodyguard, to assume command until⁸¹ a suitable colonel could be found.

In October, Camp Chase housed political prisoners almost exclusively as 738 out of a total population of 1,051, or 70.22 percent were listed as political prisoners. Hoffman sent an assistant, Capt. Henry W. Freedley, to inspect the progress Zinn was making in bringing order to the prison. Freedley found prisoners' quarters "ample" with "sufficient grounds within the enclosure for exercise." He found plenty of provisions and "indeed every necessary article was supplied and every care taken to insure their comfort." Freedley told Hoffman the hospital was "well arranged, well ventilated and comfortable." Only 6 patients⁸² died this month, giving camp chase a .57 percent death rate.

The percentage of political prisoners dropped in November as many were transferred or released. Political prisoners comprised 57.81 percent of the population, or 603 out of 1,043 prisoners. The death rate remained stable at .58 percent as

another six prisoners died.

December brought a drastic reduction in political prisoners as only 28 out of 756 prisoners, or 3.7 percent held at Camp Chase were reported. Hereafter, political prisoners would comprise only a very small portion of the prisoners held at
84
Camp Chase.

Lazelle returned to Camp Chase in December to evaluate Zinn's management of the prison. His report provides an indication of conditions at Camp Chase during the period when prisoners remained a short time before being exchanged or transferred. He found rations good and plentiful, with a variety of good food available not only through ration issue but through packages and purchases from the sutler as well. A camp official reported "from September to December 1 have received and delivered ...140 express packages containing eatables" One prisoner wrote of the plentiful rations, saying "my what a dinner - turkey, chicken, roast beef, oysters, green peaches, pound cake, honey, apple-dumplings, pies and in fact a thousand little things too tedious to mention. My health is fine
85
and I am getting fleshly and too big for my clothes."

Clothing was freely issued to prisoners "in all cases upon the application of a prisoner for clothing it was given him if after a personal examination it was found that the articles called for were needed and that the clothing previously given the
86
applicant had not been disposed of."

Lazelle found "the barrack and hospital accommodations... in excellent condition both as regards police and repair." He found "the prisoners generally are well supplied with tubs for washing and bathing and washing basins...brooms, however, are much needed, and I have directed their purchase."⁸⁷

Lazelle found few problems. He found some buildings had sunk and needed to be raised and more gravel was needed along the prison walks. With Hoffman's approval he ordered these modifications. Another problem was rats. Rats made "their hiding places under the floors, [of the sinking buildings] so that if those were raised...The number would greatly diminish." Undoubtedly rats were also attracted to the abundance of food. Many of the prisoners had never seen so much food and, accordingly "willfully and wantonly waste their food." Another problem Lazelle found was the appearance of lice. Lazelle directed "frequent and thorough scrubbing of the infested quarters with salt brine and their fumigation with sulphur", he also ordered officials to "enforce so far as it is practical habits of personal cleanliness among the prisoners where their disposition is opposed to this condition."⁸⁸

In spite of these irritants, one prisoner wrote "I expect to be exchanged in two or three weeks. This is the best prison I ever saw. We live as well here as in our hotels in Dixie."⁸⁹

Camp Chase went through several garrison commanders between December 1862 and February 1864, as its focus shifted from Confederate prisoners of war to a rendezvous for paroled

Union forces. On December 24, Zinn was relieved as garrison commander by Brigadier General James Cooper, commander of the U.S. Paroled forces. Cooper was not interested in the prison camp so he divided the garrison commander's duties and retained Zinn as prison commandant. Zinn, obviously unhappy with the arrangement, resigned on the 29th whereupon Cooper appointed the next highest ranking officer of Zinn's staff, Captain E.L. Webber, prison commandant. That same day he divested himself of the responsibilities of garrison commander and appointed Colonel August V. Kautz of the 2nd Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. In April 1863, Brigadier General John S. Mason took command of forces at Camp Chase and appointed Captain Alexander E. Drake as both garrison commander and prison commandant. Henceforth, the two duties were combined as they had been prior to Cooper. In October, Colonel William Wallace, formerly of the 15th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, now of the "Invalid Corps," took command.⁹⁰

Between December 1862 and June 1863 Camp Chase was a temporary holding facility for Confederates as exchanges were quickly carried out. During this period death rates remained low, exceeding one percent only in February 1863 when a large influx of wounded joined the camp and June 1863 as numbers of sick and wounded remained behind when Confederate officers were transferred to other prisons.⁹¹

Camp Chase had become a permanent prison amid much confusion. Moody grappled with questions of parole, prisoner

rights, and such basic questions as who constituted a prisoner of war. Tod exercised control and established rules which kept order amid conflicting guidance until Hoffman was officially empowered.

Moody's humanitarian concern and lax discipline kept death rates low during his command. Allison's command followed with fewer paroles and an increasing number of prisoners. Undoubtedly his inept management would have resulted in increased mortality had it not been for Lazelle's stern intervention.

Lazelle deserves full credit for bringing order to Camp Chase. Because of his intervention and oversight, management systems and polices were established which provided good rations, adequate facilities, sufficient clothing, and medical care to prisoners during the period of the exchange cartel.

Death rates remained low throughout this period, primarily because of Moody and Tod's liberal paroles to the sick and willingness to provide good medical care. Lazelle ensured sanitation and good food as the prison population increased, while camp surgeons continued to offer adequate care. In all, Moody, Tod and Lazelle provided the best care available under the circumstances while Hoffman's guidance, regulations, and inspections ensured adequate care would continue during the coming months.

TABLE 1

RATIONS

FOR EACH RATION	POW* RATION JUNE 15, 1862	US RATION
Pork or Bacon or Fresh or Salt Beef	12 oz 20 oz	12 oz 20 oz
Flour, or Bread (Soft) or Hard bread, and Corn-Meal	22 oz 16 oz 20 oz	22 oz 16 oz 20 oz
Potatoes	9.6 oz	9.6 oz
TO EACH 100 RATIONS		
Beans or peas, and Rice or hominy	8 Qts 10 Lbs	8 Qts 10 Lbs
Coffee, Green or Coffee, roasted, or Tea	10 Lbs 8 Lbs 24 oz	10 Lbs 8 Lbs 24 oz
Sugar	15 Lbs	15 Lbs
Vinegar	4 Qts	4 Qts
Candles	1 1/2 Lbs	1 1/2 Lbs
Salt	2 Qts	2 Qts
Molasses	1 Gal	1 Gal

* The prisoner of war (POW) issue was slightly reduced on July 28, 1862, when Hoffman's regulations were implemented at Camp Chase. They provided for reduction at the discretion of the commander, the savings to go into a fund which would buy fresh vegetables and various comfort items for prisoners.

Ration issue was supplemented by packages of food sent to prisoners from home and by individual purchases of food from the camp sutler.

TABLE 2

DEATH RATE FEBRUARY 1862 - JUNE 1863

	POPULATION	DIED	PERCENT	NOTES
1862				
FEBRUARY	*	*	*	
MARCH	*	*	*	
APRIL	1,400	9	.64	
MAY	1,400	15	1.07	1
JUNE	1,430	4	.28	
JULY	1,726	7	.41	2
AUGUST	1,961	4	.20	
SEPTEMBER	1,367	5	.37	3
OCTOBER	1,051	6	.57	4
NOVEMBER	1,043	6	.58	5
DECEMBER	756	3	.40	
1863				
JANUARY	880	2	.23	
FEBRUARY	1,076	11	1.02	6
MARCH	1,183	8	.68	
APRIL	955	3	.31	
MAY	953	6	.63	
JUNE	1,115	14	1.26	7

NOTES

* Unknown.

1. Majority of officers removed to Johnson's Island, leaving behind only those too ill to travel. The population is an estimate.
2. Smallpox epidemic reaches its peak.
3. Exchanges begin. Political prisoners now make up more than half (51.13) of the population.
4. Political prisoners comprise nearly all of the prison population (70.22).
5. Last month political prisoners are in a majority (57.81), thereafter, proportions drop (3.70 in December) as political prisoners are released or transferred to other facilities.
6. Large influx of prisoners, with many sick and wounded.
7. Large transfer to other prisons, leaving behind those too ill to travel. Large influx of prisoners, with many sick and wounded.

CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 4

THE FINAL SURGE OF PRISONERS

William B. Hesseltine described the period from July 1863 until the end of the war as a time of "war psychosis." According to Hesseltine, Union attitudes changed because Northerners believed the Confederacy "deliberately sought to torture the [Union] prisoner who fell into its hands." He defined "war psychosis" as:

The attachment to an ideal, a cause, or a country, when such attachment calls for the sacrifice of security and life, blinds the person feeling that attachment to whatever of virtue there may be in the opposing ideal, cause, or country. Seemingly, it becomes necessary for the supporters of one cause to identify their entire personality with that cause, to identify their opponents with the opposing cause, and to hate the supporters of the enemy cause with a venom which counterbalances their devotion to their own... The enemy becomes a thing to be hated; he does not share the common virtues, and his peculiarities of speech, race, or culture become significant as points of difference or, better, sins of the greater magnitude. 2

The change in attitude manifested itself first in ration reductions, then in restrictions on packages and sutler sales, and ended in restrictions on clothing issue. Increasing prison populations compounded the problem and resulted in sickness in the various Union prison camps. 3

The prisoner population of Camp Chase increased during this period. When 2,225 prisoners were added in July 1863, the population rose to 3,340. Population fluctuated during the next 12 months as new prisons were opened and prisoners transferred out. In August 1864 it climbed again, reaching 9,423 in January 1865 (See Table 4). 4

This chapter explores whether this psychosis is applicable to Camp Chase and, if it is, what the results prove to be.

In July 1863, Secretary of War, Edwin P. Stanton ordered all exchanges stopped. Prisoners increased at Camp Chase. That same month, Confederate Cavalry leader John Hunt Morgan conducted a raid deep into Ohio. The people of Columbus cast a "steely eye" on the Confederates at Camp Chase, whose number had reached 3,340.⁵

Morgan, with 700 men, was captured on July 26, at Buffington Island Ford, Ohio. He and his officers were interred as prisoners of war at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus. The remainder of his raiders were sent to Camp Chase.⁶

Escapes, heretofore uncommon at Camp Chase, took an alarming upswing in September as a total of 19 prisoners escaped.⁷ This rash of breakouts was quickly followed in November when Morgan and his officers escaped from the Ohio Penitentiary.⁸

In November and December, rumors ran rampant among guards and prisoners at Camp Chase, prompting a definite increase in security as guards were ordered to shoot to kill, and to strictly and recklessly enforce camp orders. At least four prisoners were shot by guards for crossing the "dead line," for failing to obey the lights out order, or for spilling water on the prison grounds in violation of the commander's orders.⁹

In January 1864, John Brough was sworn in as the new governor. Brough was a vehement war Democrat who had easily edged Tod out of the race with charges that Tod was too soft on war measures. He fought a bitter election against the anti-war

politician Clement L. Vallandigham who ran for governor while in exile at Windsor, Canada. Vallandigham had been expelled nine months earlier by Union officials for his incessant criticism of the war effort.¹⁰

Tod's careful but caring oversight of the prisoner of war camp ended. The state was now in the hands of officials not kindly disposed toward Confederates.

On February 11, Col. William Richardson became commander of Camp Chase. Richardson was described by a prisoner as being a "kind and educated gentlemen", although he was criticized in some government reports as "not being very active or diligent in the discharge of his duties."¹¹ Three prisoners escaped and the camp dropped to 2,195 because of heavy transfers to other prisons. In February and March 1,773 Confederates were transferred to other camps. In May, three more escapes occurred while more escape rumors circulated throughout the prison.¹²

Escape attempts continued. In June, prisoners developed a sophisticated scheme for a massive Fourth of July breakout. Some prisoners noted that the prison bread wagon made deliveries at around ten o'clock every morning and they had heard discussions about a grand review and picnic to be held off post. They realized this would be a good opportunity. This escape attempt would set off a chain of events which would eventually affect all Confederate prisoners held at Camp Chase. A prisoner, R.H. Strother, 4th Kentucky Cavalry, CSA, tells the story:

During the summer of 1864 a movement was started to organize the prisoners at Camp

Chase into companies, regiments, and brigades. After the organization was effected instructions were secretly given in regard to how the break for liberty should be made. July 4 was the day selected, and the hour ten o'clock, as the bread wagon was leaving the prison. The prisoners were not allowed to assemble in crowds, so we had to be cautious in our movements. They were to take position in groups of three or four men, as near the gate as possible without causing suspicion. The signal agreed upon was to be "Fresh fish," which was to be given by the leader of the charging squad when the bread wagon went out. The leader with his group was to drop in behind the wagon just before it reached the gate, and as it was passing out the signal was to be given and the groups of the charging squad were to fall in rapidly, keeping up a continuous charge through the gate. Those nearest the gate were to rush out and fall immediately in the rear of the charging squad, and those of Barracks No. 2 to drop in behind those of No. 1 and so on, which would keep up a continuous charge, so that the gate could not be closed.

The morning designated came bright and beautiful. The prisoners were jubilant over the prospect of escaping, and every man was in his place, waiting for the time. All eyes were watching for the bread wagon to come and to make its exit. Confusion came, however, through the earlier and, as it proved, untimely arrival and departure of the wood wagon. This caused the charge to result in failure. The charging squad was so eager that they gave the signal as the wood wagon went out, and the main force were off guard, not expecting the signal at that time. Thus it was that the charging squad passed out through the gate, and, the main column not being in supporting distance, the gate was closed. 13

The escape attempt sent shock waves through the people of Ohio. Had it been successful, 2,015 Confederates would have been unleashed in the heart of Ohio--bringing back visions
14
of Morgan's raid the previous year.

At the time of the escape attempt, Camp Chase was under investigation by the Ohio Adjutant General. Brough had sent

inspectors to Camp Chase at the request of Secretary Stanton. On July 1st Stanton asked Brough for an independent account of Hoffman's operations "with reference to the security of the guards, the discipline enforced, the mode of treatment, the intercourse the prisoners are permitted to have, the contributions that are allowed to be furnished them by their friends, and in respect to any other matter relating to this branch of the service."¹⁵

During this same period, stories began to circulate about harsh treatment and deprivation of Union prisoners of war in overcrowded Southern prisons. This contrasted sharply with the conditions at Camp Chase, where Confederate prisoners received good rations, good quarters, adequate clothing, and competent medical care.¹⁶ The preceding events had a major impact on the inspectors' outlook. Undoubtably the experience of Morgan's escapades in Ohio, the bitter political battle between Brough and the anti-war Vallandigham a few months before, and the threat of a mass escape had not endeared the captives to the new administration.

B.R. Cowen, Ohio's Adjutant General, reported his findings on August 1st. He found security at the prison adequate and the accommodations sound and spacious. He noted that with the addition of a high fence around the camp that "the number [of] prisoners may be doubled without any increase of garrison, while the camp can, at the same time, be made the rendezvous of new [Union regimental] organizations to the number of 5,000 men, or

for paroled [Union] prisoners of equal number, without increase of
17
guards."

Money taken from and sent to prisoners was deposited into an account administered by an officer who disbursed the money upon request "the officer in charge of the branch of the business assuming the position of a banker to the prisoner." Cowen went on to note that "with the money so drawn the prisoner repairs to the Sutler's store in person and makes purchases of such articles of comfort or luxury as he may desire." 18 Hoffman's regulations permitted the prisoners to receive packages and gifts "of liberal and frequent supplies of clothing, money, and food, which contributions are given them without hesitation and without 19 stint."

Cowen lauded the prison hospital and staff, writing that "the hospital department is neat and clean, and the very small number of sick (forty-five) is sufficient evidence of the healthfulness of the location and the general good treatment of the prisoners." 20 However, Cowen severely criticized Hoffman for failing to limit excess rations at Camp Chase. Hoffman had issued revised regulations on April 20, concerning the treatment of prisoners of war. They superseded the regulations issued July 7, 1862, by reducing rations by one-third, otherwise they remained essentially the same with more detailed, tighter administrative controls, and specific guidance regarding food. Hoffman specified the food ration as:

Hard bread, 14 ounces per one ration, or

18 ounces soft bread, one ration; corn-meal, 18 ounces per one ration; beef, 14 ounces per one ration; bacon or pork, 10 ounces per one ration; beans, 6 quarts per 100 men; hominy or rice, 8 pounds per 100 men; sugar, 14 pounds per 100 men; coffee, 5 pounds ground, or 7 pounds raw, per 100 men, or tea, 18 ounces per 100 men; soap, 4 ounces per 100 men; adamantine candles, 5 candles per 100 men; tallow candles, 6 candles per 100 men; salt, 2 quarts per 100 men; molasses, 1 quart per 100 men; potatoes, 30 pounds per 100 men. When beans are issued hominy or rice will not be. If at any time it should seem advisable to make any change in this scale the circumstances will be reported to the Commissary-General of Prisoners for this consideration. 21

These reductions had been ordered by Stanton in retaliation for the rations Union soldiers endured in Southern prisons. Although they reduced rations, the reduction compared favorably with the regulation Confederate ration and was only slightly below that of the standard Union ration issue. 22

The reasons are unclear, but Hoffman's regulation was ignored at Camp Chase. Richardson ensured that there was an abundant food supply. One prisoner wrote about his rations at Camp Chase during this period, reporting that the standard issue "consisted of fresh beef, corn beef, salt pork, bacon, flour, light bread, sugar, coffee, tea, pepper, salt, vinegar, etc., etc., all in the greatest abundance." 23

Cowen agreed and noted in his report that "the sleek, fat, comfortable looking rebels were never better fed nor more comfortably situated." Stating in his report that the "rebel ration" constitutes "a bill of fare much more creditable to our generosity than to our proper consideration of the treatment due an enemy which has constantly violated the commonest dictates of

humanity in the treatment received by our soldiers now languishing
in the Southern prisons." He closed his report by reporting that
all perceived excesses were "strictly in accordance with
instructions from Col. Hoffman, Commissary-General of prisoners,
and there is no authority in the camp or elsewhere in this
vicinity to correct the abuse." He also recommended that Brough
bring these matters to the "personal attention of the secretary of
war."

Brough endorsed the report and forwarded it to Stanton on
August 3, where it made quite a stir at the War Department.
Stanton ordered it sent to Hoffman for comments. Hoffman offered a
meek reply which implicated Richardson. Hoffman alleged that "if
an excess of food has been received it shows that the commanding
officer, from want of judgment, has permitted what was intended as
a privilege to grow into an abuse." Hoffman also issued guidance
to prison commanders instructing them to restrict sutler sales
only to necessary items and to restrict delivery of packages to
the prisoners. This, combined with the reduction in rations,
caused severe problems at Camp Chase.

While these discussions were taking place 2,563 more
prisoners arrived at Camp Chase. They were ushered into 17 new
barracks, accommodating 198 prisoners each. Additional barracks,
drainage ditches, and sinks were being constructed which would
enable the camp to house between 7,000 - 8,000 prisoners.

Ten days after Cowen's inspection the prison was visited
by the U.S. Surgeon General's Inspector of Prisoner of War Camps,

C.T. Alexander. Alexander found morale, sanitation, drainage, and quarters to be good. He unknowingly disagreed with Cowen, however, on the issue of food.²⁹ Reporting to Stanton on August 11, Alexander commended the Camp for supplying a sufficient quantity of food for the prisoners but suggested an additional food supplement, fresh vegetables, be issued. He asked Stanton to order Richardson "to have issued...such antiscorbutics as may at the season of the year be most economical."³⁰ This suggestion went unheeded.

Alexander also found a well equipped, well staffed, and clean prison hospital. The post surgeon and his assistant treated the severely sick who were then nursed back to health by prisoner stewards who worked in the hospital.³¹ Diseases included diarrhea, dysentery, fevers, pneumonia which, according to Alexander, could be prevented by including more fresh vegetables in the prisoners' diet. He found the surgeon, S.S. Schultz, and his assistant, I.M. Abraham, to be capable men but not particularly attentive to the needs of the prisoners.³² Nevertheless, mortality rates for August, which were .81 percent, indicated the prisoners were receiving sufficient care.³³

Hoffman's directive to Richardson prohibiting sutlers from selling food to prisoners undoubtedly had a note concerning his non-compliance with the food reduction directive issue in April, for in mid-August Richardson brought the camp into compliance. This was announced to the prisoners in August. The reason given was the well publicized mistreatment and hardships

suffered by Union soldiers in Southern prisons. For the prisoners, this came as a devastating shock. One prisoner wrote that those in prison could not understand the edict: "fighting as best we knew how...we struck no dishonorable blows; we treated [Union] prisoners as true soldiers." They could not understand why they had to suffer for wrongs allegedly done by their government.³⁴

One prisoner wrote that camp officials reduced rations by about two-thirds. Daily rations during this period consisted of "twelve ounces of baker's bread, eight ounces of unsound salted white lake fish, bones and fish." Other items included "one tablespoon of navy beans, and a spoonful of vinegar."³⁵

Hoffman's order stipulated that prisoners could not receive packages, thereby forcing all prisoners to totally depend on issued rations. Within two weeks of Hoffman's directive, Richardson wrote Hoffman concerning the packages he received; a mountain of boxes of spoiling food which in the heat of late August was beginning to smell terrible. Hoffman told Richardson to either return the packages to the sender, at the prisoner's expense, or open and sell any unspoiled contents and deposit the money into the prisoner's account.³⁶ It is unclear which Richardson did, but the packages were never issued.

Richardson used prison labor to make major improvements to the camp throughout August, despite the prisoners' complaints about the ration issue. By the end of August, Richardson wrote Hoffman and reported that the project had gone well. All structures had been repaired and improved in this effort which

"involved the entire rebuilding of the camp and prisons." He stated that with these improvements the camp could accommodate between 7,000-8,000 Confederates.³⁷ The commander also noted that the hospital was becoming overcrowded because of the increasing number of prisoners, but he intended to remedy this through additions to the existing structure.³⁸

August had provided the camp with a influx of new prisoners. The population increased 121 percent. Reaching an all time high of 4,444. With the exception of reduced rations,³⁹ Richardson had provided well and had been prepared.

In September, prisoners reported that a daily ration consisted of "one thin slice of bread or a cup of corn meal, spoiled salted lake fish, and eight or ten navy beans once or twice a week."⁴⁰ Although reduced rations created a major problem for prisoners, sanitary standards within the camp remained high. Incessant drainage improvements continued and accounts speak of the prison as "being kept well policed and nicely drained."⁴¹ Some of the buildings which had been constructed in August needed ovens which Richardson ordered procured. These were slow in arriving and complicated an already exasperating food problem the prisoners faced.⁴² September saw the prison population rise to 5,310, an increase of 20 percent from the previous month, but still easily handled by the prison accommodations.⁴³ The mortality rate, which was .50 percent in July, had steadily risen. With the reduction of rations in August it climbed to .81 percent, and from there to .87 percent in September. The hospital was clean and well

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staffed and no major epidemics were reported.

In October prisoners were still complaining about insufficient rations and starvation within their ranks. The post Inspector General, Capt F.S. Parker, looked into the matter and examined the rations issued. He determined that they were sound and the quantity was in accordance with Hoffman's regulations.⁴⁵

Parker reported that the camp was exceptionally clean, that "in relation to personal cleanliness, clothing, bedding, quarters, kitchens, messing, sinks, policing of grounds, etc.; I have only to say that from frequent tours of inspection through the prisons, I find the most perfect system of policing is organized possible under the existing circumstances."⁴⁶

Construction continued at the camp as a new hospital was completed just outside the prison walls.⁴⁷

Population increased by 5 percent in October as the prison climbed to 5,598.⁴⁸ Many of the new prisoners reported in clothed in rags. Prisoners faced Ohio's first cold snap of 1864 poorly prepared. One prisoner wrote that "having been captured in battle we were but poorly clad, as were all Confederate soldiers at this period of the war, without blankets or over-coats, and in this almost summer garb were ushered into the presence of the first crowned king of a bleak and chilling climate."⁴⁹

Richardson ran into his first severe clothing problems. Unable to provide for all prisoners, he issued what he had to those who needed it the most.⁵⁰ A prisoner reported that "some of

the prisoners had blankets and a change of clothing, while others had none. There was a pretense of furnishing these necessary comforts, but if a prisoner had anything having even the semblance of a covering he received no consideration whatever." Richardson⁵¹ had requisitioned additional clothing but was unable to secure enough. In late October he was notified that a shipment was on its way.⁵²

New prisoners introduced smallpox to the camp during this period which turned into an epidemic around the middle of October.⁵³ The sick were isolated in an attempt to prevent the spread of the disease but this effort was unsuccessful because the prisoners, afraid to be assigned to the isolation ward, concealed their condition, thereby facilitating its spread.⁵⁴ Richardson ordered vaccinations in an attempt to halt the disease, but the vaccine, still not perfected in the 1860s, did some harm as well as good. The vaccine caused sores, infections, and resulted in at least one arm amputation.⁵⁵ During this month, prisoner mortality rose to 2.02 percent of the prison population, with 113 deaths reported.⁵⁶ In November salt fish was eliminated from the food issue, and seasoning salt was also eliminated from the meager ration. In desperation, the prisoners began boiling discarded fish crates in water to obtain a very offensive smelling salt which momentarily satisfied their craving.⁵⁷ Prisoners became desperate for food and scavenged for anything to eat. One prisoner during this time wrote:

The guards threw melon rinds, apple cores and parings into the street, and enjoyed our

scuffle for them. I often paid one dollar each for rats and ate them without bread, unless I chanced to buy a piece from some poor fellow who was near death. One day we got a stray dog in our room, but he escaped from us through the back window, or we would have had a feast. 58

Soon after all the rats in the prison camp had been hunted down, killed and eaten.⁵⁹ One prisoner who had refused to eat the rodents later lamented and wrote in his diary "I think if I had a rat well served up I would try him tonight."⁶⁰ Even the firewood issued to the prisoners began to look appealing. When the issue was elm, one prisoner wrote "we ate the bark, and I saw several fights for this bark."⁶¹ Prisoners would crowd around the garbage piles looking for food scraps. One prisoner observed that

men who had proven themselves to be such in the ordeal of battle, who at their homes were the best of citizens, and in the army respected for their honesty and soldierly conduct, had become so demoralized by the pains of hunger that they would feed like hogs upon the refuse thrown into the swill tubs from the hospital. 62

Prisoners sometimes performed details in the Union training camp mess hall. These eager volunteers were rewarded with a meal, then tasked to sweep, scrap, and wash the mess ware. Any scraps of food found on the floor or in the plates were carefully hidden, carried back into the prison and prepared into "cush" which would be sold by those on detail for one dollar a plate.⁶³

Richardson reported that he had discontinued the issue of salt fish and was issuing beef instead.⁶⁴ Prisoners reported this fact, but were adamant that the amount issued was far too small. They reported that occasionally a "small quarter of fresh beef for nearly two hundred men would be issued."⁶⁵ This meat,

probably weighing less than 200 lbs, closely approximated the weight of the authorized beef issue.

When the beef was issued, it created quite a stir in the prison. "Confederate officers", according to one inmate, would "stand around while the beef was being cut up and scuffle to pick up from the ground pieces of bones or meat which would fly off."⁶⁶ Prisoners lucky enough to wrestle away a bit of the garbage would crush and boil the bits of beef bones they had gathered to "get the thin skim of tallow which formed on top of the water."⁶⁷ Inmates, who had shared cooking duties as a prison detail several months before, now all insisted on being present when food was distributed or cooked, as "no one would trust his scant rations with another."⁶⁸ In spite of this, prisoners cooperated in ration distribution, though they were still distrustful.

Parker, the Camp inspector general, wrote Hoffman that he had discovered a problem in the way the meager rations were distributed. Parker suggested that "platform scales be purchased in order to enable the prisoners to make an equal division of rations after being issued by the post--say one to every four barracks."⁶⁹ This suggestion was never implemented, probably because of cost considerations.

It appears that Richardson, who had been characterized earlier as "not being very active or diligent in this discharge of his duties"⁷⁰ was largely unaware of the desperate plight of some of the prisoners. He authorized rations in accordance with Hoffman's regulations which should have provided a meager

sustenance for each prisoner. The problems seemed to lie in the distribution system either through contractor or guard pilferage, or through inadequate distribution among the prisoners. More than likely it was a result of all of these factors. Regardless of the reasons, the food shortage weakened the prisoner's resistance to disease and tolerance to weather.

Harsh discipline compounded ration problems. The Provost Marshal, Lieutenant Alexander Sankey, 88th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, lauded in inspections for his stern efficiency, was hated by prisoners for his "cruel, even brutal" treatment of prisoners. Major J. Coleman Alderson, 36th Battalion, Virginia Cavalry gives an example:

On one occasion the tunnel was completed, and our little band attempted to escape...passed through the exit beyond the outer wall; but when the next man peeped out, he saw they were taken in by Sankey's guard. The order of the procession was immediately reversed, and the disappointed prisoners returned to their bunks. The captured officers were placed in irons. Lieutenant Sankey ordered us to fill up the tunnel and to give the names of those engaged in this enterprise. We positively refused to do either. The rations for the whole prison were then cut off. Already weakened by disease and starvation, our condition was now deplorable. After nearly three days without one morsel to eat, we got an audience with Colonel Richardson, who countermanded Sankey's brutal order and gave us three days' back rations. Most of us consumed the whole three days' rations within a few hours. 72

The population remained fairly constant in November with 5,610 prisoners in custody. The requisitioned clothing was beginning to arrive, but in insufficient quantities. Richardson continued to find it difficult to provide for the prisoners' clothing needs. Mortality took a slight jump to 2.6 percent of

the prison population as 146 prisoners died from pneumonia,⁷⁴ typhoid, fever, dysentery, and smallpox. Parker wrote Richardson and attributed "the increase of sickness and mortality...to cold and wet weather and men exposing themselves by visiting the sinks in their night clothes. Although their clothing in many instances is not sufficient for this climate, yet it is much improved since their arrival at this post."⁷⁵

December brought snows and bad weather which turned the prison camp into a quagmire. Prisoners continued to endure insufficient rations as they faced worsening conditions in the camp. On the 11th, snow fell "two or three inches in depth with plenty of ice in the prison." When it thawed it prompted a prisoner to write in his diary that "our prison is certainly the muddiest place in creation; the ground thawed through and there is hardly a foot in the pen where you will not go over shoe mouth."⁷⁶ Mud was trampled into all facilities, leaving them filthy. The weather remained bitterly cold throughout the month as Richardson continued to face difficulty clothing all of the prisoners, so he had straw issued to help keep them warm.⁷⁷

The prison population actually dropped in December due to death. The mortality rate increased to 2.77 percent as the poorly nourished men fell prey to disease and harsh weather.⁷⁸ Smallpox remained a problem in the camp although the surgeon reported that vaccinations were beginning to bring it under control. These vaccinations continued to produce bad side effects.⁷⁹

On Christmas eve, Richardson acknowledged Hoffman's message

that he should expect and prepare for "from 4,000 to 5,000 prisoners from Nashville." Richardson wrote that he was prepared to receive the men, but was perplexed by Hoffman's instructions that "Confederate authorities will supply them with clothing and blankets." He asked for clarification.⁸⁰

The supplies Hoffman referred to were to be provided by Brigadier General William N.R. Beall, who had been paroled as a prisoner of war by Union authorities to act as a Confederate agent in charge of supplying Southern prisoners of war. Having surrendered at Port Hudson, Mississippi, and served time on Johnson's Island, Ohio, he was freed and given an office in New York City in 1864. He was, by agreement between the two governments, responsible for supplying Confederate prisoners at Camp Chase and elsewhere with clothing and blankets through the authorized sale of Confederate cotton.⁸¹

The 4,134 prisoners who arrived in January 1865 increased the prison population by 71 percent and brought the total to 9,423. Camp Chase, with a capacity to hold up to 8,000, was able to receive and adequately house these prisoners although in some instances it meant placing up to two men in one bunk. Overcrowding caused some sanitation problems although in general the prison remained fairly clean.⁸²

The biggest problem facing officials at Camp Chase was that many prisoners were already near death. The post inspecting officer, Capt E.K. Allen, wrote that the prisoners "most of whom have been wounded and necessarily require hospital

treatment accommodations and medical attention, all of which have been supplied." Aside from those who were wounded, Richardson reported that "a large number of the recent arrivals are in need of clothing to protect them from actual suffering, many of them being on their arrival here barefooted. I have ordered them to be supplied with shoes and such articles of clothing as are absolutely necessary to prevent suffering in this inclement season." ⁸³ Indeed, prisoners reported that when they arrived at Camp Chase they had less clothing than they had in the field. Many boots and other articles had been stolen ⁸⁴ by guards while enroute to the prison.

Richardson wrote Hoffman that "the prisoners received from Thomas' army have been very much exposed, and great mortality prevails. Pneumonia is the principal disease." In addition to pneumonia, smallpox was still a problem in camp though the new arrivals were being vaccinated as quickly as possible. Inspections revealed that the hospital was doing all it could to ⁸⁵ treat the sick and wounded who had been enroute since December 16.

The mortality rate soared in January to 3.11 percent, with 293 deaths reported. This rate would have been even higher had Richardson not authorized that shoes and blankets be issued because problems had prevented the Confederate government from ⁸⁶ shipping supplies to Camp Chase.

On February 1st General Ulysses S. Grant, realizing that the Confederacy was in its death throes, authorized the resumption of ⁸⁷ exchange. Camp Chase housed 9,416 prisoners.

The prison mortality rate soared again in February to 5.3 percent as more died from battle wounds and exposure suffered during their trip to Camp Chase. A camp inspection found the prison and hospital clean and well policed. Special mention was made of the hospital in the report which stated that "a complete and full amount of hospital and other accommodations have been furnished to accommodate all sick and wounded with good ward-masters and nurses; even with all this care [we] will not in all cases prove successful in reviving the wasted fragments of Hood's army."⁸⁸

In March the prison population dropped as 2,286 Confederates were paroled. The mortality rate also dropped to 3.93 percent, attributed to "the fact that those brought here in an almost dying condition have died, and the favorable change to those with enough vitality to be treated are slowly recovering, so that the present health of the prisoners can be said to be very good. The smallpox, which raged for a while so fearfully, through the various instrumentalities, viz, vaccination, with rigid removals and care, has almost disappeared from the prisons."⁸⁹

The March exchange would have been even more dramatic had there not been between 2,000 and 3,000 Confederates who, according to Richardson, refused to be sent back south on exchange. These men, believing that the South had lost, had no desire to be exchanged and possibly sent into a last battle for a lost cause. Accordingly, Richardson wrote Hoffman "I suggest some more favorable treatment in their case."⁹⁰

Thereafter, treatment improved as prisoners were released. In April, following Lee's surrender, Camp Chase housed 5,339; in May 5,539; June figures were 3,353, and by July they dropped to 48. By August there were no prisoners held at Camp Chase.

From July 1863 to the end, attitudes changed. Hesselstine attributed it to stories of the Confederacy's mistreatment of Union prisoners. At Camp Chase, publicity had some influence but it affected attitude changes far less than local events. The state government changed following a bitter pro vs anti war political battle. Morgan took the war deep into Ohio, was captured, then escaped. Break out rumors at Camp Chase were followed by a mass escape attempt which occurred during a state adjutant general investigation. These local events changed attitudes and the prison.

Up to July 1863, prisoners had abundant rations, received packages from home, and bought food from a sutler. In early August 1863 this changed because an angry governor complained to Hoffman and Stanton, who had ordered ration reductions weeks before. Richardson, who for unknown reasons disobeyed the reduction, was now ordered to comply. He reacted by strictly enforcing the reduction.

"War psychosis" influenced Camp Chase. Reduced rations and the denial of packages and sutler privileges came as a result of the knowledge that similiar conditions existed in the South. Union and state officials' attitudes exactly conformed to Hesselstines' theory. Hesselstine is correct on a national level. Hesselstine

observed that "war psychosis" manifested itself first in ration reductions, then in restrictions on packages and sutler sales, and ended in restrictions on clothing issue. Increasing prison populations compounded the problem and resulted in sickness.

Ration reduction and restrictions on packages and sutler sales imposed hardships at Camp Chase. Reduced but adequate rations revealed problems in distribution which had heretofore been covered up by abundant supplies. Restricting packages and prohibiting sutler sales only compounded the problem. Many prisoners were very hungry. Hunger was a reality among prisoners from August 1863, though official reports rarely mention the problem. Perhaps Richardson did not know the extent of the hunger, because his concern for prisoner welfare in medical care, sanitation, and clothing suggest that had he known, he would have corrected the problem.

In spite of the prisoners' hunger Richardson was not affected by "war psychosis." Camp Chase officials were less inclined towards harsh treatment of Confederate prisoners. Richardson bent the emphasis and complied with accepted norms in sanitation and medical procedures which made Camp Chase a reasonably good prison facility. Richardson continuously improved the camp, built new facilities, kept the prison policed, and ensured adequate medical care, including smallpox vaccinations. Richardson requisitioned clothing and issued it to prisoners although by agreement, the Confederate government was responsible for providing clothes.

The death rate rose after August but much of the increase

was due to new prisoners who arrived wounded or weakened from exposure following surrender. Smallpox epidemics also depleted the population though serious attempts were made to isolate the sick and immunize the prisoners. In all, Richardson and his staff provided the best care available under the circumstances.

TABLE 3

RATIONS

FOR EACH RATION	CSA* RATION	POW** RATION June 20, 1864	US RATION
Pork or Bacon or Fresh or Salt Beef	12 oz 20 oz	10 oz 14 oz	12 oz 20 oz
Flour or Bread (soft) or Hard Bread, and Corn-Meal	18 oz 12 oz 20 oz	18 oz 14 oz 18 oz	22 oz 16 oz 20 oz
TO EACH 100 RATIONS			
Beans or Peas, and Rice or Hominy	8 qts 10 lbs	6 qts 8 lbs	8 qts 10 lbs
Coffee, Green or Coffee, Roasted, or Tea	6 lbs - -	7 lbs 5 lbs 18 oz	10 lbs 8 lbs 24 oz
Sugar	12 oz	14 lbs	15 lbs
Vinegar	4 qts	-	4 qts
Candles	1 lb	5 candles	1 1/4 lb
Soap	4 lbs	4 lbs	4 lbs
Salt	2 qts	2 qts	3 3/4 lbs
Molasses	-	1 qt	1 gal
Potatoes	-	30 lbs	100 lbs

* Specified by CSA regulations, but actual ration issue varied.

** The prisoner of War (POW) issue was slightly reduced again in January 1865 as several condiments were eliminated, but this reduction appears to have gone unnoticed by the prisoners at Camp Chase.

TABLE 4
DEATH RATE JULY 1863 - JULY 1865

	POPULATION	DIED	PERCENT	NOTES
1863				
JULY	3,340	9	.27	
AUGUST	3,322	19	.57	
SEPTEMBER	2,140	21	.98	
OCTOBER	2,333	26	1.11	
NOVEMBER	2,712	19	.70	
DECEMBER	2,828	14	.50	
1864				
JANUARY	3,047	15	.49	
FEBRUARY	2,195	18	.82	
MARCH	1,604	8	.50	
APRIL	1,223	20	1.64	1
MAY	1,546	26	1.68	
JUNE	1,667	10	.60	
JULY	2,015	10	.50	
AUGUST	4,444	36	.81	2
SEPTEMBER	5,310	46	.87	
OCTOBER	5,598	113	2.02	3
NOVEMBER	5,610	146	2.60	4
DECEMBER	5,523	153	2.77	
1865				
JANUARY	9,423	293	3.11	5
FEBRUARY	9,416	499	5.30	
MARCH	7,861	309	3.93	
APRIL	5,339	132	2.47	
MAY	5,539	80	1.44	
JUNE	3,353	45	1.34	
JULY	48	2	4.17	6

NOTES

1. In February and March 1,773 transferred to other prisons, leaving a disproportionate number of those too ill to travel behind, causing the death rate to increase.
2. Ration reduction plus a large influx of wounded.
3. First severe clothing shortages as sick and wounded Confederates poured in. Smallpox epidemic.
4. Problems with pneumonia.
5. Severely exposed, sick and wounded survivors of Hood's army arrived. Richardson ordered shoes and blankets issued even though the Confederate government was obliged to supply.
6. August death rate does not represent treatment prisoners received. All but severely ill were released in July.

CHAPTER 4

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to test William B. Hesseltine's thesis by making a detailed examination of one prison camp, something Hesseltine was unable to do because he was surveying them all, both Union and Confederate. His basic thesis is that:

...prisoners [both North and South] were well treated by their captors in the early days of the war. But after the cessation of exchange...the prisons of the South became crowded, and the poverty of the Confederacy resulted in excessive suffering among those unfortunates who were confined in the stockades of Andersonville, Florence, Millen, Macon, and Columbia, or spent dreary days in the famed Libby prison or on Belle Isle. These conditions, being reported in the North created the belief that the prisoners were ill treated through a deliberate purpose; the inevitable hatred engendered by the war made such a belief readily credible. The result of this psychosis was that prisoners in the Northern prisons were forced to suffer in retaliation for the alleged Southern cruelty. 1

In the context of Hesseltine's thesis, this paper focused on Camp Chase and answered the basic question: How successful were Camp Chase officials in managing a prisoner of war camp?

As Hesseltine observed, care provided prisoners before August 1864, was superb. Management problems inherent in the scramble to establish a prisoner of war facility had been quickly overcome first by the governors of Ohio, then by the Commissary General of Prisoners. Adequate medical care was provided, sanitation constantly improved, and facilities, clothing and rations issued.

By October 1862, Camp Chase was a smooth running facility with a low death rate.

After August 1864, prisoners in Camp Chase did suffer in retaliation for alleged Confederate cruelty to Union prisoners. Hesseltine observed that the "conditions in regard to [inadequate] rations lasted throughout the winter of 1864-1865 and until the end of the war. Everywhere the prisoners suffered for the lack of a proper vegetable diet." At Camp Chase this retaliation was limited to a slight reduction in rations, as well as restrictions on sutler food sales and package delivery. Clothing was tightly controlled, but it was still issued through July 1865.

Rations were closely watched by prisoners after August 1864. What should have provided adequate subsistence proved inadequate to some. Besides possible contractor pilferage and poor quality rations, food distribution problems developed in the camp. Prisoners insisted on being present when food was distributed. They scuffled for scraps and took advantage of others by selling garbage gathered on mess detail. Unlike the desperate conditions at Andersonville where prisoners fought one another "like...snarly dogs" over food, prisoners at Camp Chase cooperated in ration distribution, though they were still distrustful. Comradeship did not break down as at Andersonville. At Camp Chase, the regulation ration was adequate to sustain life, while at Andersonville it clearly was not.

It is unfortunate that rations were reduced in August 1864, just as the prison population was climbing toward an all time high and the war was winding down. Thousands of prisoners experienced hunger and unnecessary hardships leaving bitter memories and

accounts of their experiences. These accounts taint an otherwise record of good care provided. Camp Chase officials ran a successful prisoner of war camp. Constant improvements were made to medical facilities, camp sanitation, and quality of food offered (until August 1864). Clothing, when available, was also provided.

Hesseltine reported increased mortality at Camp Douglas, Illinois, because of "the long confinement [of prisoners], ineffective medical attendants, and the refusal to allow the sutler to sell vegetables." This was not the case at Camp Chase. Medical care and improvements in prison sanitation remained a top priority at Camp Chase through the war. Constant improvements and new construction kept the hospital capable of dealing with sick and wounded. Prison construction, drainage and waste disposal improvements made Camp Chase as healthful as possible for the location.

Peaks in Camp Chase's death rate are attributable to large numbers of sick Confederates arriving from battlefields or large numbers of transfers out, leaving behind those too ill to travel. The sick left behind were soon joined by recent captives who were wounded, sick or severely exposed. This caused a disproportionately high mortality rate.

Death rates between September and November 1862 give an indication of prisoner treatment. During this period political prisoners, citizens who had not been wearied in battle, comprised the majority of the prisoner population. The death rate for these

months was low as one might expect, but it was not significantly different from average monthly deaths in 1862 or from the death rates throughout 1863 when exhausted and wounded prisoners were housed there. Careful medical care and sanitation kept mortality rates low among Confederates.

When rations were reduced in August 1864, the death rate increased slightly, from .50 percent in July to .81 percent in August. The increase coincided with a large influx of wounded. Between July and August the population nearly doubled, with 2,429 new prisoners arriving from the Atlanta Campaign.

After August 1864, the continuous arrival of wounded made it difficult to judge accurately the impact of the ration reduction. Comparing Camp Chase's death rate from August 1864 and June 1865 to Union army deaths from disease during the same period, gives some indication of the care provided to prisoners. Camp Chase death rates are lower than Union figures for soldiers on active campaign despite a dramatic increase in prison population between August 1864 and June 1865. This shows that ration reduction had little impact on prisoner mortality.

Hesseltine found the "lack of [fresh] vegetables was the greatest defect in the prisoners' diet" following Hoffman's ration reduction order. Cases of scurvy were reported at several Union prison camps, including Elmira prison in New York, which reported seven hundred and ninety-three cases in one month.⁵ The scarcity of fresh vegetables and fruits resulting from restrictions on sutler food sales and elimination of package delivery in August 1864

undoubtedly weakened some Camp Chase prisoners, making them more susceptible to disease. The impact of this, however, was not as severe as Hesseltine suggests. Scurvy was not reported as a significant problem at Camp Chase. Union soldiers on campaign also lacked fresh fruits and vegetables, which undoubtedly influenced the disease death rate.

Looking at the entire period, we can compare the highest prisoner monthly death rate for 1862 through 1865 with the Union Army's annual death rate from disease:⁶

TABLE 5

DISEASE DEATH RATE

UNION SOLDIERS VS. CAMP CHASE PRISONERS

Union Annual Monthly Average		Camp Chase Highest Monthly Rate
1861	1.08	Unknown
1862	4.9	1.07 (May)
1863	6.3	1.26 (June)
1864	4.8	2.77 (December)
1865	5.6	5.30 (February)

Union figures reflect increasingly long and difficult campaigns. Camp Chase figures represent deaths from disease and battle wounds. Confederate captives sent to Camp Chase were also weakened by long campaigns, poor food, and sparse clothing. The Confederate army death rate from disease is not reported in

Confederate records, but Union estimates show it to be much higher than the Union mortality rates listed above. In light of these factors, it is remarkable that the prisoner death rate at Camp Chase was so low.

Rules, regulations and guidance issued by state and federal governments were essential in making Camp Chase a well functioning prison. Proper sanitation and medical care were essential ingredients in keeping Camp Chase mortality low. Competent commanders were an important ingredient in adequate prisoner care. Good officers made a positive impact on prisoner care and on effective administration of Camp Chase. When quality officers were in command, things ran smoothly; when not, things did not run so smoothly.

William B. Hesseltine's thesis is partially correct when applied to Camp Chase. Prisoners were well treated up to the time rations were reduced in retaliation for alleged Confederate cruelties to Union prisoners. In spite of this, Camp Chase officials continued to provide quality medical care, continued to stress sanitation and provide clothing late in the war even though they were not obligated to do so. The death rate was always lower than the Union soldiers on campaign. This demonstrates that officials at Camp Chase were successful in managing a prisoner of war camp, even during the period of Union retaliation.

CHAPTER 5

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1

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2

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3

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4

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5

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6

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