Point Lookout, Maryland

The Largest Civil War Prison

Robert E. Crickenberger Jr.

Unedited Excerpt

To my parents, Bob and Celeste

and

Daniel D. Harlan Crickenberger
Sergeant, Company G, 10th Virginia, Prisoner of War
Point Lookout, MD: May 14–July 28, 1864
Elmira, NY: July 31, 1864–June 21, 1865

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Foreword

Ifirst met Bob Crickenberger at a living history event held at the Spangler's Spring area of Gettysburg National Battlefield Park in the spring of 2000. At that time, I was looking for a new progressive Civil War group to join, one that combined the authentic portrayal of Union soldiers with an in-depth history of the units we were representing on any given Civil War battlefield. Waking up on the hard ground at Spangler's Spring on the Sunday morning of that weekend and following a busy day of demos we presented all day Saturday, I heard Bob call, "It's time for 'Sunday Services boys!'" Only partially awake, I followed the rest of the unit of "Company C" halfway up Culp's Hill and deposited myself on the ground, along with the rest of the men by one of the many unit monuments found on Culp's. Bob proceeded to pull book after book from his camp sack, and read from unit memoirs and secondary sources, providing us all with a deep dive into the combat proceedings for the men whom we were portraying that weekend. Right then and there I was hooked. I knew I had found a unit that took its history very seriously, led by a man who understood what history was all about.

Since that event, now more than twenty years ago, Bob and I have developed a deep and abiding friendship. Along the way I have accompanied him on many more living history weekends throughout the Eastern Theater of the war, on many private trips to various museums and battlefields, and spent countless hours just "talking history." I taught a Civil War elective to seniors in high school for many years, and I had come to know and understand a great deal about those calamitous years. But what Bob knows and understands about the events of 1861–1865 is on a level of depth and sophistication that I will never attain. There has never been a conversation between us over all these years when Bob has not taught me something new regarding the Civil War, especially when it comes to Point Lookout

prison camp in southern Maryland. Other than all of the time Bob has spent with his family "up the road" at Chesapeake Beach, Bob has "lived" at Point Lookout. Bob truly lives, eats, and sleeps history.

When we first met, I knew that Bob wanted to write a definitive history of the prisoner-of-war camp at the Point, and I have watched with admiration for how conscientious and relentless he has been in seeking out materials in support of his book. Bob's research is both complete and impeccably balanced, taking into consideration the firsthand records and views of both the North and the South. As a result, Bob has produced the definitive history of Point Lookout prisoner-of-war camp that will stand the test of time.

Congratulations, my friend,

Kendall Mattern

Preface

Prisoners of war expect humane treatment by their captors while waiting for exchange. Ideal as this may sound, seldom has this ever been the case. In earlier wars, priority was placed on the exchange of prisoners, but they could be further subjected to ransom, enlistment into the army of their enemy, parole, or even suffer some form of retaliation. According to Emmerich de Vattel's internationally recognized *Law of Nations*, acts of war committed by the members of the armed forces of belligerents are not considered criminal acts. Therefore, soldiers that are captured are not liable to be tried as criminals for committing recognized acts of war. Instead, they become prisoners of war. Receiving prisoner of war status, they expect to receive *non-punitive* detention and protection.[1]

More Americans experienced internment as a prisoner of war in the Civil War until World War II. The American experience had been that policies and regulations that governed the treatment of prisoners and their care continued to remain flexible, tenuous, and non-binding from the time of the American Revolution until the first shots were fired upon Fort Sumter. With the advent of the Civil War, it was evident that neither belligerent had learned the lessons of the previous three wars when it came to the care and treatment of prisoners of war.[2]

The *United States Army Regulations of 1861 (revised in 1863)* addressed the subject of the prisoner of war in three diminutive articles that stated that prisoners would be disarmed, receive subsistence, then sent to the rear to be paroled and

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1 Stephen C. Neff, *Justice in Blue and Gray: A Legal History of the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 20–24.

2 Alan Marsh, "POWs in American History: A Synopsis," National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/ande/learn/historyculture/pow_synopsis.htm; Charles W. Sanders, *While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2017), 25–26.

exchanged based on the orders (if any) of the "General commanding-in-chief, under the instructions of the government." From the outset, the caring for prisoners was seldom a priority of either government. The obvious action to take was to exchange prisoners as soon as possible. It would take a degree of recognition of the legitimacy of the Southern belligerent by the Lincoln administration to be governed by the *Law of Nations* regarding prisoners. Was it a war between belligerents, a territorial war, or a rebellion of states against the national government? Initially, neither regarded the conflict as a civil war.[3]

The eventual Dix-Hill Exchange cartel of 1862 (named for its first exchange commissioners, Union Gen. John Dix, and Confederate Gen. Daniel H. Hill) stated that prisoners were to be paroled if not exchanged within ten days of their capture. Due to the initial success of the cartel, those prisons in operation were basically void of prisoners by mid-1862. However, by mid-1863, the cartel began to have its problems with prisoner exchange because of captured Black Union soldiers. This would cause a major slowdown to any further exchanges. It became evident that neither government had anticipated the possibility of a breakdown of negotiations and a resulting accumulation of prisoners by both sides. As a result of the breakdown of the cartel arrangement, prison populations began rapidly to increase. Neither government was prepared to supply care, protection, and security for so many prisoners for such a prolonged period. Unprecedented hardships and suffering in both prison systems resulted.[4]

Due to the failure of negotiations, prisoners began languishing in camps for extended periods. They suffered from conditions that resulted from acts of retaliation and the politics of government officials, much like American prisoners had during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The Federal government reinstated the position of commissary general of prisoners in 1861. The United States Army Regulations of that year contained nine articles outlining the duties of the commissary general of prisoners. Along with these guidelines, the appointed officer was expected to conduct business as directed by the administration. As the Civil War developed into a prolonged conflict, the need for clearly defined regulations governing the treatment of prisoners of war became paramount.[5]

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3 Revised United State Army Regulations of 1861, Fed. Reg. (1863); Neff, *Justice in Blue and Gray*, 29.

4 United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of War, 1880), Series 2 vol. 5:306–307. Hereafter cited as "*OR.*"

5 United States Department of the Army, "Article IV," in *Revised United State Army Regulations of 1861. With an Appendix Containing the Changes and Laws Affecting Army Regulations and Articles of War to June 25, 1863* (Washington D.C., 1863), 11–12.

Lincoln, of course, refused to recognize the legitimacy of the so-called Confederate states. There was some discussion within Lincoln's cabinet at the beginning of the war (especially at the prompting of Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase) as to whether granting prisoner-of-war status to captured Confederate was tantamount to legal recognition. Eventually, the Lincoln administration agreed to grant prisoner-of-war status, but as a matter of concession rather than as a legal right. Lincoln's continued refusal to recognize any aspect of the rebellious Confederacy would remain unchanged throughout the remainder of the war.[6]

As the Lincoln administration soon discovered, the acknowledgment of the status of prisoners of war would be one more hurdle to overcome, along with what to do with the mounting prisoner of war population. Issues concerning their treatment remained unresolved as hundreds of prisoners quickly grew into thousands. Without specific regulations, their treatment continued to remain open to interpretation between the two governments, influenced by conditions not specifically addressed by antiquated international laws.

During the mid-1800's, no new progressive or modern code emerged to provide answers or fill in the gaps left by earlier customs regarding prisoner treatment. Even though the Federal government claimed to be guided by the internationally recognized *Law of Nations* in the conduct of war, Lincoln considered these laws invalid, in some cases, specifically when it involved the treatment of prisoners (even though he would quote the same laws to justify later legislative actions). In April 1863, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck (then general-in-chief of the armies of the United States) recognized the necessity to produce a succinct, yet precise, updated version of the laws of war to be followed by U.S. armies in the field.[7]

To accomplish this, Halleck renewed his acquaintance with renowned German international lawyer and professor, Franz Lieber. Lieber, assisted by an appointed committee of military and government officials, was commissioned by the president to create and publish regulations that were issued to the U.S. services, in the form of General Order Number 100, (otherwise known as the *Lieber Code*). John F. Witt stated that Lieber "aimed to write a distillation for the laws of war for the age of democratic nations and mass armies" that covered a wide assemblage of previously unanswered questions and procedures regarding the conduct of war. Even though Lieber's code was issued as a general order to the Union Army, it was

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6 Dr. Allen C. Guelzo, e-mail interview by Robert E. Crickenberger, Jr., Chesapeake Beach, MD, June 26, 2021.

7 Emer de Vattel, Bela Kapossy, and Richard Whatmore, *The Law of Nations, Or, Principles of the Law of Nature, Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns, with Three Early Essays on the Origin and Nature of Natural Law and on Luxury* (1758; repr. Indianapolis, IN, 2008); Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2005), 550.

basically regarded as a set of guidelines and referred to as a "moral cloak" for how the Union would wage war for the duration. Prison camp commanders would regard the *Lieber Code* in this same way.[8]

The 33 articles of Section III of the *Lieber Code* specify the basic principles pertaining to the treatment of prisoners of war. The foundations of these articles are rooted within the law of war and the *Law of Nations* as they were influenced by the earlier European conflicts of the 18th century. The more advanced *Lieber Code* continued where the earlier customs left off. Even though the *Lieber Code* specifically states that a prisoner is due wholesome food and attention to medical needs, other factors needed for prisoner maintenance, such as security, shelter, and clothing, are not mentioned. These items were assumed and expected to be automatically provided to enlisted prisoners based on the *Law of Nations*. In accordance with these customs, the War Department reactivated the post of commissary general of prisoners in 1861 to administer prisons and maintain Rebel prisoners of war.[9]

The significance of the *Lieber Code*, particularly in the eyes of the global powers, was that the Lincoln administration would be the first government to issue such advanced regulations to its armies while at war and active in the field. Since the *Lieber Code* was considered a restatement of existing laws of war rather than new legislation, Congressional approval was not necessary, and the code immediately went into effect upon approval by the president.[10]

The accumulation of prisoners created several challenges for both Union and Confederate officials. Due to the suspension of the Dix-Hill Cartel and the further lack of cooperation by either government regarding exchanges, government-owned facilities such as forts, penitentiaries, and training camps rapidly filled. Fort Lafayette, in New York harbor, had its casemates filled with prisoners, practically rendering the fort defenseless. Prisoner housing became such a problem in early 1862 that Federal authorities resorted to housing Confederate prisoners in prison ships anchored in the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri. As these available sites became exhausted, the need for additional new prisoner camps became apparent. Faced with the limited number of facilities available for prisons in 1863, the War Department ordered the creation of additional prison camps, beginning

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8 *OR* 3:3/148–164; John Fabian Witt, *Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History* (New York, 2013), 231–232, 252.

9 T. Cole Jones, *Captives of Liberty: Prisoners of War and the Politics of Vengeance in the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 2020), 16.

10 Thomas Erskine Holland, *The Laws of War on Land* (London, 1908), 71; Neff, *Justice in Blue and Gray*, 57.

with Point Lookout. These new prison camps were expeditiously established and became part of a second wave of camps created to answer the growing need. The massive camps at Rock Island, Illinois (December 1863) and Elmira, New York (July 1864), then others, would soon follow.[11]

The prison camp at Point Lookout, Maryland (named Camp Hoffman by the prison administration, but commonly referred to as Point Lookout), was designated, initially, to hold 5,000 prisoners with the capability to expand by an additional 5,000. It was a vast, open field that would become a 30-acre prison camp surrounded by a 12-foot wooden stockade wall, crowned with a catwalk for guards. Its composition featured 10 divisional streets, nine mess halls, a sutler shop, and a post office, in addition to other support offices. Due to the eventual overcrowding of the stockade, the footprint of the prison would change twice to accommodate the ever-expanding population, forcing an enlargement of the prison within three months. Later, the prison would expand from the original 38 acres to 45 with the inclusion of the adjacent seven-acre officer's stockade and parole camp, making Point Lookout the largest prisoner of war camp during the war. (The prisons constructed at Point Lookout; Hart's Island, New York; Camp Butler, Newport News, Virginia; Johnsons' Island, Ohio; and Rock Island, Illinois, were the few prisons constructed whose sole purpose was to incarcerate prisoners of war).

Over 214,000 Southerners were confined in prisons and camps during the Civil War. The prison population at Point Lookout would exceed its designated population of 10,000 inmates in a matter of a few months after opening. Its peak population would surpass 22,000 prisoners during April 1865. The final accounting submitted in August 1865 would reveal that over 52,000 prisoners had passed through the prison gate during its two-year existence. Each state of the Confederacy was represented not only by the soldiery, but by members of the Confederate States Navy and over 190 civilians (a number which included seven women) and several Black men. These numbers also included citizens of several countries including England, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, and Germany.[12]

Almost two years to the month after Point Lookout was opened, it was shut down and its books closed. By 1867, most of the government buildings and materials that were not sold at public auction were dismantled by the Quartermaster Department and returned to the inventory of its departmental depots in

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11 *OR* 3/2:291–292, 327–328.

12 William B. Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons* (Kent, OH, 1962), 1; DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook, *They Fought like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War* (New York, 2003), 76, 86.

Washington and Baltimore. Hammond General Hospital at Point Lookout would flourish for another year as an asylum for wounded and sick soldiers and sailors.

Point Lookout's remote location, however, did not prevent its inclusion in newly created, innovative, policies and legislation designed to accelerate the Northern war effort. One of the most important pieces of legislation, passed in early 1863, permitted the recruitment of Black males, both Freedmen and former slaves, into the Union Army. As a result, Federal forces received thousands of Black males into their ranks that were soon seeing combat during Grant's Overland campaign.

This was followed by the creation of the Invalid Corps (Veteran Reserve Corps) a new branch consisting of men no longer fit to serve as frontline soldiers but who could still serve in noncombatant roles such as prison guards. This was followed by the creation of the U.S. Volunteers whose soldiers were once prisoners of war held at Point Lookout (two regiments would be mustered from Point Lookout). Once these new policies and organizations reached southern Maryland, they would impact the everyday lives of both the Southern prisoners and Union guards at Point Lookout.

Another new program would find its way to Point Lookout called the National Reburial Program. The precursor to this program was in progress during the late war but was formerly established by war's end and would continue for another couple of years. This program would recover and identify the various cemeteries at Point Lookout, further affecting the status of Point Lookout during the postwar years of Reconstruction.

Fortunately for the latter-day researcher and students of the Civil War, thousands of those imprisoned at Point Lookout produced a litany of personal records of their lives as prisoners. These accounts provide searing eye-witness descriptions of prisoner experience, survival, and death. Their memories of prison life add an essential human component to a history that too often focuses on battles, campaigns, tactics, and the outsized personalities of high officials.

My family lineage includes my ancestor, Johann Frederick Kruckeberg, who was a Hessian soldier captured on December 26, 1776, at the battle of Trenton. Fortunately, he remained in the United States. Since that time, several Crickenberger's have served, including during the War of 1812 and in the Civil War for the Confederate Army. My paternal grandfather served in the U.S. Army during World War I. My father served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean and Vietnam wars. I served in the navy during the Vietnam War, where our family service ends.

My personal interest in Point Lookout began in January 1978 after discovering that Sgt. Daniel D. Crickenberger, Company G, 10th Virginia, had been held there as a prisoner of war. Daniel was one of 11 related Crickenberger's who

fought for the Confederacy. Daniel was captured on May 12, 1864, at the battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, arriving at Point Lookout on May 14 by way of Belle Plain, Virginia (a massive holding area for captured Confederate soldiers during the war). He would remain at Point Lookout for approximately three months after which he was transferred in July 1864 to Elmira, New York, remaining there until his release in July 1865. It did not take long for a review of existing histories regarding Point Lookout, along with my research, to determine that a new study of Point Lookout was justified. Existing studies of this southern Maryland prisoner of war camp have relied upon too many postwar memoirs and diaries which often contain significant biases and faded memories, distorting the debate over responsibility for the conditions suffered by the prisoners at Point Lookout.

The primary purpose of this book is to clarify the record by the inclusion of newly uncovered information pertaining to what took place at Point Lookout, revealing the significant role that the camp played in the prisoner of war system. I wrote this book in the hopes that it would spark increased interest in the subject of Civil War prisons for the specialist and the general reader both. This book is the result of years of research and dedication to the preservation of Point Lookout and its memory. I am further indebted to the historians who preceded me with their research into this endlessly fascinating prison site. They provided me with the foundation for this study of how and why the prison camp evolved, and how it impacted the lives of so many thousands of Confederate prisoners, Federal guards, civilians, prison administrators, and family members.

Chapter 1

The Prison Camp at Point Lookout

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Before the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861, properties and stations manned by United States forces in the South were either surrendered to, or captured by, the newly organized Confederate government. These seizures produced the first prisoners of war even before the first land battles had been fought between the United States and the Confederacy. Over the course of the war, approximately 409,608 soldiers—about one out of every seven who served—surrendered themselves or were captured in battle. Most non-combatants were incarcerated for engaging in covert operations or for political reasons.

Prisoners of war could be held for weeks, months, or in some cases more than a year. Thousands suffered in debilitating conditions, and many continued to experience lasting effects in the post-war years. Of those captured, more than 214,000 were Confederates, of whom approximately 26,000 died while imprisoned. The number who later died because of the lasting effects of imprisonment cannot be calculated. From the outset of the war, the care of prisoners and the establishment of adequate facilities were not considered critical by either government as contributing to victory. In the early months, captives expected to be treated humanely under the assumption that they would be paroled and exchanged quickly, since many believed the war would be short-lived. Neither government was prepared for the large number of prisoners produced by extended campaigns.[1]

After hostilities commenced in mid-1861, Federal authorities acknowledged the possibility that the conflict might last longer than first anticipated.

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1 Charles W. Sanders Jr., *While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, 2015), 1.
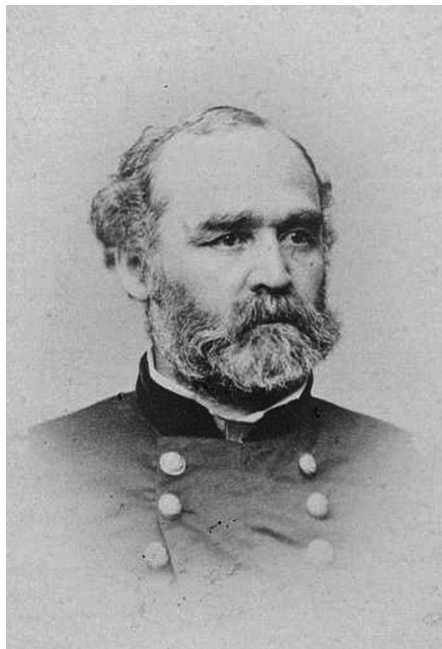
Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs
Library of Congress

Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs advised Secretary of War Simon Cameron to appoint an officer as commissary general of prisoners to manage the growing number of captives. The post was reactivated on October 7, 1861, with the officer designated, according to U. S. Army regulations, to serve directly under the quartermaster general. Cameron selected Lt. Col. William Hoffman of the 8th U.S. Infantry, who at the time had recently been paroled and was awaiting exchange (he was formally exchanged on August 27, 1862). With Cameron's approval, Meigs ordered Hoffman to fill the post.[2]

Hoffman was displeased with his appointment to a noncombatant position about which he knew very little. He soon lodged a protest, side-stepping Meigs, by writing directly to the secretary of war to express his dissatisfaction. Despite Hoffman's objections, Meigs secured him for the post. Meigs formalized the appointment with Special Order No. 284 on October 23, 1861, assigning Hoffman to the office and placing him directly under the quartermaster general in accordance with regulations.[3]

On January 13, 1862, Edwin Stanton replaced Simon Cameron as secretary of war. Stanton insisted that Hoffman report directly to him rather than to Meigs. On June 17, 1862, the adjutant general issued General Order No. 67 announcing Hoffman's appointment and outlining his authority, duties, and responsibilities as commissary general of prisoners, answerable only to the secretary of war. Hoffman established uniformity in the department regarding the management of prisons, reports, and inspections. He soon discovered, however, that his rules and regulations were often interpreted at the discretion of prison commanding officers. This issue was rectified with General Order No. 190, issued May 3,

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2 Leslie Gene Hunter, "Warden for the Union: General William Hoffman (1807–1884)" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1971), 2.

3 Sanders, *While in the Hands*, 68–69; *OR* 3/2:121.

Colonel William Hoffman,
Commissary General of Prisoners
Library of Congress

1864, by Secretary of War Stanton. The order expanded Hoffman's authority over prison camps and their commanding officers in all matters. It further stipulated that Hoffman served under the direction of the secretary of war and answered directly to him, which meant that any order from Hoffman carried the authority of Stanton.[4]

Meigs and Hoffman were part of the antebellum United States Army, which in 1861 numbered approximately 16,000 men in 198 companies stationed throughout the United States and its territories. It was an army that operated on a spartan budget, forcing officers to restrict expenditures and employ creative means to provide equipment and supplies for their men. They functioned within a strict accounting system under the constant threat of fraud investigation. As a result, officers discovered that by converting a portion of the funds allotted for rations, they could generate a budgetary surplus, which allowed them to purchase and substitute other needed items. Even after the commencement of hostilities, this frugal budgeting remained a part of U.S. military culture, and Hoffman both used and encouraged this method among his subordinates as commissary general of prisoners. He was eventually responsible for 32 active prison camps and several parole camps for exchanged Union prisoners.[5]

Hoffman's abstemious spending proved to be more extensive and effective than Meigs had anticipated. Their prewar habits of frugality remained evident in
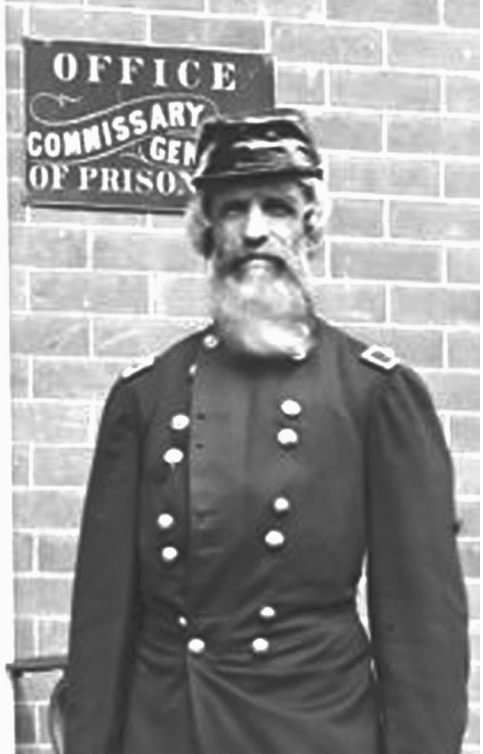
4 *OR* 4/2:4, 30; Revised United State Army Regulations of 1861, Fed. Reg. (1863), Articles 121, 253; *OR* 7/2:105–108

5 Curtis S. King, William Glenn Robertson, and Steven E. Clay, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign, Virginia, 4 May to 15 June 1864: A Study in Operational-level Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2006), 1; Hunter, "Warden for the Union," 231.

the establishment, command organization, and daily operations of prisons and prison sites.[6]

By mid-1863, the Lincoln administration determined that the war was no closer to conclusion than it had been during the previous two years of fighting. Lincoln soon transformed his administration's conduct of the conflict, abandoning what he described as the "rose-water approach" taken by his generals for a more aggressive strategy. The results of this shift did not become evident until early 1864, when the newly promoted army commander, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, began conducting vigorous campaigns on multiple fronts. Grant's aggressive battlefield offensives strained Confederate resources beyond their capacity to reinforce armies, slowly exhausting the Confederacy's limited manpower. In doing so, the sustained northern pressure produced an unprecedented number of prisoners.[7]

Prior to Grant's assumption of command, the prisoner exchange system known as the Dix-Hill Cartel; the prisoner exchange agreement negotiated between the two governments, began to collapse over the legitimate status of captured Black soldiers, who were then being recruited into the U.S. Army and Navy. The resulting suspension of exchanges created an influx of prisoners for both sides, with camps quickly reaching their intended capacities. The Lincoln administration recognized that halting the prisoner exchanges would deprive the South of much-needed manpower. Thus, prisoner populations in northern facilities continued to grow. This situation worsened after the simultaneous Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg in July 1863, which added an even greater number of captives.

It soon became clear that prisoners of war constituted something like a parallel army that each government was responsible to maintain. The care and upkeep of prisoners-imposed burdens on both governments, especially as additional resources became necessary. This strain was particularly severe for the Confederacy, which struggled to provide for its forces in the field. Denying care to prisoners was politically fraught for both governments, but especially for the South as it sought foreign recognition and legitimacy. According to the provisions of the *Lieber Code* (General Orders No. 100) issued by the United States in April

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6 Sanders, *While in the Hands*, 70–71, 90.

7 John Fabian Witt, *Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History* (New York, 2012), 2.

1863, prisoners of war were to be protected by their captors and were entitled to wholesome food and medical attention when needed.[8]

Prison sites were seldom suitable for confining human beings for extended periods. Facilities were hastily organized and insufficiently planned by both governments. The prevailing assumption was that sites would be used only for short-term confinement, with little consideration given to the possibility of a prolonged war. Locations were selected primarily for convenience and expediency, less for long-term feasibility as prisons. Often, the buildings chosen were vacant and had previously served industrial or commercial purposes. By the end of the war, approximately 180 locations and structures were used as prisons (98 Union and 83 Confederate), of which 32 Union and 34 Confederate camps were designated major prisons in the North and South, respectively.[9]

The rapidly growing prisoner population created significant challenges for both the Union and Confederate administrations. Due to increasing battlefield captures and the absence of cooperation between the governments in exchanging prisoners, numbers began to exceed what Union officials had originally anticipated. Existing government-owned facilities such as masonry forts, penitentiaries, and former training camps found themselves rapidly filling to capacity.

As existing prison sites became fully occupied, the need for additional camps grew urgent. In response, the War Department issued orders in 1863 for the expedited establishment of new prison facilities designed to accommodate the growing number of prisoners. Within General Order No. 190, dated May 3, 1864—which also established the authority of the commissary general of prisoners—seven prisons were designated principal prison camps. Point Lookout was named first among these principal prisons, reflecting its status as the largest and most significant Union prison camp. (Point Lookout was also referred to as a "depot," or "station", meaning that imprisonment was intended to be temporary, with the expectation of transferring prisoners farther north.)[10]

End of Unedited Excerpt

8 *OR* 3/3:156–157, (Art. 76/79.)

9 Lonnie R. Speer, *Portals to Hell: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA, 1997), 323–339.

10 *OR* 7/2:106.