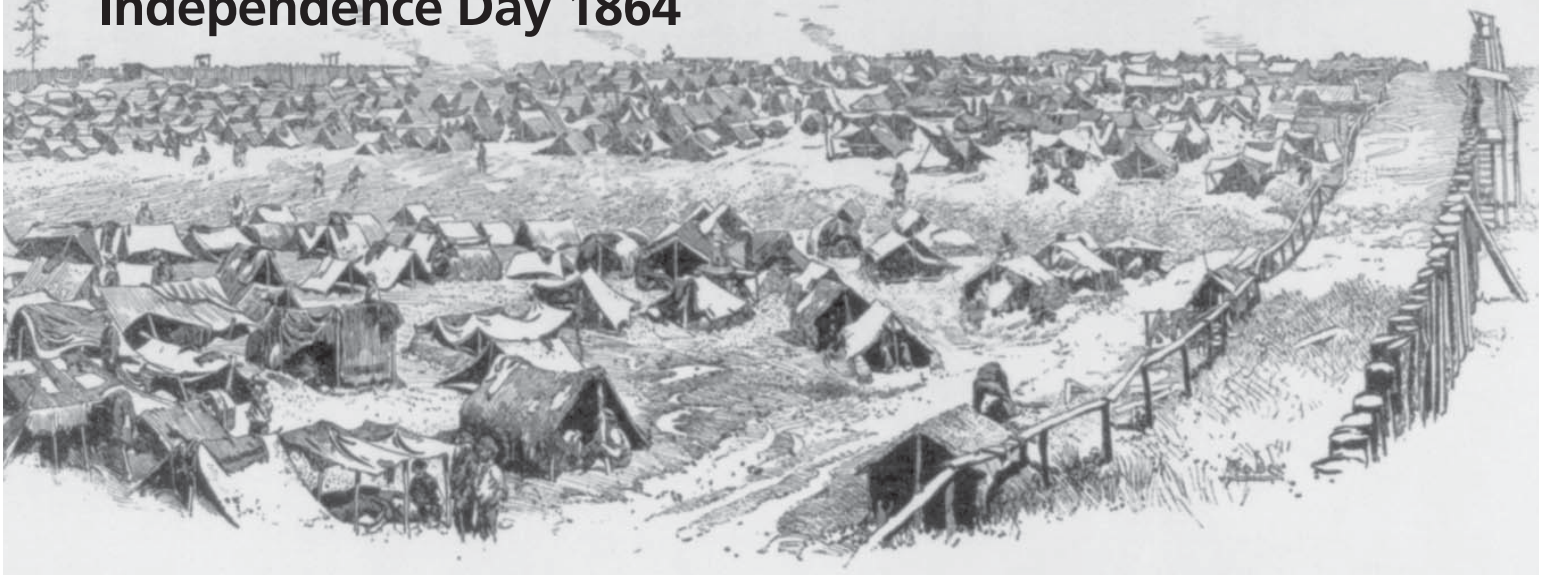




## Independence Day 1864



*“Almost the Glorious Fourth of July. How shall we celebrate?  
Know of no way except to pound on the bake tin, which I shall do.”* — John Ransom

At the beginning of July, Camp Sumter military prison was just over four months old. The prison population numbered well over 22,000. Days earlier a ten acre expansion of the stockade had opened, which enlarged the prison to its final dimensions of 26 ½ acres enclosed. These first-hand accounts illustrate the different ways prisoners experienced the anniversary of the nation’s independence during their captivity at Andersonville.

**Alonzo Tuttle Decker**

**Battery L, 7th New York Artillery**

Well the fourth open – very dull Hear the sound  
of one musket Have a very heavy thunder shower  
through the day They issue fresh beef boiled rind  
almost rotten that The boys almost starved eat it with  
relish

**John Duff**

**Company A, 101st Pennsylvania Infantry**

Sam Long and Dave Davis went back to the stockade.  
A very dry 4th of July. But we hope if the lord spares  
us life to be out of this place of torment.

**Samuel Henderson**

**Company M, 14th New York Heavy Artillery**

We had nothing but meal to eat and it rained.

**Christian L. Kinder**

**Company A, 22nd Pennsylvania Cavalry**

Monday, Weather – rained  
Camp Sumpter, A. Ga.  
Camp gave three cheers for the army before  
Richmond and three groans for the Confederacy

**William T. Peabody**

**Company F, 57th Massachusetts Infantry**

Raining very hard but the camp fires are burning for  
supper. This is a hard 4th I tell you, I never expect or  
wish to (see one like it) again; this is horrible to see;  
just come from the north for themselves it is enough.

**George W. Pennington**

**Company K, 141st Pennsylvania Infantry**

Very showery today, this is the day of Independence  
and here I am in prison far from home and friends,  
little did I think two years ago that I would ever  
spend the 4th in such a place as this and I pray God  
that I may never see another such a one as this.

**William W. Seeley**

**Company C, 150th Pennsylvania Infantry**

Heavy thunder Shower  
our camp is reorganised  
we are in the 32nd Mess  
Stephen & I Share pork beans onions & dumpling  
we draw raw rations  
1 qt corn meal 2 roll ¼ lb fish beef pr day

**William Tritt**

**Company F, 21st Wisconsin Infantry**

Sun rises very nice, but hazy and smeary looking.  
Gun cracked and the man squealed out as it took  
effect on or near the deadline. No rations yesterday  
& it’s now 2 o’clock and no rations yet. Raining  
hard. Rations are coming. . . .

**Robert H. Kellogg, 16th Connecticut Infantry**

Monday brought “*the glorious fourth.*” One year  
before, it had found us *up the Peninsula*, about  
eighteen miles from Richmond. Little did we dream  
that its next anniversary would find us in such a  
predicament, but there we were, and we must make  
the best of it.

Notwithstanding our cheerless condition, some  
were inclined to show some remembrance of the  
day. One of the boys had a few *percussion caps*,  
and by snapping these with a *fragment of brick* and  
a *tenpenny nail*, we had a *miniature celebration*,  
*the oration* and *refreshments* being indefinitely  
postponed. It might be that at home they were firing  
cannon over some victory that we knew nothing  
about; perhaps publicly eulogizing some General  
who had suddenly won immortal fame by some  
brilliant achievement, and thus fostering national  
pride. We hoped it were so, for loyalty had not been  
starved out of us altogether, and we could rejoice in  
the *country’s prosperity* even there.