



# Through Battle, Prison, and Disease: The Civil War Diaries of George Richardson Crosby

*Three themes illustrate what can be gleaned from Crosby's diaries: a record of the exploits of a largely neglected regiment, the POW experience of one of its members, and his personal experiences in battle, camp, and dealing with varying officialdom to gain his due bounty.*

By PATRICK GALLAGHER

**F**or Private George Richardson Crosby of the First Vermont Cavalry, the battle of Gettysburg started a day early. His regiment had been following the trail of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia ever since the 22nd of June. They arrived in the town of Hanover, Pennsylvania, on the 30th, worn and tired from the long march in the heat of an early summer. Tired as he was, Crosby's spirits were buoyed up by the friendly reception his regiment had received on their march northward and by gifts of food and drink from the citizenry of Pennsylvania. Shortly after passing through the town, Crosby and his comrades were attacked by General J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry. Turning, the Vermonters found the Confederates shelling the town itself and fighting with other Union cavalry regiments. After a sharp battle lasting much of the day, the rebels withdrew to the southeast, away from the main body of the Confederate army they had sought to rejoin.

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*George Richardson Crosby.  
Courtesy of the author.*

Crosby recorded this and many other wartime experiences in a set of diaries, beginning in April of 1863 and concluding in the same month in 1865; volumes for the years 1861 and 1862 are believed by the Crosby family to have existed, but are presumed lost to time. I became aware of these diaries some time ago, as they have been handed down through my mother's family. The diaries themselves can currently be found at my parent's home in Lyndon, Vermont; full photocopies of all three are also in the Vermont Historical Society's collection in Barre.

George R. Crosby had been serving in the First Vermont Cavalry since its inception in 1861 and by war's end he rose to the rank of sergeant. In his diaries he recorded the daily activities of life in his regiment and the battles they fought, the Gettysburg campaign and the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren raid among others. This record is significant for several reasons. Chiefly, it details a regiment that has been very little examined, the sole published history being Horace K. Ide's *History of the First Vermont Volunteer Cavalry*.<sup>1</sup> Vermont regiments as a whole are under examined and the First Vermont Cavalry all the more so, given the general preponderance of attention to infantry regiments.

Also of particular interest is Crosby's time as a prisoner of war; he was in Confederate hands for the majority of 1864. This imprisonment,

following his capture at the battle of Craig's Church, Virginia, on the 5th of May, was spent in the Andersonville and Florence prison camps. During his time in these two camps he experienced and bore witness to horrors of starvation, sickness, abuse, and general neglect in the Confederate military prison system.

In addition, the process Crosby records of filing his bounty claims after reenlisting in late 1863 illuminates the complex and multi-layered nature of the bounty system. This was not a simple matter, as he had to deal with both federal and local authorities. Ultimately, the selectmen of Andover, the Vermont town he reenlisted through, gave him the biggest headaches; it took him well over a year to finally wrest payment from them. Taken together, these three themes illustrate what can be gleaned from Crosby's diaries: a record of the exploits of a largely neglected regiment, the POW experience of one of its members, and his personal experiences in battle, camp, and dealing with varying officialdom to gain his due bounty.

The story of the First Vermont Cavalry begins before George Crosby's diaries, when Lemuel Platt, a wealthy resident of Colchester, Vermont, received authorization from the War Department to raise a regiment of cavalry following First Bull Run. Previous to that battle many offers to raise cavalry regiments had been rejected on the grounds that the war was certain to be over before they completed their mustering in.<sup>2</sup> After it became apparent that the war would not be won by ninety-day volunteers, these rejected offers were quickly reconsidered. The First Vermont Volunteer Cavalry was mustered into service in late November 1861 with Platt as acting colonel.<sup>3</sup>

The eight original companies of the regiment were each comprised of men from a specific county, with two exceptions: Company K contained men from Lamoille and Orleans, and Company D had men from Orange and Caledonia counties, all of which were sparsely populated.<sup>4</sup> Two additional companies would subsequently be added to the regiment.<sup>5</sup> Crosby enlisted in the town of Brattleboro, in Windham County, and as a result he was assigned to Company F.<sup>6</sup> This organizational practice appears to be particular to the First Vermont Cavalry; Vermont infantry regiments organized their companies by specific town or towns, rather than by county.

Upon reaching Washington in early January 1862, Colonel Platt resigned his commission as he had intended, acknowledging his own lack of qualifications for actual command. He was replaced by a West Pointer, Colonel Jonas P. Holliday, a captain from the pre-war Second U.S. Cavalry.<sup>7</sup> His command was also to prove brief; on April 3, 1862, Holliday committed suicide for reasons unknown.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after Colonel Holliday's

suicide, the regiment was incorporated into General Nathaniel P. Banks's Fifth Corps.<sup>9</sup>

From late April until early autumn of 1862, the regiment was under the command of Captain Charles Tompkins, who also had originally served in the Second U.S. Cavalry. His assignment was less a mark of personal qualification than a sign of the lack of other, more qualified men who had been removed from the regiment as casualties. Specifically, the man most in the regiment considered Holliday's natural successor, the well-liked and qualified Lieutenant Colonel Addison Preston, had been badly wounded in fighting near Ashby's Gap in April.<sup>10</sup> That small fight was the first of what was to be the regiment's extended experience in the Shenandoah Valley. In the late spring of 1862, the main opponents the regiment encountered were guerillas and bushwhackers, not regular confederate troops.<sup>11</sup>

Tompkins held command of the regiment until early September 1862, when he resigned. With Preston still convalescing, the two officers most likely to take command of the regiment were Majors Edward Sawyer and William Collins. They had been back in Vermont since May for sick leave and recruitment duty; the practice of sending regimental officers back to the state for recruitment duty was common to all Vermont regiments, and allowed a certain level of control over the quality of recruits.<sup>12</sup> The Vermont superintendent of recruiting, however, noted that Sawyer and Collins had not reported to him, nor was he aware of either being particularly ill during that summer.<sup>13</sup> Both officers were unaccounted for, possibly indulging personal matters on regimental time. Sawyer did straighten out his status fairly quickly, but Collins was still listed as missing as late as June.<sup>14</sup>

Sawyer therefore assumed command of the regiment on October 5. During October he confronted a problem that was to prove chronic for the First Vermont Cavalry, a lack of serviceable mounts. Sawyer complained to his brigade commander that the First Vermont Cavalry had only 112 usable horses, with an additional 230 unusable in mid-October 1862. At that time there were 943 men in the regiment. This disparity, Sawyer claimed, was largely the result of unscrupulous purchasing agents buying decrepit horses to profit off the government premium applied to all horses, regardless of quality.<sup>15</sup> The deficit was temporarily made good by the arrival of a large shipment of horses from Vermont in January, but an adequate supply of replacement horses was not maintained.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, Sawyer's recommendation that oversight of the purchasing process be instituted appears to have gone unheeded. In February 1864, he again reported a large disparity between men and mounts, 545

men with only 230 usable horses.<sup>17</sup> In the absence of horses, many men in the regiment were forced into a permanently dismounted role until the deficit was finally rectified late in the war. The reputation of Vermont's Morgan horses was also partially to blame for this problem, as buyers from other states and the Federal government snatched up virtually any horse they could lay hands on.<sup>18</sup>

Mounted or not, the men of the regiment spent the early months of 1863 encamped. The main body of the Army of the Potomac proceeded south on April 13 under the command of General Joseph Hooker. The First Vermont Cavalry did not go with it, having been assigned to the Washington defenses. In addition to their usual camp duties, the regiment patrolled against Confederate raiders such as Colonel John S. Mosby.<sup>19</sup>

Crosby's account begins on April 11, 1863. His writing is almost entirely without punctuation, which I have inserted for the sake of coherence. Whenever possible I have recorded his entries exactly as he wrote them, inserting words and spelling corrections in brackets only when it would be otherwise impossible to understand the narrative. I have also included in brackets the state in which specific locations he mentions are to be found, when it is not immediately obvious. On a few occasions I have removed whole words from his entries and sentences that are completely incoherent and make no sense.

Between April 12 and May 7, 1863, Crosby did not write in his diary. During this time the regiment was involved in actions against confederate guerillas in the region around Warrenton Junction, defeating them on the third of May.<sup>20</sup> Following this action the regiment returned to camp at Vienna-Fairfax. Camp life is a recurring and dominant theme throughout Crosby's diaries, it almost seems as if they spend more time encamped and on picket duty than the field. In part this seemingly excessive amount of time spent in camp was dictated by the weather. Even with the advent of steam transportation, nineteenth-century armies were still bound to the limitations of foot and hoof, which made large-scale campaigning impossible many months of the year. In addition the Army of the Potomac was encamped so often because it needed to recover and reorganize following failed campaigns against the Army of Northern Virginia. Not until General Ulysses S. Grant became overall Union commander did the Army of the Potomac stay in the field consistently. Before Grant's command then, the army would return to camp following each campaign, whether defeated or victorious.

Crosby never writes of these reasons for being encamped. As a cavalryman, being in camp entailed more "active" duty of patrols and pickets than the infantry generally experienced, and larger strategic and tactical

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issues didn't enter into his daily life. For him, camp life was routine, occasionally uncomfortable, and generally predictable. His largest concerns tended to be rations and the mail. The following selection of entries from May and June 1863 illustrate this routine. There were, of course, many others like them, but none differ substantially.

May 8, 1863

went to camp. opened [Thomas] Brigham's Box and found this Book, suspenders, to packs envelopes and two quivers paper. regt at Warrenton Junction [Virginia], Co F & M at Vienna. got Boots fixed for 5 cents. Hub Pierce whiped the Infantry man. Hooker on this side of the river.

May 9, 1863

pleasant. stewed two kettles beans, baked some (No. 1). Grazed my horse the first time. Heard the news that Hooker had crossed the Rapahannac again.

The "Helen" (occasionally spelled "Hellen") mentioned on May 10 is his wife, the former Helen Brown of New Hampshire whom he married in St. Johnsbury, Vt. on January 16, 1860.<sup>21</sup>

May 10, 1863

pleasant. wrote to Helen. drew ten days rations. nothing to do.

May 15, 1863

went on guard No. 1. stood at hospital at night. guard over Co M dead marks all the men in camp. Colonel ugly as the devil. got leter from Brother.

May 19, 1863

warm [and] pleasant. got leter from home. drew two days rations. saw Ed Redington, Lieut. in the VT 12th. saw Sergt. Jennie of the 16th. had two drinks of whiskey.

This libation was likely either illicitly obtained or had outside of camp; due to problems of camp discipline and maintenance, alcohol had been forbidden in the camp for enlisted men a month earlier.<sup>22</sup>

May 21, 1863

pleasant. on guard from half past three til five. the birds sang incessantly, never heard so much bird singing in Virginia.

May 23, 1863

very hot. got mail and made a new bunk with [Samuel] Hinkley. received a leter from home on the 20th. on horse guard tonight. Colonel right on his disipline.

May 24, 1863

warm and p[leasant]. wrote home, sent Co records and maps. wrote to Brother. year ago today started on Bank's retreat and charged

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through the Rebs at Middletown [Virginia]. preaching in camp, did not attend. got pants and coat.

May 27, 1863

pleasant. drilled most of forenoon. afternoon dismounted under Segt. Smith. laid down in the shade. did not draw sabres from scabard.

May 28, 1863

pleasant. went on division horse guard last night with two hundred others, called out at eleven o'clock. Colonel ordered off the wash men because he regretted that he paid for his washings in government rations.

May 31, 1863

pleasant. arrived at kettle run at 6 o'clock in the morning. our boys out here had a sharp fight yesterday. charged on one piece of artillery, took it with ten prisoners, killing several. our loss borey Co H killed and twenty five wounded. go on picket to night.

June 2, 1863

pleasant. nothing to do, built a bunk. no news, everything dull. a horse got loose last night and ate up four day's rations of my bread.

June 6, 1863

pleasant. started at four o'clock A.M. on scout the thoroughfare gap [Virginia]. saw five rebs but [they] skedadled. returned at five P.M. another detachment came from Fairfax, nine from our Company. thunder shower at night.

June 11, 1863

cloudy with some rain. we arived at Bristow [Virginia] last night about seven o'clock. verry tired with horses worn & pailed. brought in two bush whackers, they are old offenders but we have caught them at last. they will be hanged or shot. go on picket tonight, the rest of the Brigade go on scout.

June 12, 1863

verry warm and uncomfortable. chased two rebs this morning while on picket, didn't catch them. month's pay-money ran short, our Company did not get paid. Co C & M did not get paid.

June 14, 1863

pleasant. Hooker's army all passing us, been going all day. been paying my debts, paid to day. wrote home to day, shall not send until tomorrow. part of our Co on picket.

Hooker was still in overall command of the Army of the Potomac, despite his defeat at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May. As the army recovered from its mauling in early June, Hooker's scouts detected movement in some units of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia.<sup>23</sup> Hooker's initial impulse was to take the opportunity to move against Richmond again. He reasoned that with Lee's army moving

north, there would be no force capable of stopping him from taking the Confederate capital.<sup>24</sup> President Lincoln quashed this idea, however, for two reasons. First, while Hooker might succeed in taking Richmond, the Washington garrison could not hold out against Lee should he appear before the capital defenses. Second, even if Richmond was taken without corresponding loss, the rebellion could not be put down while it still had an army in the field.<sup>25</sup>

Hooker moved the Army of the Potomac north in pursuit of Lee in what would become the opening moves of the Gettysburg campaign. The First Vermont Cavalry, as part of the Third Division, Cavalry Corps, moved northward as well. They were detached from the main body of infantry however, and for this reason Crosby refers to the Army of the Potomac as “Hooker’s Army.” The Third Division nevertheless followed the same line of march as the rest of the army as it headed north. The final days of June saw the First Vermont Cavalry involved in fights in and around Gettysburg. During that period of time the regiment fought repeatedly against General J.E.B. Stuart’s cavalry, and also participated in an attack against Confederate infantry on the third day of the great battle.

The Third Division of the Cavalry Corps, including the First Vermont Cavalry, moved into Pennsylvania on the 29th of June. It came under attack by Stuart’s cavalry on the 30th. The first troopers to encounter Confederate horsemen were from the Eighteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry regiment, but the First Vermont would soon be engaged as well.<sup>26</sup> The skirmish that evolved was initially one of encounter; the leading elements of Stuart’s column were approaching the town of Hanover as much of the Third Division was leaving it. The First Vermont was among these troops, being several miles north of the town when the fighting started.

This “sharp fight,” as Crosby terms it, began when men of the First Vermont Cavalry heard cannon fire coming from the direction of Hanover.<sup>27</sup> The Vermonters arrived back in town in time to bolster the flagging Fifth New York and Eighteenth Pennsylvania regiments, forcing the equally exhausted Confederate horsemen to withdraw to the southeast.<sup>28</sup> This fight at Hanover was not decisive in and of itself, but it did delay Stuart’s cavalry from linking back up with Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia.<sup>29</sup>

June 27, 1863

cloudy. whole brigade drunk. all out of rations but can buy plenty of bread. left the gap at five o'clock P.M. whole 5th and 11th Corps came up and relieved us. came back as far as Jeffersonville. turned to the left, passed through middletown [Maryland] 11 at night. the ladies seranaded us with patriotic songs and the bands played. we were



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received with great enthusiasm, waving of flags and white handkerchiefs. Quite a contrast to our reception in Virginia towns.

June 30, 1863

cloudy, started at six this morning, passed through Hanover [Pennsylvania], before we got through we were attacked in the rear, we had a sharp fight which lasted about three hours, they shelled us & the town. Hanover is a pretty place. The ladies brought edibles of all kinds to us, they gave us wine and everything that the country affords, camp at night.

The regiment was not involved in the main actions of the first two days of Gettysburg; it did fight again with Stuart's cavalry on July 2, on the far left wing of the Army of Northern Virginia's position.<sup>30</sup> As Crosby mentioned, this was a longer and fiercer fight than the one at Hanover on the 30th, compounded by heavier Confederate artillery support.

The third day saw the regiment in the main line of battle. They were deployed on the left of the Union position, forward of Big Round Top. General Judson Kilpatrick, commanding the Third Division, ordered a charge upon the Confederate infantry opposite this position. These troops were General John Bell Hood's division, which was badly worn from its failed efforts to take Little Round Top the day before.<sup>31</sup> The charge in question was led by General Elon Farnsworth, who died during the fight. Companies A, D, E, and I fought dismounted (the rest remained on horseback) in the attack on Hood's division, and were badly mauled.<sup>32</sup>

July 1, 1863

warm, left Hanover 10 A.M. our squadron in advance, passed through Adamstown [Pennsylvania], captured 12 prisoners, crossed the Susquehanna, went most to Carlisle [Pennsylvania], countermarched, came back about 12 miles, camped. In our yesterday's fight all that I know of extent is I saw 60 prisoners & 11 dead but we had more prisoners and more killed, we drove them out of town & held the town they took 2 A.M.

July 2, 1863

pleasant, started 7 went to Adamstown [Pennsylvania], stopped two or three hours, went to Hunterstown [Pennsylvania], had a fight with Stewart's cavalry, drove them. Fight lasted about four hours, they are fighting terribly on our lines, after our fight we went to a little village near Gettysburg, we found thousands of wounded, they were digging pits to bury the dead.

July 3, 1863

cloudy today, went on to the left wing, fought all day, our Brigade lost heavily, we charged on infantry, I have not learned the extent of the loss yet, had one man killed from our Co and one wounded, it is strange that the whole Co was not killed, [I] shot one reb, shot at several many more, retired about two miles and camped for the night.

Following the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg, the Army of Northern Virginia, having suffered severe losses, turned and began its retreat. Union cavalry under General Kilpatrick, the First Vermont among others, was detailed to harass the rebel withdrawal and capture as much of their wagon train as possible.<sup>33</sup> For the First Vermont Cavalry this meant intermittent and often intense combat for the rest of July. This fighting stands in contrast to the commonly held view that following Gettysburg neither army made any effort to continue to actively campaign. On July 6 the regiment found itself in combat with a stronger element of the enemy's rear guard.<sup>34</sup> They survived only through intervention by supporting artillery. The post-Gettysburg combat grew in intensity for the First Vermont Cavalry on the 8th, against Stuart's cavalry. The fight lasted all day for the regiment as it was moved along the Union line to support other formations.<sup>35</sup>

July 5, 1863

arrived at Gettysburg this morning three A.M. Captured about eighty prisoners without firing again. some gave themselves up. we were able to get the train agent through Hagerstown [Maryland]. went within some miles of Williamsport [Maryland], our division captured twelve men and a train of cavalry wagons. came back to Boonsboro [Maryland] 12 at night & found rest of the Brigade.

July 6, 1863

cloudy. left Boonsboro 7 A.M. passed through Frankstown [Pennsylvania]. went to Hagerstown. had a hard fight at eight hours with the rebel sharpshooters, infantry & cav. we lost very heavy, our regiment broke but they had reason to. they took four good men prisoner but slaughtered them terribly. they flanked us but we had out our battery. fired grape & canister, killing them by the hundreds. our brigade is badly cut up. we caused the rebels to burn their train. took a few prisoners and got away no sooner dusk. camped within firing of our artillery.

July 7, 1863

rainy. started this morning went to Boonsboro & stayed until night. went on picket at daylight. know now much of our regiment lost. our Company lost six taken prisoner in the fight yesterday. we have had no rations for a long time, have to buy everything. the teams cannot get to us.

July 8, 1863

rained all night, got wet. the enemy advanced on us this morning nine o'clock. we fought them all day. they came near getting the best of us but about eleven at night we charged them and drove them three miles. our battalion charged on a battery. our regiment lost three killed.

The next three days heralded a pause in the near-constant combat Crosby and the First Vermont Cavalry had been engaged in since the fight at Hanover on June 30. This pause was spent rounding up stragglers,

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as well as taking a much needed rest on the 10th. It appears that the rebel cavalry were as worn as the Vermonters, for as Crosby notes of the 11th, “the rebel pickets were in sight but nither of us fired although we were within easy gun shot of each other.”

The remainder of the month involved continued contact with the enemy, although not as regularly nor as intensely as before. Crosby parted company from the regiment on July 27, and so his account of the post-Gettysburg actions of the First Vermont Cavalry goes no further. He had been sent home to Vermont to collect and bring back to the regiment the latest batch of recruits and conscripts.<sup>36</sup> This duty appears to have been not terribly onerous, as he fails to even mention it during the approximately two months he was home. By 1863 Crosby had moved his family from Brattleboro, where he had lived in 1861, to the town of St. Johnsbury in Caledonia County.

July 31, 1863

last night was the first time I slept in a bed for most two years and [did] not sleep well.

Being back in civilian surroundings seems to have been quite the tonic for Crosby’s spirits, although initially it did take some adaptation. Other than getting used to sleeping in beds, Crosby enjoyed every moment of being home in Vermont, particularly seeing his friends and family. Conversely, when the time came to depart for the front again, he plunged into a lengthy depression that took several weeks of time to pass.

August 2, 1863

this is the first time I hear my little girl speak. she was not afraid but kissed me and called me Papa. she is pretty and grown much more than I had calculated. in the afternoon I went and helped bennet Butter. At night I went with Hellen for milk.

August 4, 1863

today I went to Lyndon with Hellen and Addie, stayed with at Myram Miller’s in the afternoon. I was mighty glad to see the old Boys and we had a jolly good time. I had more questions asked than I could answer in a week. in the evening went to Charles’s and stayed all [night].

August 7, 1863–August 10th, 1863

all this time enjoyed life so well that I could not trust my diary.

August 11, 1863–August 15th, 1863

this diary is of no act when I am enjoying life so much.

August 16, 1863–August 20th, 1863

Diary Playd.

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September 26, 1863

arrived in NY this morning six o'clock. went to Barnum's in forenoon. afternoon went to theater. verry tired at night, went to bed at eight at the soldier's union relief association. verry lonesome, did not sleep verry well.

September 27, 1863

pleasant. verry homesick. went down to battery and to the wharf and saw the Rusian fleet. in afternoon attend religious services. felt unwell, went to bed early. sick all night, did not sleep much.

September 29, 1863

lounged around the city. saw plenty of officers drunk. went to georgetown and got Tom's [Bartleff] Box at the Express office. sick of Washington and every other plase but home. I should like to see my folks today.

Crosby did not return from his first leave until early October, by which time the regiment was deployed along the Rappahannock River. He was back with the regiment on the 4th, and found "Boys all right and glad to see me," but also that "my horse was gone and everything lost." This loss of his gear and horse can only have made being back at the front even more miserable.

Crosby would be granted a second furlough not long after he returned from his first, in early 1864. This extra leave was offered as partial inducement to retain veterans whose enlistments were running out, as his was.

December 12, 1863

rained some. wrote to Fred Miller. cooked beans. had the proposition again read to us to reenlist. the inducements are verry tempting. I want to do so but am afraid my folks will not agree.

December 19, 1863

great excitement today about reenlisting. the captain of the first Brigade read the order to us and I think the regt will go home. went on picket at Mitchel's ford. got leter and diary from home. sold the diary for 30.

December 25, 1863

went on picket at Cission's ford. our Co at reserve. got a verry interesting letter from home, it was a little sample of my correspondence that I ever received. I guess my folks don't think mutch of me [reenlisting] but they can't stop me.

December 29, 1863

pleasant again. relieved by the 5th Mich. got three leters from home. two of them have been on the road a long time. I got a leter [on] the 29th that was written since they were. we found the boys in camp all reenlisting. got leter from Brother.

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December 30, 1863

went to station. saw Brother, he has enlisted. I enlisted from the town of Andover [Vermont]. expect to get five hundred dollars town bounty that will help my folks a great deal.

The lure of bounty, leave, and promotion was clearly more of a draw to Crosby than any potential disapproval from his family was a deterrent. In addition to the thirty days at home, he was also promoted to corporal as part of reenlisting as a Veteran Volunteer.<sup>37</sup> The bounty money he was expecting was substantial as well. He mentions this for the first time in his 1864 diary which, unlike the 1863 volume, contains a memoranda section in the back. Crosby used this extra space for continuing entries he had been unable to fit into the area demarcated for a particular date, and on two occasions to record long accounts of memorable events.

memoranda section, dated January 1, 1864

It is pretty muddy and bad weather for a man about to enlist for three years but the money is what I must have for the benefit of my wife and child. I am anticipating nine hundred dollars bounty from town and government.

Nine hundred dollars may seem an exceedingly high expectation, but Crosby was not far off the mark. His federal enlistment bounty would come to \$402, paid out in increments of \$50 a month.<sup>38</sup> He could expect additional bounties from the town he enlisted through; Vermont paid out more than 4.5 million dollars for bounties over the course of the war.<sup>39</sup> The Andover town bounty he expected of “five hundred dollars . . . that will help my folks a great deal,” however, would not come as easily, as the following entries show. That settlement was not concluded in Crosby’s favor until late 1865.

December 31, 1863

rained all day hard. wrote home to selectmen of Andover. sent certificate. a detach[ment] of our regt went on picket. I will try to keep my diary next year in better style than this.

memoranda section, dated January 4, 1864

first snow of the season fel today, about an inch. I am verry anxious to hear from Andover. no mail on account of the railroad being disturbed somewhere between here [and] Washington.

January 12, 1864

put adition on chimney. afternoon cut poles for horse stable. worked verry hard. got leter from andover saying that I should get no town bounty.

February 23, 1865

wrote to Andover. I have heard that they were going to pay me a town bounty.

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February 28, 1865

mustered for pay and signed the payrole. it is a snowy day. wrote letter for Peterson to his folks. wrote another letter to the selectmen of Andover. Snowy day.

March 1, 1865

pleasant but some cold. got letter from home, Hellen is sick. got a letter from the selectmen of Andover. they are going to pay me fourteen dollars town bounty when I am mustered out of service.

In actuality, Crosby received considerably more than fourteen dollars from Andover. After being mustered out of service in August 1865, he received \$270.20 from the town selectmen. Of that sum, \$2.70 was interest for the time since his initial application.<sup>40</sup> Taken together with his federal bounty, this comes to \$670.20, about \$200 short of the amount he had hoped for, but a very substantial payment nonetheless.<sup>41</sup>

For Crosby the first two months of 1864 were a return to camp routine, with the intermission of his reenlistment furlough of January 17th to February 20th. After being back in camp for three days when he mentioned "great preparations for a raid we shall have tomorrow." This was to be the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren expedition of February 28 to March 7. Its primary purposes were to liberate Union prisoners held in Richmond as well as to damage Confederate logistics and supplies in the area surrounding their capital.<sup>42</sup> Company K of the First Vermont as well as detachments from other cavalry regiments left in advance of the main body under the command of Colonel Ulric Dahlgren on the 8th. They secured a crossing of the Rapidan River and proceeded on ahead of the main raiding force.<sup>43</sup>

During the whole raid, Crosby's company rode with the main body under Kilpatrick. As such he had no first hand knowledge of what occurred to Dahlgren's detachment, which had been destroyed in an ambush.<sup>44</sup> He recorded the raid in his daily entries, but also wrote an entire summary of it in his memoranda section.

Feb 28: Kilpatrick started on a raid with four thousand Cavalry and two Batteries of artillery. crossed the Rapidan River at Ely's Ford [Virginia]. captured a picket post at that place of thirty men. went through Chancellorsville Spotsylvania. Co H halted 29th one hour and had coffee and fed horses then proceeded to Beaver dam station on the Virginia Central Railroad. there we burnt up all the Depot Buildings. destroyed the Railroad for about five miles, burned several cars. marched all night and arrived in the morning of the 1st of march Ground Squirrel Bridge on the South Anna River. we halted there to rest and make coffee. we had been there but a short time when the Rebs attacked us in the rear with cavalry and artillery. halted one half hour then marched southeast. did not halt again until within three and one half miles of Richmond and inside of the entrenchments.

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halted and foraged corn and fed our horses inside the entrenchments then we marched toward Richmond. Engaged the Rebs, went within one and a half miles of the City. destroyed two or three miles of the Richmond and York River Railroad and went into camp for the night about five miles from the City. we were all verry sleepy and tired having had no sleep nor rest since we lef Stevensburg on the 28th. we got in camp before dark about ten o'clock. our camp was staked, we were all asleep except the pickets and I guess some of them. we had a hard fight but were obliged to retreat. we lost eleven men from our Company and seventy from the regt; I do not know how many from the command. we fell back to mechanicsville [Virginia], got there about four o'clock in morning of the 2nd of March. halted there about four hours when we were again attacked, our regt at the front. Eastman of our Co was wound badly in the foot by a musket ball in the skirmish. it lasted about two hours. we went to from there to Turnstals Station [Virginia]. fed horses just at night then marched towards White House several miles then countermarched came back to Turnstals Station and camped about two o'clock. on the morning of the 3rd at daylight we were attacked both front and rear by small parties but they were shure to get out of our way when we charged on them. about nine o'clock we marched, arrived at New Kent Court House [Virginia] about noon where we found a Brigade of Butler's Niggars and a battery of artillery come up to help us out. we are almost entirely destitute of rations. we halted about two hours then proceed on. found guirrillas plenty[ful], had one man killed and another wounded out of the column as we were pasin by the woods. we succeeded in capturing four of them. we arrived at Macock [Virginia] just after dark. went into camp, unsaddled for the first time since we left, then tore down deserted houses to build fires. nothing to eat. March 4, started at eight A.M. arrived at Williamsburg [Virginia] about noon. there we found troops stationed; we begged rations of them but were so many that but few were supplied. we did not halt at that plase but marched to Yorktown. we went into camp at 5 P.M. and drew rations. March 6th, started at six this morning for Portsmouth in steam transports: about two thousand cavalry, some infantry and artillery. the horses got scared. fraid of an attack. we arrived about three o'clock the same day but it proved to be a false alarm and the next day, 7th, we went to Glouster Point [Virginia] by the same rout we came. Glouster Point is across the River opposite Yorktown.

On March 12 the regiment boarded steam transports and returned to the northern side of the Rappahannock. Once back, they went back into camp and returned to picket duty, interspersed with increased drilling. A month later on April 16, the regiment gathered to bid farewell to General Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick had by this time earned the nickname "Kill-Cavalry" for his reckless habit of ordering headlong assaults on strong enemy positions. It is a measure of his unpopularity with cavalrymen of the Army of the Potomac that only two other regiments

(the First and Seventh Michigan) saw him off when he was relieved of command.<sup>45</sup>

April 16, 1864

rained most all night last night. rainy day. relieved from guard at eight this morning. pickets relieved today. Gen. Kilpatrick took a parting leave of us in person today. he has command of Gen. Sherman's cavalry.

That interlude aside, the rest of April passed in picket duty, dress parade and constant drilling. Crosby occasionally relieved the monotony by helping the camp sutler brew beer, which sold briskly. In early May the Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River in the opening moves of General Grant's Wilderness campaign. The First Vermont, under the command of General James H. Wilson, drove off enemy pickets at Germanna Ford in the early hours of May 4, but ran into heavy fighting the following day. They had encountered the Twelfth Virginia cavalry under the command of General Thomas L. Rosser; the Confederate horsemen were further east of the main Confederate position than had been anticipated.<sup>46</sup> The battle continued on the 5th, during which Crosby was taken prisoner. He recorded a full account of being captured in his memoranda.

this morning took our breakfast before daylight and moved forward, our regiment in the advance. we took a road to the left and parallel with the plank road. we advanced about five miles when we came upon the rebel skirmish line. our regt was nearly all dismounted and sent on the skirmish line. about twenty of our Co, myself among the rest, were sent mounted under command of Seargt. Bartleff to support the right of our skirmishers. we drove them back about a mile, our lines extending at right angles with the road. the country here is completely covered with wood and a thick underbrush. we held the ground for about two hours and were forced to fall back. our party of mounted men had to protect the right flank and give the dismounted men a chance to get to their horses. our mode of action was to draw up in a line and wait until they came upon us then give them a volley and fall back. this we repeated seven times with success but they gained upon us fast. when we got back to a small clearing we found our men flying in confusion and the rebs coming like hail. here we found Major Wells, he succeeded in rallying about a hundred men and formed them on to our squad and we charged with revolvers which checked them for a few minutes. so that many of our men got away by that means. I stood my ground firing my carbine as fast as I could load. I was about eight hundred yards from the road to the right. I had been in that position but a few minutes when the rebs charged again. on turning my horse around I found I was standing alone. I ran my horse as fast as I could but before I could get to the road at the corner of the woods I found myself in the midst of a squad of Rebel cavalry. two rufians of the 12th VA Cavalry came up



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to me and I gave them my arms. one took my hat, the other took my pocket book out of my pocket. in short they took everything that I had except this Diary and its contents which they did not find, it being in my brest pocket. I asked them to let me have some keepsakes of no value to them that were in my pocket book but [they] would give me nothing. General Rosser wrode up to me when I was giving up my arms and asked me how many men we had engaged. I told him I did not know but if he kept on in that road he would soon find out to his discomfort. I was then taken about a mile to the rear and delivered to the provost guard. there was about forty prisoners there, some of them wounded. four of co G were badly wounded and we left them at a house near by. Corporal Brainard was badly [wounded] in the groin. his cousin was mortaly [wounded] through the breast. Little of the same Co was lef there badly wounded through the shoulder. about two o'clock we were started on foot, fifty four of us in number, for the rear. we reached Videresville [Virginia], a distance of eleven miles about dark. on the road we met Gen. Longstreet's Corps. we were very tired and hungry. we found a wagon train at that plase and drew a small handful of cracker crumbs. I devoured mine quickly and camped for the night.<sup>47</sup>

After his initial capture George Crosby was taken south to Andersonville prison along with other Federal prisoners. Richmond had previously been the main site for POWs, but by early 1864 Confederate policy was changing.<sup>48</sup> For every Federal prisoner held, more food had to be brought into the city, which was growing increasingly difficult; the threat of rescue attempts by Union cavalry was also of growing concern.<sup>49</sup> By February 1864 prisoners began to be sent out of the city to the unfinished prison at Andersonville, Georgia.

Crosby finally arrived at Andersonville on May 22, seventeen days after his capture in Virginia and following several layovers in Virginia and South Carolina.<sup>50</sup> The prison was not completed when its first prisoners arrived on February 24, 1864; the stockade was finished but no shelters or buildings stood within it.<sup>51</sup> By May when Crosby arrived the population had risen to 15,000 prisoners in an enclosed space of 74,052 square feet. In August Confederate authorities reported that overcrowding had led to an expansion of the north side of the prison, giving the 32,899 prisoners 117,612 square feet of space. Even with this extension, the Confederates overseeing the site soon found that the average space available per prisoner had dropped from 49.3 to 35.7 square feet.<sup>52</sup> Crosby recorded his impressions of the camp and its inhabitants in his memoranda shortly after arriving on the 22nd.

arrived at Macon [Georgia] at daylight. one of the guards fell off the carr and was killed. we arrived at Andersonville about noon. this is the end of our journey for the present. here we are counted off into detachments of two hundred and seventy and into messes of ninety

with a seargeant in charge of each to draw rations and assemble for roll call. we are put in the stockade where there are about thirteen thousand prisoners. there is about ten acres of ground enclosed a stockade which is made of hewn pine logs set in the ground like fence posts standing about fifteen feet out of the ground. the timbers are about eight or ten inches through. there is a sentry box that comes up above the top of the stockade about twenty feet from and on the inside of the stockade is a railing which is called the dead line. if a man gets outside of this rail he is shot without any warning by the sentry. across the camp the ground is swamp & several rods each side of the stream so that there is nearly half an acre of ground that is used for a sink and for gambling. this is the most filthy, nasty patch of ground that I have ever beheld. the ground rises each way from the stream so that the ends of the camp are thirty to forty feet higher than the centre. the camp is nearly square but a little longset from north to south. there are two gates on the west side through which our rations are drawn by a mule team. our rations consist of about three ounces boild bacon and from one third to three fourths of a loaf of cornbread pr day and occasionally a spoonful or two of rice or half cooked mush. they are cooked by a detail from the prisoners in a building made for the purpose just outside the stockade. we are divided into detachments of two hundred and fifty, each detachment divided into three messes, ninty in each with a seargeant in charge of each to draw rations and call the roll. Sergt. English of the 14th NJ has charge of the mess that I belong [to]. I am in the fifty-first detachment, second mess. I think that all the prisoners that they have got are here, some of them have been prisoners nine months or more. many of them came here from Dell Island and Libby Prison. some of them are almost naked and seem to have forgot that they are human beings. they lie around in the sand like dogs, eat their corn doger and scratch. there are but a few that are naked but many that have nothing but a shirt, some an old pair of drawers, some have an old overcoat thrown over their shoulders to cover their nakedness. they have been here so long that they are nothing but skin and bones. they are discouraged and have grown to be almost Idiots. they never wash, have no cover and live like hogs. there is another class here that are gamblers and what we call raiders. they are our city roughs, burglars, robbers, thieves, jewes and bounty jumpers. here they play all sorts of games of cards and dice, sit in the hot sun all day with their monty bank on the sweat board, taking what money they can get. some have made small fortune speculating, buying bean soup, tobacco and such stuf of the guards and selling it again to the prisoners. we get a piece of blak soap about an inch square for twenty five cents greenbacks or one dollar confederate money, corn meal one dollar and twenty five cents pr quart, other things in proportion. there is an other class here that is interprising and respectable. such men are good soldiers. the raiders go in gangs and charge on tents and when the occupants are asleep and rob the rations, blankets and everything they can get.

This passage outlines two items of particular interest from Crosby's stay in Andersonville: miserable health conditions and gangs of raiders.

Conditions within the camp were of almost universal deprivation; no tents or other shelters were issued to the prisoners, nor blankets or other clothing. Rations were at best inadequate and at worst nonexistent. This lack of food combined with massively unhygienic conditions to breed deadly illnesses, chief among them diarrhea, dysentery, and scurvy. Water was supplied from wells and the Sweet Water Creek that ran through the camp. Both of these supplies were contaminated by poorly positioned latrines and the lack of any sanitation regimen.

June 9, 1864

showers. men are dying at the rate of sixty every twenty four hours, mostly of scurvy and diareah. thousands have not even a blanket for a cover. water is poor and dirty. fighting occurs several times a day, alas for human depravity.<sup>53</sup>

Given all these factors, the prisoners' health was generally so poor that "the slightest scratch + even the bites of small insicts were in some cases followed by such a rapid + extensive Gangrene, as to destroy extremities + even life itself."<sup>54</sup> Crosby was no exception, suffering from colds, diarrhea, infections, and what he calls "the rheumatis." Despite these numerous complaints, he never attempted to get admitted to the hospital, possibly because he knew it to be severely overcrowded.<sup>55</sup>

May 29, 1864

I am weak and nearly sick. spent my last three dollars for a quart of beans. prisoners are dying at the rate of twenty five per day. eight or ten hundred more prisoners today.

June 1, 1864

sick today, in great pain. have gotten a severe cold and [it] settled all over me. heavy thunder shower at night, got wet.

Digging tunnels was a common means of escape for the prisoners at Andersonville. Due to the contamination of the creek, the prisoners often dug wells, giving them the pretext to descend deep enough to start a horizontal shaft toward freedom. Cave-ins and flooding hampered tunneling efforts, but most were thwarted by informants before they reached completion.<sup>56</sup>

June 14, 1864

cold and rainy. the camp is getting muddy. the rheumatis bothers me a good deal. Tuttle is verry hard up. the rebs found an other tunnel today. drew bread and meat again today. many are making their escape and the guards go with them.

June 15, 1864

over a hundred died in the last twenty four hours out of the hospital and camp. this storm kills many. about a thousand more prisoners

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came in today. stormy but warmer. drew bread. I have got the Rheumatis to that I can hardly walk.

June 18, 1864

It was a verry rainy night last night and the same today. I have so much pain in my hips and legs that I can sleep but little at night. the time seems verry long to me. more prisoners today.

June 19, 1864

Showery today. I am sick, have got the diarhea and the rheumatis. went to the Doctor, got six pills and a powder. more prisoners. drew rice. my apetite is poor, I feel hard.

By the end of July the prison population had topped 30,000, twice what it was when Corporal Crosby arrived. The expansion had added 43,560 square feet to the stockade, but by now it was almost entirely filled.<sup>57</sup>

July 29, 1864

showery. a few more prisoners from Sherman's army. I am verry weak and nearly sick. the stockade is getting nearly as crowded as it was before the adition was put on. our cup is spoiled so that we [have] nothing to cook in but a half canteen.

September 3, 1864

the reason that I have left this blank space in my diary is partly becaus I have had nothing worth writing and partly on account of having a fellon on my left thumb which has been verry painful. in the meantime everything has gone on as usual . . . I have passed many a sleepless night in the last two weeks on account of the felon on my thumb. I can get nothing from the surgeon here for it, all the medicine I can get is cornmeal and soup. I have had it lanced twice with a broken lance[t] but it was premature. it seems as if I should go crazy. I cannot rest day or night.

The raiders Crosby mentioned in his memoranda passage of May 22, 1864 had become a constant threat to the other inmates by the time he had arrived. They consisted mostly of disreputable sorts, who generally had been drafted or joined the Union Army after bounty money. In prison they formed gangs and robbed, terrorized, and occasionally murdered other prisoners. The Confederate garrison had initially done nothing to curtail their activity, because there were not enough guards to effectively patrol the interior of the stockade while attending to their other duties.<sup>58</sup>

June 26, 1864

verry warm. the raiders are getting to be verry bold. they take the new comers and take everything away from them, murder some in a horrible manner. there is an organized band of them of probably more than two hundred. they are city roughs, house breakers and pickpockets. several efforts have been made to put them down but to no effect. prisoners coming in every day. no news that is reliable.

With no one acting against them, the raiders grew increasingly bold in their attacks on other prisoners. They preferred to strike at night, but would act in broad daylight if the opportunity presented itself. On those occasions when one of their victims successfully defended himself, additional raiders would join in and pummel him senseless, occasionally killing the soldier in question.<sup>59</sup>

The turning point came on June 29, when raiders mercilessly beat a newly-arrived prisoner named Dowd and robbed him of his watch and money. Thinking they had killed him, the raiders departed. However, Dowd was made of sterner stuff, staggered to his feet, and sought help from the Confederate sentries on the walls. Commandant Henry Wirz, angered by Dowd's beating, authorized the prisoners to organize and supplied them with clubs.<sup>60</sup>

June 29, 1864

the rebs have commenced today to help us get rid of the raiders. they have arrested a large lot of men and have not got through yet. the[y] are puting an adition of ten acres onto our enclosure which will be done in a few days.

These Regulators, as they were known, swiftly arrested a large number of raiders with aid from the guards. They were tried by a jury drawn from the inmate population, and six of them were eventually hanged. This judicial proceeding happened with the full knowledge and sanction of both the garrison and the Confederate government.<sup>61</sup> Although thievery and disorder still existed within Andersonville after the hangings, organized violence on the scale of the raiders never again arose.

June 30, 1864

very hot. Corpl. Cook is quite sick with the diareah. they [are] at the raiders again today. they got a jeury of twelve sergts of our men to try their cases. the charges, evidence and sentinc will [be] sent to our government for approval. today finishes the first half of the year.

July 2, 1864

put up blanket. we drew new rations. nothing to cook in and it is hard to borrow. we hear that five of the raiders are sentenced to be hung. our new camp is nearly as crowded as the old one. water is a good ways off and poor.

July 11, 1864

thunder shower at night. extremely hot. more prisoners. six of the raiders were hung at five o'clock. they were proven guilty of murder, tried, sentenced and hung by our men with the sanction of the rebels inside of our camp. they were all hung at once. the rope broke with one but he was soon put back up again.

.....

July 12, 1864

hot as usual. more prisoners today. the men that were hung yesterday protested their innocence to the last. they were a hard lot of men and richly merited their punishment. I do not know their names or regiments.

Along with basic survival and the raiders, Crosby's other main concern was his chance of being either exchanged or paroled. Earlier in the war exchanging prisoners had been handled through a cartel of Union and Confederate officers, but the practice had broken down in 1863, in large part due to the appearance of black regiments in the Union Army.<sup>62</sup> Regardless of cause, the regular exchanges of prisoners had effectively ended before Crosby even reached Andersonville. This did not stop the garrison from hinting that an exchange was imminent, nor rumor from circulating among the prisoners, arising seemingly from thin air. The guards started such rumors of an exchange as a method of control; prisoners were unlikely to attempt escapes with an exchange coming.<sup>63</sup> Crosby was encouraged by these rumors, but eventually saw them for what they were.

June 5, 1864

just a month today since I was captured. there is great talk in the camp of an exchange or parool verry soon. they drew new rations on this side of the brook this week. Norman mooved up with us, he and Tuttle together.

June 13, 1864

cold rainy day. rained all night. Cook went back today, he thinks there is not [enough] room. great excitement in camp about being paroled. report that the officers already paroled. rations [the] same as yesterday.

July 15, 1864

very hot. a few prisoners came in from Sherman's army. they report that the rebs are clearing everything out of Atlanta. there are petitions getting up to send to the different States praying for an exchange or release from prison.

August 1, 1864

great talk of a parole soon. the whole camp is excited but I am afraid that it is a hoax. they are taking the sick out fast. I don't know where they are puting them.<sup>64</sup>

September 3, 1864

stories of parool and exchange are plenty[ful] . . . there is a report that we are going to be paroled immediately, few beleive it.

September 26, 1864

rations today half pint meal half pint of rice. a great deal of talk about parool and exchange but it amounts to verry little.

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General exchange of prisoners would never be completely reinstated, though special exchanges and paroles of obviously ill and debilitated prisoners did occur.<sup>65</sup> It was by this device that Crosby was released, but by then he was no longer in Andersonville. In September he had been moved to Florence, South Carolina, along with the majority of the camp's population.

September 12, 1864

this morning at daylight we were let out of the bull pen and we [were] put into freight carrs, sixty men in each carr with one fourth pound bacon and half loaf corn bread. no man is allowed to step out of the carrs, if he does he gets shot.

September 14, 1864

six dollars got me bread enough for one meal. I was verry hungry. the sitizens say there is no exchange. arrived in Charlestown 3 this morn they traved north. arrived at Florence 1 P.M. lay in the carrs all night.

The Confederate War Department had been looking for a new location to house prisoners since July, as General Sherman's advance toward Atlanta raised concerns about Andersonville's security.<sup>66</sup> Charleston was considered but disqualified as too vulnerable to Union naval attack.<sup>67</sup> As a result Florence, which is 80 miles further inland, was chosen.

The final months of 1864 at Florence were likely the hardest ones of his time in captivity for Crosby. His health remained precarious, and emotionally he was hit by two damaging blows. The first was seeing other prisoners taking the Confederate oath of allegiance, which 807 had done by October.<sup>68</sup> Although initially angry with these men for switching sides, Crosby acknowledged that many were driven to it by the extremity of conditions within the camp. While starvation was primarily due to simple shortage much as at Andersonville, it was compounded by the prisoners having little or no cookware and utensils. The problem was noticeable enough for Confederate officials to attempt to distribute utensils in an effort to reduce spoilage, but nothing came of it.<sup>69</sup>

September 29, 1864

Reb officers in camp giving the oath of Allegiance to all who wish. about a hundred and fifty have taken it. our rations today are one fourth pint rice, five spoonfuls molasses piece potatoe size of a walnut.

September 30, 1864

it is reported that a thousand men from this camp have sent in their names yesterday & today to take the oath of Allegiance, curses upon them. rations [to]day one fourth pint meal, same of rice, four spoonfuls beans one fourth pound Beef salt.

October 20, 1864

drew some more good molasses, three fourths pt flour, half pt meal,

some salt. lots of men are taking the oath, they are starved and froze to it.

More personally damaging to Crosby than these defections was recurrent homesickness. Previously he had manifested this intense desire to be home after a furlough, but in early October 1864 the effects of hunger brought it all back to him. Out of desperation to buy food, he had to sell a ring given to him by Helen.

October 2, 1864

this morning made a little gruel out of all the meal I had, three spoonfuls. 8 o'clock [we were] ordered to pack up, mooved about a mile to a stockade that has been prepared for us. starvation drove me to sell the ring that my wife gave me. I bot some meal & sweet potatoes. got a dollar for the ring.

Miserable, starving, and sick, Crosby stopped writing entries on October 21st, and did not recommence until December 14th. That was the date he was finally released under a special, limited arrangement in which both sides agreed to exchange ill men who were unable to return to active duty.<sup>70</sup> Upon being paroled under this provision, Crosby was transported to Annapolis and admitted to the hospital at Camp Parole.<sup>71</sup> After a brief period of recovery he returned to Vermont, only to sicken again in Brattleboro, where he admitted himself to the military hospital on February 13, 1865.<sup>72</sup>

Landing in the Brattleboro hospital was more fortuitous than Crosby might have known; of the over 4,000 patients who convalesced at Brattleboro during the war only 91 succumbed to their ailments.<sup>73</sup> His regimen while there can only be described as relaxed, with frequent trips into town and occasional passes to visit his family back in St. Johnsbury.<sup>74</sup> As he mentions on February 17, "the Stewart told me to go to the clerk and he would give me a pass whenever I wanted one." That is not to say that he was on an extended vacation; his painting skills were frequently put to use by the hospital administrators.

The remainder of Crosby's entries involve his time in the hospital, and they end abruptly in mid-April, shortly after news of President Lincoln's assassination. After being mustered out of service in August, he returned home to St. Johnsbury and at last got his wish of March 12, 1865, to return to live with his family again. Settling into a house on Cliff Street, he became employed by the St. Johnsbury school district, initially as a janitor; later in life he would rise to become the town's truant officer.<sup>75</sup>

Crosby's beloved wife Helen would sicken and die of cancer in 1880, at the age of 43.<sup>76</sup> Of his children, only Addie and Ferdinand, his son by his second wife Agnes, would survive to adulthood.<sup>77</sup> In May 1908, Crosby



came down with a bad case of pneumonia, dying of it on the 23rd of that month at the age of 72.<sup>78</sup> Through Ferdinand his line continued, as it does to this day.

Other than these diaries, no other letters or papers of George R. Crosby survive. His account of the war is both a record of his military experience and an intensely personal look at a man who just wanted to go home again. Through his battle records we gain insight into an under-examined regiment in an under-examined arm of service, the First Vermont Cavalry. Balanced against that is the human factor that appears throughout Crosby's diaries. His entries give us an insider's view into the function and occasional failings of the bounty system, as those written while on leave give a glimpse into the home life the common soldier yearned to return to. From these many experiences we gain another perspective on the experience of Vermonters in the Civil War, and truly that must be the ultimate value of the Civil War diaries of George Richardson Crosby.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Horace K. Ide, *History of the First Vermont Cavalry in the War of the Great Rebellion*, edited with additional material by Elliot W. Hoffman (Baltimore, Md: Butternut & Blue, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Eli Slifer to Simon Cameron, 16 April 1861, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), Series III, Volume 1, 77 (hereafter cited as *Official Records*).

<sup>3</sup> Ide, *First Vermont*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Stephan Z. Starr, "The Inner Life of the First Vermont Volunteer Cavalry, 1861–1865," *Vermont History* 46 no. 3 (1978): 158.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>6</sup> Theodore S. Peck, comp., *Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers and Lists of Vermonters Who Served in the Army and Navy of the United States during the War of the Rebellion, 1861–1866* (Montpelier, Vt: Watchman Publishing Company, 1892), 243.

<sup>7</sup> G. G. Benedict, *Vermont in the Civil War: A History of the Part Taken by the Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the War for the Union, 1861–1865* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press Association, 1886) Volume 2, 542.

<sup>8</sup> Ide, *First Vermont Cavalry*, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Major General George B. McClellan to the War Department, April 1862, in *Official Records*, Series I, Volume 6, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Ide, *First Vermont Cavalry*, 62–63.

<sup>11</sup> Private Henry A. Smith to his family, 7 June 1862, in Jeffrey D. Marshall, *A War of the People: Vermont Civil War Letters* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999), 81–82.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall, *A War of the People*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Ide, *First Vermont Cavalry*, 66.

<sup>14</sup> Captain Frank Platt, "Consolidated Morning Report," 1 June 1862, *Regimental Consolidated Morning Report Book, 1st Vermont Cavalry*, RG 94 - Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Volume 1 of 6, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>15</sup> Colonel Edward Sawyer to Brigadier General Montgomery Meigs, 15 Oct. 1862, *Regimental Letter Book*, RG 94, Volume 4 of 6.

<sup>16</sup> Ide, *First Vermont Cavalry*, 60.

<sup>17</sup> Colonel Sawyer to Lieutenant L. W. Barnhart, 16 Feb. 1864, *Regimental Letter Book*, RG 94, Volume 1 of 6.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephan C. Trombulak, *The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History*, (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999), 72.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ide, First Vermont Cavalry*, 98.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 95–96.

<sup>21</sup> *Records of Marriages in the Town of St. Johnsbury* (Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Company, 1897), Office of the Town Clerk, St. Johnsbury, Vermont, Volume III, 70.

<sup>22</sup> Captain Clarence D. Gates, “Special Order 15,” 11 April 1863, *Regimental Order Book*, RG 94, Volume 4 of 6.

<sup>23</sup> General Joseph Hooker to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, 4 June 1863, in *Official Records*, Series I, Volume 27, Part 1, 29.

<sup>24</sup> General Joseph Hooker to President Abraham Lincoln, 10 June 1863, in *Official Records*, Series I, Volume 27, Part 1, 34.

<sup>25</sup> President Lincoln to General Hooker, 10 June 1863, in *Official Records*, Series I, Volume 27, Part 1, 35.

<sup>26</sup> George A. Rummell III, *Cavalry on the Road to Gettysburg: Kilpatrick at Hanover and Hunt-erstown*, (Shippensburg, Pa: White Mane Books, 2000), 205.

<sup>27</sup> *Ide, First Vermont Cavalry*, 107–108.

<sup>28</sup> Rummell, *Cavalry on the Road to Gettysburg*, 249.

<sup>29</sup> Colonel Edward Sawyer to Vermont Adjutant General Peter Washburn, 10 October 1863, *Regimental Letter Book*, RG 94, Volume 1 of 6.

<sup>30</sup> Report to Vermont Adjutant General Peter Washburn Concerning Actions of 2 July 1863, 10 July 1863, *Regimental Letter Book*, RG 94, Volume 1 of 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ide, First Vermont Cavalry*, 115.

<sup>32</sup> Colonel Edward Sawyer to Assistant Brigade Adjutant General Captain Siebert, 7 August 1863, *Regimental Letter Book*, RG 94, Volume 1 of 6.

<sup>33</sup> *Ide, First Vermont Cavalry*, 118.

<sup>34</sup> Report Concerning Actions of 6 July 1863, 10 July 1863, *Regimental Letter Book*, RG 94, Volume 1 of 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Company Muster Roll Card, July–August 1863, in George R. Crosby Service Record, RG 94, Box 29.

<sup>37</sup> His promotion to corporal was not official until January 18. Company Muster Roll Card, 18 January 1864, in George R. Crosby Service Record, RG 94, Box 29.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> J.H. Baxter, comp., *Statistics, Medical and Anthropological, of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau, Derived from Records of the Examinations for Military Service in the Armies of the United States during the Late War of the Rebellion of over a Million Recruits, Drafted Men, Substitutes and Enrolled Men* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1875), 1:163.

<sup>40</sup> Receipt from Andover Town Selectmen B.F. Howard, O.W. Leonard, and William Pierce, 12 August 1865, Pioneer Memorial Society Archives, Andover, Vt.

<sup>41</sup> The state government of Vermont did not offer any bounty money itself, but did regulate the town bounties. *Acts and Resolves Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont at the Annual Session, 1864* (Montpelier, Vt.: Freeman Steam Printing Establishment, 1864), 26–27.

<sup>42</sup> S.M. Dufur, *Over the Deadline or Tracked by Bloodhounds* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press Association, 1902), 12.

<sup>43</sup> Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick to Major General Alfred Pleasanton, 16 March 1864, in *Official Records*, Series I, Volume 33, 183.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ide, First Vermont Cavalry*, 158.

<sup>46</sup> Gordon C. Rhea, “Union Cavalry in the Wilderness: The Education of Phillip H. Sheridan and James H. Wilson,” in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Wilderness Campaign* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 119.

<sup>47</sup> Corporal Crosby was taken prisoner at a meeting house called Craig’s Church, a short distance north of the Catharpin Road. Company Muster Roll Card, 5 May 1864, in George R. Crosby Service Record, RG 94, Box 29.

<sup>48</sup> Ovid L. Futch, *History of Andersonville Prison* (Indiantown: University of Florida Press, 1968), 10.

<sup>49</sup> William Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 12.

<sup>50</sup> On May 14, Crosby recorded one of his infrequent impressions of the course of the war generally, rather than his small corner of it. At that time he being held temporarily in Danville, S.C., awaiting transit by rail to Andersonville. He comments both that the Confederate militia appears to be “composed of the old men and young boys” and that it “is no doubt the last that can be raised in this vicinity.” From all he has seen thus far, he concludes that it “looks as though the confederacy was on its last legs, everything seems to be strained all that it will bear.”

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<sup>51</sup> Carl L. Romanek, "The 'Inherent Logic' of Andersonville," in Joseph P. Cangemi and Casimir J. Kowalski, eds., *Andersonville Prison: Lessons in Organizational Failure* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1992), 42.

<sup>52</sup> Surgeon Joseph Jones, "Table Illustrating the Mean number of Federal Prisoners confined in the Confederate States Military Prison at Andersonville, Georgia from its organization, Feb 24th 1864 to September 1864 and the average number of Square Feet of ground to each Prisoner," *Observations upon the Diseases of the Federal Prisoners Confined at Andersonville, Georgia in the Confederate States Military Prison, Made in Accordance with the Order of the Surgeon General of the Confederate States*, RG 109, Reports on the Conditions at Andersonville Prison, 1864–1865, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>53</sup> Confederate Surgeon Joseph Jones, inspecting the camp on behalf of the Surgeon General's Office, estimated that daily mortality was closer to 90–100 men daily. He did agree with Crosby that diarrhea and scurvy were two of the chief causes, exacerbated by contaminated drinking water. Joseph Jones to Confederate Surgeon General S.P. Moore, 9 October 1864, in *Observations upon the Diseases of the Federal Prisoners Confined at Andersonville*, RG 109.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Chief Surgeon Isaiah White to Surgeon S.M. Beemis, 26 June 1864, in Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Gwynn A. Tucker, "Andersonville Prison: What Happened?" in Cangemi and Kowalski, *Andersonville Prison*, 14.

<sup>57</sup> Surgeon Joseph Jones, "Table illustrating the mean strength, total Cause of Disease + Death + Relations of the Cases + Deaths of the most fatal Diseases amongst the Federal Prisoners confined at Andersonville, Georgia," 16 September 1864 in *Observations upon the Diseases of the Federal Prisoners Confined at Andersonville*, RG 109.

<sup>58</sup> Surgeon Joseph Jones, "Description of the Confederate States Military Prison and Hospital at Andersonville: Number of Prisoners—physical conditions—food—clothing—habits—moral condition—disease," in *Observations upon the Diseases of the Federal Prisoners Confined at Andersonville*, RG 109.

<sup>59</sup> Futch, *History of Andersonville Prison*, 66–67.

<sup>60</sup> Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot*, 97–98.

<sup>61</sup> Assistant Adjutant General William S. Winder, "General Order 57," 30 June 1864, in *Official Records*, Series II, Volume 7, 426.

<sup>62</sup> General Robert E. Lee to Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon, 28 October 1864, in *Official Records*, Series II, Volume 6, 438–439.

<sup>63</sup> Futch, *History of Andersonville Prison*, 48.

<sup>64</sup> Unlike previous rumors of exchange, this one had some foundation in truth. Negotiations between the Federal commander besieging Charleston and Charleston's garrison commander had led to a special exchange of 100 officers. No resumption of general exchanges, however, would result from this negotiation. Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot*, 164–165.

<sup>65</sup> Lieutenant Colonel John E. Mulford to General Alexander Schimmelfennig, 16 December 1864, in *Official Records*, Series II, Volume 7, 1232.

<sup>66</sup> Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon to General John H. Winder, 17 July 1864, in *Official Records*, Series II, Volume 7, 471.

<sup>67</sup> General Samuel Jones to the Confederate War Department, 10 September 1864, in Ibid, 789.

<sup>68</sup> Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Pickett to General W.J. Hardee, 12 October 1864, in Ibid, 972–974.

<sup>69</sup> Inspector General John F. Lay to Major Horton Lee, 21 September 1864, in Ibid, 855.

<sup>70</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Mulford to General Schimmelfennig, 16 December 1864, in Ibid, 1232.

<sup>71</sup> Hospital Muster Roll Card, 24 December 1864, in George R. Crosby Service Record, RG 94.

<sup>72</sup> *Journal of the U.S. General Hospital in Brattleboro, Vermont: 1861–1865*, Vermont Historical Society microfilm collection, no. 147.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Furloughs and passes for soldiers in military hospitals were officially limited to 5 percent of the total strength of a given command. One suspects from Crosby's entries that this regulation was more honored in the breach than the observance. Colonel Richard Rush, "General Regulations for the Recruiting Service and Organization of the Invalid Corps," 12 August 1863, in *Official Records*, Series III, Volume 3, 671.

<sup>75</sup> George R. Crosby, "Report of the Truant Officer," *Sixth Annual Report of the School Officers of the Town of St. Johnsbury, Vermont: February 1, to December 31, 1898* (St. Johnsbury, Vt: Republican Press, 1898), 19, Bailey Howe Library Special Collections, University of Vermont.

<sup>76</sup> *Records of Births and Deaths in the Town of St. Johnsbury* (Rutland, Vt: The Tuttle Company, 1897), Volume IV, 216, Office of the Town Clerk, St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

<sup>77</sup> *Records of Births and Deaths in the Town of St. Johnsbury*, Volumes IV, 197, and VII, 132, 136.

<sup>78</sup> "Certificate of Death—George R. Crosby," *Records of Births and Deaths in the Town of St. Johnsbury: 1908*, Office of the Town Clerk, St. Johnsbury, Vermont.