The condition of inmates at Andersonville

(Library of Congress)

In 1864 the Civil War was raging through parts of the South, but actual fighting hadn't reached remote Andersonville, Georgia, where the prison camp, Fort Sumter, had been built. On one particularly hot July evening that year, a Confederate guard from the 26th Alabama regiment stood watch on the parapet of the stockade prison, which was more commonly referred to as Andersonville Prison by the locals, and as "hell" by
the Union soldiers and sailors incarcerated there.

The prison was nothing more than acres of open ground surrounded by a stockade fence and earthworks barricades. The destitute prisoners sheltered themselves as best they could, some with makeshift tents, others in shallow holes dug in the dirt, lined with pine needles, and covered with whatever scrap of fabric the men had-a tarp, a blanket, maybe
a tattered coat. The prison was so crowded that each man had just enough room to lie down.

As dusk gave way to night, the guard looked out on thousands of prone, wretched bodies-some of them nearly skeletons from dysentery and malnourishment-and he thought of Andersonville as a massive graveyard where the corpses were still breathing and graves were yet to be covered.

It was a damn pity, the guard thought, but this was war, and from what he'd heard, the Yankees had their own prison camps, some no better than Andersonville, or so he told authorities later.

He leaned on his rifle and surveyed the dead line, a simple waist-high fence inside the prison that ran parallel to the stockade walls.
The fence, made up of posts set in the ground connected by a single line of horizontal planks, had been constructed to keep prisoners away from the walls. The area between the dead line and the stockade walls was kept vacant to prevent prisoners from trying to tear down the walls or tunnel underneath them. Crossing the dead line without permission was strictly forbidden. Captain Henry Wirz, who was in command of the stockade, ordered his guards to shoot any man caught on the wrong side of it.

The guard from Alabama could hear the prisoners below him. They groaned and moaned and chattered among themselves until the mass of them sounded like a single, restless behemoth. But tonight the guard thought he heard something else. He thought he might be going crazy, but he'd heard the same sound that morning and the night before as well. It sounded like the cries of a newborn.

He scanned the terrain of bodies and squinted through the gloom. A baby in this hell hole? he thought. The Lord could never be so cruel.

But then he spotted a figure crawling out of a ragtag tent. When the figure stood up, the guard noticed that the person was wearing

skirts. The silhouette swayed back and forth in place, like a forlorn dancer without a partner, and she seemed to be holding something in her arms, holding it close. The guard strained to pick out landmarks on the prison grounds, the larger tents of the bullies and raiders, trying to gauge the exact location of the silhouette. It was hard to be certain in this light, but he thought she was standing in the area where the newlyweds had pitched their tent about a year ago, Captain and Mrs. Harry Hunt. And she wasn't the only woman inside the prison walls. There was another somewhere on the field, a faithful wife who would not leave her husband's side.

But a baby? he thought. It just couldn't be. Andersonville was where people died.

He heard a series of high-pitched, plaintive wails that carried over the din, and now there was no doubt in his mind that there was a child down there. The silhouette in skirts swayed faster, bouncing the bundle on her shoulder. The guard didn't like this development at all. He feared for their safety. A horrible thought passed through his mind-the emaciated prisoners falling upon this child for food. His heart was thumping hard. He had to tell someone about this immediately.

By the end of 1863 it had became obvious to the leadership of the Confederacy that they could no longer house Union prisoners of war in their Richmond, Virginia, prisons. These prisons were being run by skeleton crews, and the Confederacy feared that if Union cavalry penetrated the city, the prisoners would be spurred on to riot and break out of their confines, aiding their fellows and depriving the South of prisoners that they could exchange for their own men who were being held in the North.

Furthermore, these 13,000 Yankee prisoners were milking Richmond dry, consuming large quantities of food in a city that had little for its own population. General Robert E. Lee and Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon agreed that it was time to relocate these prisoners deeper in the South where they would be farther from the reach of Union forces and where food would be more available.

Seddon assigned Brigadier General John Winder, the chief prison keeper of the Confederacy, to the task of finding a suitable location for a new prison. Winder dispatched his son, Captain W. Sidney Winder, to find a place that met Secretary Seddon's specifications. The site had to be isolated yet near a railroad line. It also had to have abundant sources of fresh water and mature timber. As Sidney Winder began his search, he soon found that the site also had to be far from any significant population since no right-minded voting citizen wanted a war prison in his immediate vicinity. The captain found the perfect spot in Sumter County, Georgia, a village called Andersonville Station on the Southwestern Railroad. It had a population of less than 20 adults, whose wishes could be easily overridden by the Confederate government.

In December 1863, General Winder appointed his second cousin, Captain Richard B. Winder, quartermaster of the new prison, which they decided would be called Camp Sumter. Richard Winder's job was to build the prison and get it done as quickly as possible. A 16.5-acre plot was marked off, 1,010 feet long and 780 feet wide. A small creek bisected

the site and would supply the prisoners with fresh water. The quartermaster's orders were to build an enclosure fit for 10,000 prisoners.

By January 1864 slaves from local farms were put to work on the prison. Pine trees were felled and squared, and ditches were dug in which to set the timbers. The stockade walls were 8 to 12 inches thick, and the timbers fit so tightly that light could not be seen coming from the other side.

The next month prisoners started to arrive at Andersonville. Most of them were already in poor condition, some severely malnourished, particularly those who had come from Belle Isle Prison in Virginia. With no shelters built on the prison grounds, the prisoners made do with what they had, constructing tents, huts and lean-tos out of whatever materials they had with them or could find on the site.

Within days of the prison's opening, 15 prisoners managed to scale the walls with a rope woven from pieces of cloth. Guards with dogs-the prison maintained a pack of 40 part-bloodhounds and two monstrous Cuban bloodhounds-recaptured the escapees the next day. This breakout prompted the construction of the dead line. Slaves were sent into the stockade to put up the dead-line fence. The prison population was informed in no uncertain terms that anyone crossing the dead line for whatever reason would be shot on sight.

The day after the dead line was completed a German-born Union solder nicknamed "Sigel" from the 2nd Division of the 11th Corps was caught reaching under the dead line to retrieve a discarded rag. A guard took aim and shot him, killing him instantly. Sigel died with the dirty rag in his hand.

News of Sigel's execution made its way to the North where it was used to great effect as propaganda. The general public had never heard of such a thing as a dead line, and Union newspapers decried its cruelty. But in fact the dead line was a standard feature in any stockade prison, and it was widely used in Union prisons.

Andersonville was guarded by two Confederate regiments, the 26th Alabama and the 55th Georgia. It is not known who fired the shot that killed Sigel, but the prisoners would have guessed it was a Georgian. As former prisoner of war Sam S. Boggs wrote in his memoir, Eighteen Months a Prisoner Under the Rebel Flag, A Condensed Pen-Picture of Belle Isle, Danville, Andersonville, Charleston, Florence, and Libby Prisons, "The Alabamans were intelligent and kind hearted: the Georgians were ignorant and brutal. The Alabamans would talk to us from their posts, while the Georgians were liable to shoot if we spoke to them."

As the war dragged on, the flow of prisoners to Andersonville became an unceasing flood. The camp became so overcrowded, an extension was ordered to enlarge the space by ten acres. One hundred and thirty prisoners were put to work constructing new stockade walls, which were completed on June 30, 1864. The next morning a 10-foot section of the old wall was torn down, and 13,000 prisoners were ordered to relocate

within two hours. The penalty for refusal was the confiscation of the prisoner's belongings. The order set off a stampede as prisoners ran to find a new spot, many of them scavenging timbers from the downed section of wall until there was nothing left.

But new prisoners kept coming, and by August Andersonville held nearly 33,000. Unofficially it was the Confederacy's fifth largest city. It was so overcrowded, there were only 27 square feet per prisoner, a patch roughly 3 feet by 9 feet. Rations were steadily reduced as the population grew. Salt, meat and sweet potatoes were eventually eliminated from the prisoners' diets. The cornmeal allotment was decreased, and food wasn't distributed every day. Desperate for nourishment, prisoners mobbed a bread wagon one day and tore it apart, picking it clean. Some prisoners developed methods for catching the swallows that swooped low over the camp and would eat their quarry raw before anyone could take it away from them.

Mean-spirited guards would toss hunks of cornbread into the pen just to watch the prisoners scramble. Occasionally they would drop food into the forbidden zone beyond the dead line so they'd have someone to shoot at. Visitors from the surrounding area were invited to observe the starving Yankees from the parapets as if the prisoners were zoo animals, and local Georgia ladies were often seen ogling at the emaciated, apparently finding the sight gruesomely entertaining.

A prison surgeon, Dr. W. J. W. Kerr, also heard the cries of the infant. Dr. Kerr who was originally from Corsicana, Texas, had just arrived at Andersonville that day. He inquired among the guards and learned of the plight of the Hunt family. Concerned for the welfare of the mother and child, the doctor convinced his superiors to remove the Hunts from the compound, and when he learned how they had come to reside at Andersonville, he started a petition to have them paroled. The doctor was moved when he discovered that the Hunts had been newlyweds when they were captured.

According to an article Kerr wrote for Confederate Veteran magazine, Jane Scadden Hunt of Chicago and Captain Harry Hunt of Buffalo, New York, were married in the summer of 1863 in New York City. Captain Hunt ran a sailing vessel out of that port, and to celebrate his marriage, he invited several members of the wedding party to accompany him and his new bride on a pleasure trip into the Atlantic. They had been at sea only a few hours when they were intercepted by a Union revenue cutter and ordered to sail to North Carolina to pick up a load of corn for the war effort. They reached North Carolina without incident, but while loading the vessel, they were captured by Confederate troops. Recognizing that the crew was made up of noncombatants, the Southerners released all but Captain Hunt. "His wife, thinking he would be released in a few days, refused to leave him; but instead he was finally sent to Andersonville Prison and both were held as prisoners of war," the article read.

The Hunts had been at Andersonville for 13 months when their baby was born. During part of that time Mrs. Hunt apparently disguised herself as a man. She had a trunk that contained some clothing and

"$5,000 in greenbacks," which was stolen by prison marauders. When her baby son arrived, she had only a few strips of cloth in which to wrap him.

Dr. Kerr addressed his petition to General Winder, who was in charge of the post, but the commandant of the stockade would also have a say in the Hunts' fate, and that job belonged to Captain Henry Wirz, the man responsible for ordering the dead line. The Swiss-born Wirz was reputed to be iron-willed and cold-hearted. The doctor wondered how the commandant would respond to the Hunts' predicament.

The man did not look like the devil. William Marvel in his book Andersonville: The Last Depot describes Captain Wirz as "a stooped, frail fellow." Some said he had the demeanor of a rodent. His hair was dark, and he wore a full black beard. His hazel eyes betrayed the nervous energy within him. He tended not to wear his uniform coat, preferring a white linen shirt, white duck trousers and a gray army cap pulled down low over his brow. He never went anywhere without a sidearm, either a large, intimidating LeMat grape shot revolver or one of two Colt navy revolvers he owned. According to Marvel both of the Colts were "defective and would not fire."

Captain Wirz was born Hartmann Heinrich Wirz in Zurich, Switzerland, in November 1823. As a young man he longed to study medicine, but his strict father discouraged that ambition, steering his son into commerce. Wirz married in 1845 and bore two children. In the late 1840s, he was imprisoned briefly, though there is no record of his offense. "Perhaps it was embezzlement," Ovid L. Futch speculates in his book History of Andersonville. "Perhaps he lived beyond his means and incurred a debtor's sentence." After his release, he divorced and was banished from Switzerland. He arrived in America in 1849.

After working for a short time as a weaver in Lawrence, Massachusetts, he resettled in Kentucky where he apprenticed with physicians. By 1854 he had set up his own medical practice in the town of Cardiz, where he married a widow named Elizabeth Wolfe. He was apparently ready to settle down, but his lack of medical credentials was discovered, and he was forced to leave Cardiz. He resettled in Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, where he found employment on the Marshall plantation, tending to the sick and injured among the slaves. How Wirz felt about this turn of events is unknown.

Wirz enlisted in the Fourth Louisiana Infantry on June 16, 1861. A year later, after being promoted to sergeant, he suffered a wound to his right wrist in the Battle of Seven Pines. He never fully recovered from that injury, and it caused him constant pain for the rest of his life. He was promoted to captain on June 12, 1862, and detailed to General John Winder, who gave him command of the military prison in Richmond. A month later he was given command of the prison at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He remained there through the fall, then was dispatched to Paris and Berlin as a special emissary of the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. Wirz spent a year in Europe on that mission. In February 1864 he journeyed back to the Confederacy, and on March 27 he was installed as commandant of Andersonville. His jurisdiction was relegated to the prison area itself, not the entire

facility.

How cruel or compassionate Wirz was at Andersonville is a topic of intense debate. During the 15 months that it operated as a war prison, it was widely regarded as hell on Earth. After the war, several Andersonville inmates published their recollections of the experience, and not all of them portrayed Wirz as a cold-blooded monster. The accounts of Wirz's command at Andersonville describe contradictory aspects of his personality.

The "Chickamauga" incident, for instance, has been reported in various ways, some showing Wirz as being needlessly punitive, others depicting him as iron-handed but consistent with the well-stated rules of the prison. Thomas Herburt, a one-legged, Canadian immigrant who fought for the North, was a well-known eccentric at Andersonville. He earned the nickname "Chickamauga" because of his nonstop chatter about his participation in the Battle of Chickamauga, where he lost his leg. He was generally regarded as a pest and was often victimized by his fellow inmates, who would beat him to shut him up and steal his rations because he was an easy target. His amputation wound had never healed completely, and he was frequently admitted to the prison hospital for treatment. On occasion the kinder guards would let him out of the stockade to avoid the abuse of his peers. After all, how far could a one-legged man of questionable sanity go even if he did try to escape?

In May 1864 the Confederate War Department ordered guards from Andersonville to the front lines, and these men were replaced by young, inexperienced reserves from Georgia. On May 13 a tunnel under the stockade was discovered, and an escape plot was foiled. The bitter prisoners who had long planned this escape route concluded that someone inside the stockade had betrayed them. They were sure that the culprit was mad Chickamauga. The next Sunday, which happened to be Whit-Sunday, a gang of angry prisoners confronted him, and when they started to threaten him physically, Chickamauga hobbled to the south gate, crossed the dead line, and shouted to the nearest sentry, demanding to be let out.

The sentry was a teenager with little experience guarding prisoners. He knew the dead line rule, but Chickamauga was clearly mad. The shoot-on-sight order could not apply in this case. The angry prisoners gathered at the dead line like agitated animals of prey. Fearing them, Chickamauga scuttled out of their reach and screamed for the sentry to let him out. The boy didn't know what to do. A riot seemed imminent. Captain Wirz, who had retired for the day, was summoned to the gates.

A furious Wirz mounted his white mare and rode into the stockade where he found Chickamauga ranting and blubbering. Chickamauga threw himself on the commandant's mercy. He pleaded to be admitted to the hospital, but Wirz refused him. Chickamauga then asked Wirz to kill him, for he'd rather die by an enemy's hand than by his friends'. Wirz immediately drew his pistol and offered to grant him this request. (Whether this pistol worked or was loaded is not known.) The angry

Yankees shouted at Chickamauga, demanding that he return to the prison grounds.

The situation was about to erupt when Wirz turned to the sentry and reprimanded him, ordering him to do his duty and shoot Chickamauga for violating the dead line. The young sentry hesitated, but according to some accounts, Wirz repeated the order, leaving the young man no choice. The sentry leveled his rifle on Chickamauga and fired, hitting him in the jaw. The mad man fell to the ground, thrashing and flailing. The guard apparently fired again, hitting him in the chest this time. Assuming that Chickamauga was dead, Wirz told the guards to leave the body where it fell as a warning to the other prisoners. The next morning when guards were finally sent into the stockade to retrieve the body, they discovered that the one-legged man was still alive. Chickamauga lingered a few more hours before he finally succumbed to his wounds. Several variations of this story were told after the war, and today historians cannot agree on the particulars.

With his white duck suits and his white horse, Wirz was dubbed "Death on a Pale Horse." Many felt that the name was particularly apt in regard to his handling of the prison raider problem. What began as isolated incidents of prisoners preying upon other prisoners became an epidemic when these marauders formed an alliance. Led by Willie "Mosby" Collins of the 144th New York, these thugs became known as "Mosby's Raiders," and at their peak they were 700 strong, armed with clubs, slingshots, brass knuckles and homemade knives. Many of them bunked together in a large communal tent in one section of the stockade, a patchwork affair sewn together from rags and garments stolen from other prisoners.

Some prisoners carried large sums of money with them, and they were prime targets for Mosby's men. The raiders employed "bunk steerers," prisoners who befriended new arrivals to the stockade and directed them to the "best" available spots in the compound. The steerers then informed the ruffians of the newcomers' locations.

Prisoners who fought back were subject to severe gang beatings. Several prisoners were killed defending their belongings. In one case a man murdered his own brother for the money sewn into his pants, then buried the corpse under his own bunking ground, sleeping every night on top of his brother's bones. The raiders operated by night, communicating with one another by whistling. Whenever innocent prisoners heard whistling in the dark, they lay awake, waiting for the sounds that followed-the smack of fists and clubs hitting flesh followed by gut-wrenching moans and cries.

The prisoners were ready to do something drastic to end the tyranny of the raiders, and a forthright new arrival named Dowd demanded to speak to the commandant after a pack of raiders beat him bloody. A mob of angry prisoners backed him up. They asked Captain Wirz if they could assemble a police force of their own-or "regulators," as they would be called-to protect the prison population from the raiders. Wirz agreed to their proposal and provided the regulators with clubs to enforce the peace inside the stockade. After consultation with General Winder, Wirz further empowered them to punish those they found guilty

as long as they abided by the rules of court martial and obtained permission before meting out sentences. Wirz wanted a swift end to the raider problem, so to hurry things along, he suspended the prisoners' rations until all the raiders were captured.

On June 29, 1864, the regulators went to work, rounding up the worst of the raiders and dragging them to the gates where Confederate guards took custody of them, securing them in stocks or with ball and chain. Nearly 200 raiders were captured, but Wirz felt that this was too many and ordered all but the most serious offenders back into the stockade. Angry prisoners armed with clubs ran to the gates and formed a gauntlet for the released raiders. Guards were ordered to fire buckshot at any raider who refused to run the gauntlet. The raiders tried to break through the sides of the gauntlet, but even those who succeeded were pursued and bludgeoned.

General Winder granted the prisoners' request to conduct their own trial for the worst of the raiders. To get as impartial a jury as possible, 18 new prisoners fresh off the train were selected. Three judges were elected, and several of the lawyers in the prison population volunteered to prosecute the cases. "Mosby" Collins had enough money stashed away to hire a defense attorney from among the prison legal pool.

A courtroom was set up in a shed outside the stockade gates. Regulators ransacked the raiders' tents, searching for evidence-cash, watches and other personal belongings stolen by the raiders. The trial took place over a period of several weeks and adhered to the rules of military law. Most of the accused were found guilty of minor crimes, but Wirz would not let them serve out their sentences in separate quarters. He ordered these men released back into the stockade. Word of Wirz's order spread fast, and when the gates opened to let these prisoners back in, a new gauntlet, now stretching 150 yards, was waiting for them.

Six of the raiders, including "Mosby" Collins, were sentenced to death. On General Winder's insistence, the transcripts of the trial were sent to Washington for federal approval. A letter allegedly signed by Abraham Lincoln granted the Andersonville prison court authority to execute the guilty. On the morning of July 11, a crew of prisoners built a crude scaffold where the six men would be hanged. It was devised so that all six would stand on a plank that would give way when the end props were pulled out, sending them to their doom simultaneously.

Shortly after noon, Wirz on his pale horse escorted the condemned men into the stockades. John McElroy in his 1899 memoir Andersonville: A Story of Rebel Prison, reported that Wirz in his thick German accent announced to the prison population, "Brizners, I return to you dese men so goot as I got dem. You haf tried dem yourselves, and found dem guilty. I haf had notting to do wit it. I vash my hands of eferyting connected wit dem. Do wit dem as you like, and may Gott haf mercy on you and on dem. Garts, about face! Vorwarts, march!"

As the condemned were led to the scaffold, one man broke free and ran for his life. Regulators chased him down and brought him back. The other raiders in the camp and their sympathizers shouted and jeered, threatening to cause a riot to free their comrades. The six men were given an opportunity to say their last words before they were hustled up onto the plank and nooses were fitted over their heads. Two executioners pulled the ropes that released the props holding the plank. The six men dropped, but Mosby's frayed noose snapped. The crowd surged, some calling for Mosby's release in the face of a sign from God that he was innocent. But the executioners quickly gathered him up, retied his noose, and pushed him off the scaffold. The condemned raiders were left to twist in the wind for 27 minutes.

Captain Wirz's cold, Pilate-like indifference regarding the condemned raiders seems to prove that the man had a heart of stone, but other accounts portray him as a gentleman of considerable kindness and charm. The officers' wives and the local Georgia ladies generally found him to be quite pleasant. On one occasion he paroled several dozen Union drummer boys and put them to work outside the stockade to save them from the horrors of the stockade. He even invited one of these boys to live in his own home.

Wirz showed mercy on the Hunts and provided Mrs. Hunt and her baby with a private tent outside the stockade walls. He paroled Captain Hunt and made him ward master of the hospital, so that he could be near his wife and son.

In May 1864 Union troops under the leadership of General William Tecumseh Sherman began a campaign on the city of Atlanta. Sherman's formidable presence in Georgia caused great concern at Andersonville. General Winder believed that Sherman might launch an attack on the prison to liberate the captured Yankees. The South had fewer men in uniform than the North, and the Confederate leadership did not want to see the Union army replenished with 33,000 freed prisoners. They apparently did not take into account that the harsh conditions at Andersonville hardly made these men battle ready.

To prepare for a possible attack, General Winder ordered the construction of two outer stockades and an earthworks barricade around the existing stockade. The work commenced immediately. With Sherman's army so close, there was no time to waste. A middle stockade 12 feet high and the earthworks barricade were hastily erected, but the outer stockade was never completed. Sherman did not attack Andersonville, and his troops took control of Atlanta in the fall.

It has been suggested by some historians that the Union did not attempt to liberate Andersonville or other Confederate war prisons as part of an attrition strategy. Feeding thousands of prisoners was more burdensome for the Confederacy than it was for the Union. Food given to prisoners was food taken away from Confederate soldiers.

At the beginning of the war, an exchange cartel had been established to arrange for the swapping of prisoners between the North and the South, but when the Union insisted that their black soldiers be traded on a one-for-one basis just like the white soldiers, the Confederacy refused. Freedom and equality for black slaves was the issue that had ignited the war. It was a point the Confederacy would

not concede although it desperately needed its soldiers imprisoned in the North. The Union would not negotiate this, even though it meant keeping Union soldiers incarcerated in hellholes like Andersonville. To win the war by attrition-if that was indeed the Union's plan-the confederacy's resources would have to be sapped in every possible way. According to William Marvel in Andersonville: The Last Depot, "In the summer of 1864, Ulysses Grant let it slip that there was at least a grain of truth to that argument: as hard as it was on those in Southern prisons, he contended, it would be kinder to those still in the ranks if each side kept what prisoners it had, since it would end the war sooner."

This was a cruel strategy if the Union leadership was fully aware of the horrible conditions at Andersonville. Prisoners died of exposure, malnutrition and a variety of diseases, including smallpox, typhoid, dysentery, diarrhea, scurvy and gangrene. Lonnie R. Speer writes in Portals to Hell: Military Prisons of the Civil War, "Diarrhea and dysentery, by themselves, were responsible for 4,529 deaths between March 1 and August 31, 1864." When a man was found dead inside the stockade, his body was simply left in the lane that ran in front of his shelter. A prison detail would eventually remove it.

Sometimes men would fake their own deaths, hoping to be carried out and left on the pile of corpses rotting outside the prison gates, so that they could run off after dark. Many men risked crossing the dead line to scale the stockade walls, but even those few who made it over the top didn't get far. Escapees were usually captured within a day. Out of the nearly 33,000 prisoners who spent time at Andersonville only 329 escaped successfully.

Andersonville served as a war prison for only 15 months. The everpresent threat of attack from Sherman's troops forced Winder to relocate prisoners to other facilities. This evacuation was long and torturous because most of the prisoners were in wretched shape, and the trains arrived irregularly. Security grew lax during this period as many guards were pulled off duty and sent to the front lines, but with no provisions and little strength, few prisoners attempted to escape. The evacuation proceeded slowly, but by November only 1,500 inmates occupied the camp. New arrivals brought the population up to 5,000 by December, and the camp remained at that number until the end of the war in April 1965.

All told, Andersonville Prison, which was originally built to hold 10,000 prisoners, held 32,899 at its most crowded. In all, 12,919 of them perished there. According to John W. Lynn in {800 Paces to Hell}, the death toll at Andersonville was roughly equivalent to the total number of Union soldiers killed in the six bloodiest battles of the war-Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, the Wilderness, Shiloh, Stone's River and Chickamauga.

There is no record of what became of Captain and Mrs. Hunt and their baby boy.

After the war, Captain Wirz was tried for the atrocities of Andersonville by a military tribunal that convened at the U.S. Capitol in Washington. Oddly Wirz stood trial on these charges by himself; his superiors were not indicted. Former prisoners gave vivid testimony

regarding beatings and shooting allegedly administered by Wirz while Wirz's attorneys argued that a man with "a withered left shoulder and useless right arm," as William Marvel writes, could not possibly have delivered such punishment by his own hand. It was obvious that the North needed a scapegoat to satisfy its outrage over the horrors of Andersonville, and Wirz fit the bill. His conviction was inevitable.

On October 24, 1865, he was found guilty on one count of conspiracy to commit murder for conditions at Andersonville and 11 counts of murder, including the death of one-legged Chickamauga. Wirz was sentenced to death by hanging. His execution took place 17 days later within view of the Capitol in the yard of the Old Capitol Prison before a restless crowd of spectators, some of whom climbed trees to get a good look at the devil of Andersonville as he met his end. Wearing the customary black robe and hood of the condemned, his hands and legs bound with straps, Wirz was hanged at 10:30 in the morning. He was pronounced dead 14 minutes later. As his body was removed, knife-wielding spectators rushed to the scaffold to take slivers of wood and pieces of the rope as souvenirs.

Andersonville received 45,613 soldiers during it's existence. Date of greatest number (33,114)-8 August, 1864. Daily average deaths during it's occupation 29 3/4. Mortality rate, per/1000-24%. Mortality of 18,000 registered patients-75% Total Deaths include:

Gangrene-678
Scurvy-3574
Gunshot wounds-155
hung in stockade-6
Syphilis-7
Sunstroke-52
Small Pox-68
Jaundice-9
Constipation-93
Gonorrhea-3
Nostalgia-7 (not sure what this indicates?)
Unknown-443
(Cold weather below)
Pneumonia-321
Bronchitis-93
Pleuritis -137 (I think this is induced by cold weather??)

Deaths in stockade and Hospital during the existence of the Prison

March 1864-283
April-------576
May--------703
June-------1201
July-------1317
August----3076
September-2794
October---4590
November--492
December--160
January 1965--100
February------139
March--------192
April---------32

Total 12,912

Source-"Andersonville, The Southern perspective by J.H. Segars-
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