

## Chapter 2

# Artifacts of Internment: Archaeology and Interpretation at Two American Civil War Prisoner-of-War Sites

John H. Jameson

**Abstract** While the American Civil War (1861–1865) is best known for key events such as the Battle of Gettysburg, the horrid Civil War prisoner of war experience is also important, with 56,000 men perishing in Civil War prisons. At two PoW camp sites, managed and interpreted for the public by the US National Parks Service, archaeology has played an important role in enhancing understanding. Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia, perhaps the most notorious of the Civil War prisons, has few surviving records or remains of the stockade, but archaeology has revealed two construction phases and key architectural features and living areas. At Fort Pulaski National Monument, Georgia, the location of the graves of the Confederate PoWs who died at Fort Pulaski were revealed through archaeology and are now marked and interpreted for the public by an outside exhibit.

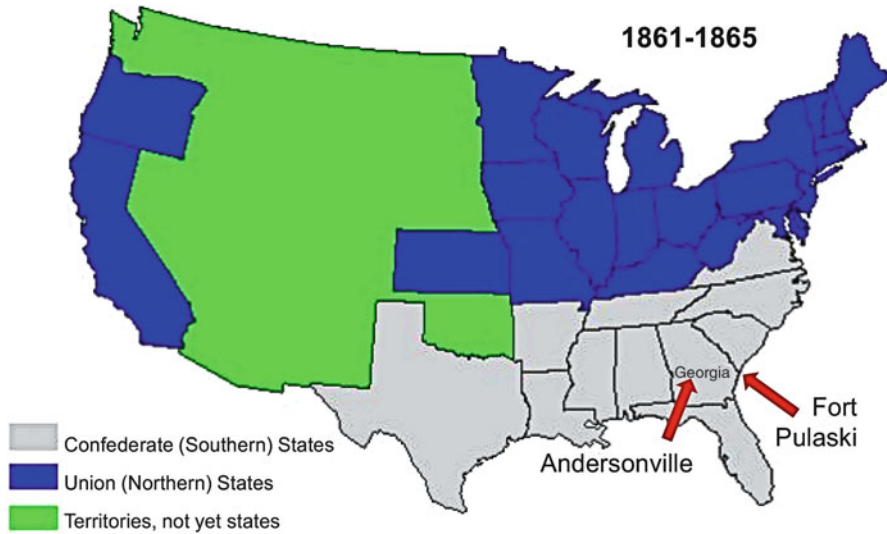
## Introduction

The American Civil War (1861–1865) marked an end to an economic and social era, that despite the principles espoused in the Declaration of Independence of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, could not be sustained. The Declaration and the US Constitution with its Bill of Rights were forged within an unspoken compromise over the issue of slavery. Slavery, as the backbone of the plantation and rural agricultural systems, was condemned by Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration and third president of the United States. Jefferson wrote of the “fireball in the night” that would bring ruin and devastation to the nation (Randolph 1829:323), yet he was

---

J.H. Jameson (✉)

NB Southeast Archeological Center, U.S. National Park Service,  
Waterford Glen Court, Tallahassee, FL 32312, USA  
e-mail: jhameson@yahoo.com



**Fig. 2.1** Map of the United States in 1861–1865 during the American Civil War showing the states of the Confederacy (*grey*) and states loyal to the Union (*blue*) and locations of Andersonville National Historic Site and Fort Pulaski National Monument, Georgia

a slave owner, and his life personifies the great paradox of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, and these internal contradictions inevitably led to the Civil War between Confederate and Union states (Fig. 2.1).

While the war is best known for key events such as the Battle of Gettysburg and innovative military technologies such as rifled cannon, trench warfare, and submarines capable of sinking ships, the atrocities of the PoW camps should also be burned into the collective historical American consciousness. While the war etched names such as Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Antietam, and Vicksburg into history, the more subversive battles in the camps went relatively unnoticed. Of the more than 600,000 Americans who lost their lives in the war, an estimated 56,000 died in Civil War prisons, at a casualty rate much higher than on the bloody battlefields. Two Civil War PoW sites, Andersonville and Fort Pulaski, presently managed and interpreted for the public by the US National Parks Service in the state of Georgia, located in the southeastern United States, have benefitted from a combination of archaeological and documentary research to reveal the PoW experience (Fig. 2.1).

Andersonville National Historic Site (NHS) is the location of perhaps the most notorious of the Civil War prisons. With little surviving original records or remains of the stockade, archaeology has provided key evidence for two reconstruction phases as well as information on important architectural features and living areas. Besides the prison, the Andersonville NHS contains a national cemetery as well as the National Prisoner of War Museum. The exhibits in the National Prisoner of War Museum commemorate the sacrifice and suffering of American prisoners of war in all conflicts. Fort Pulaski National Monument is where the “Immortal 600”

Confederate (Southern) officers were imprisoned; their sad treatment was in part prompted by news of the horrors at Andersonville. The precise location of the graves of the Confederate prisoners who died at Fort Pulaski was finally revealed in the late 1990s through archaeology, and are now marked and interpreted for the public by an out-of-doors exhibit.

## Conditions in Civil War Prisons

### *More Horrible Than Battle*

Most American Civil War soldiers by far preferred to be on the battlefield rather than in a PoW camp. The Union's Fort Delaware, the PoW prison camp from which those at Fort Pulaski were derived in 1864, was dubbed "The Fort Delaware Death Pen." Another Union prison at Elmira, New York, experienced nearly a 25 % mortality rate. The South's infamous Camp Sumter, or Andersonville prison, claimed the lives of 29 % of its inmates. More than 150 prisons were established during the war; all were filled beyond capacity, with inmates crowded into camps and shelters with unhealthy conditions and meager provisions (Hall 2003).

The high mortality rate in Civil War prisons was generally not deliberate, but rather the result of ignorance of nutrition and proper sanitation on both sides of the conflict. While malice was seldom intended, ignorance, coupled with shortages of food, shelter, and clothing, produced cauldrons of disease and death. While previous wars had harbored similar prison conditions, the Civil War was unique in the sheer numbers of men confined. With the possible exception of the aftermath of the Battle of Saratoga in 1777, where thousands of British soldiers became PoWs, Americans had seldom been faced with what to do with more than 100 men in captivity. The hundreds of thousands of men imprisoned simply exceeded either side's ability or will to manage the crisis (Hall 2003; Ketchum 1997).

The North incarcerated most of its PoWs in an array of coastal fortifications (such as Fort Pulaski), existing jails, old buildings, and barracks enclosed by high fences (see Chap. 4). Both sides realized, however, that less formal and make-shift facilities would be required in many cases to house the overwhelming numbers of prisoners that were being captured. Union prisons such as Maryland's Point Lookout housed soldiers in tent cities walled in by high fences, while the South, lacking the means to build adequate structures, forced men into crowded stockades.

### *Depression and Dysentery*

Prison diets consisted of pickled beef, salt pork, corn meal, rice, or bean soup. The lack of fruits or vegetables often led to outbreaks of scurvy and other diseases.

In many northern prisons, hungry inmates hunted rats, sometimes making a sport of it. Starvation and poor sanitation inflamed outbreaks of diseases like smallpox, typhoid, dysentery, cholera, and malaria. If left untreated, sores led to gangrene—a disease curable only by amputation. Of all these afflictions, perhaps the most dangerous was depression. A good number of the prisoners became catatonic, wasting away, and some elected suicide as a remedy, taunting guards to shoot them.

Despite these insufferable conditions, prisoners on both sides coped as best they could. Inmates at Johnson's Island prison in Lake Erie were housed in one of the best-equipped prisons (Chap. 4) and formed a YMCA, a debating society, and a thespian troupe to pass the time. When snow was present, some even held snowball fights. At some prisons, such as those in the Richmond area, prisoners published their own newspapers and established libraries. Prisoners whiled away their days with games like chess, cards, and backgammon.

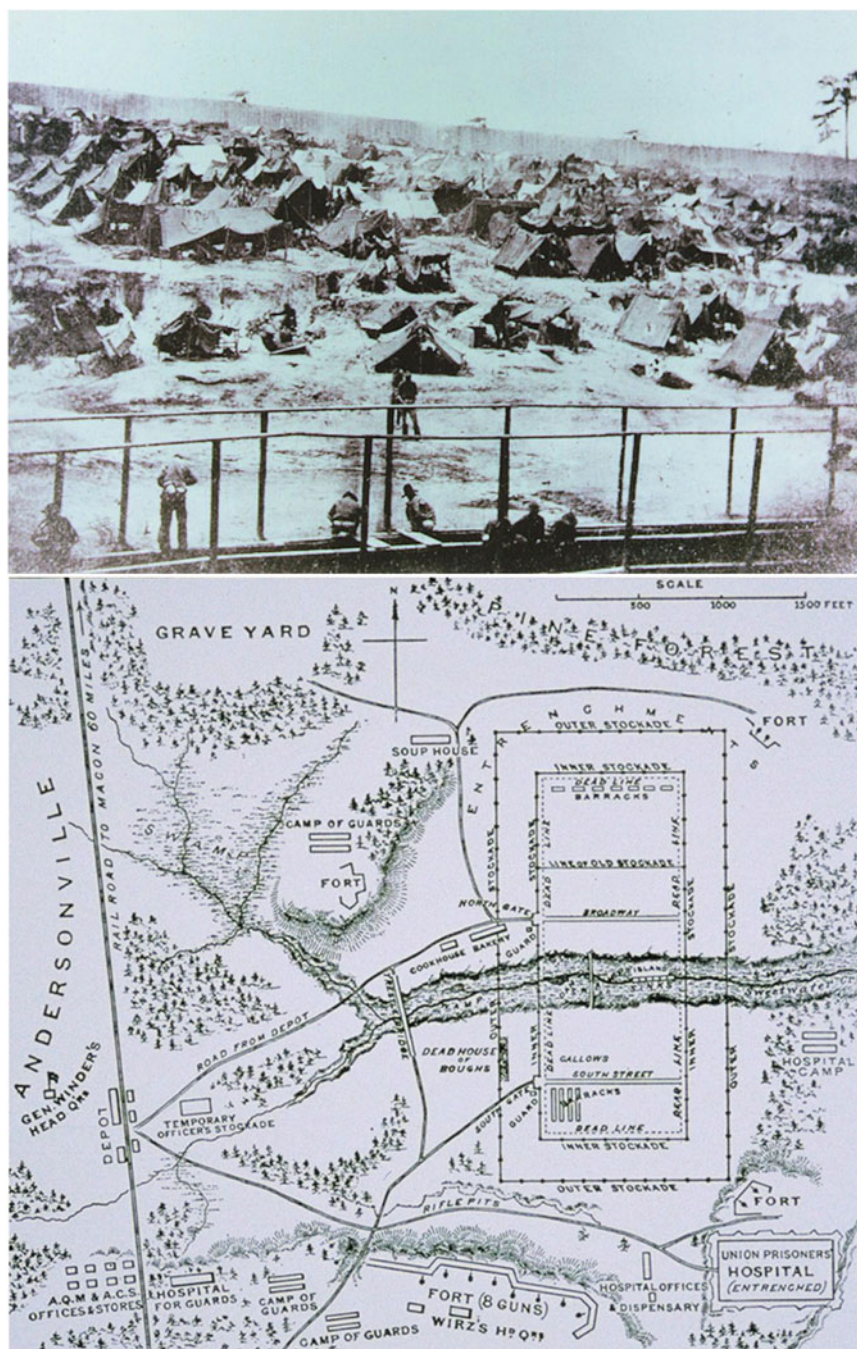
Problems of overcrowding were exacerbated by slow and inefficient prisoner exchange practices. Later in the war, when the Confederacy refused to exchange black prisoners, in some cases forcing them into slavery, the exchange system broke down. Knowing that attrition rates were affecting Confederate forces more severely than Union forces, Union generals became reluctant to enter into exchanges. General Ulysses Grant, senior commander of Union forces, refused to allow PoWs at Fort Pulaski to be exchanged. However, a good number of the Andersonville inmates were later exchanged through the port of Savannah in November 1864 (Derden 2010).

Union propaganda campaigns both during and following the war decried the dire conditions of Confederate prisons while ignoring their own, as evidenced by the conditions and treatment policies at Fort Pulaski. Despite these horrific conditions, and evidence on both sides of cases of brutality and deliberate deprivations, only Major Henry Wirz, the Confederate commandant of Andersonville, was executed for war crimes and was later seen as a scapegoat (Peoples 1980).

## The Andersonville PoW Camp

Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia is the site of Andersonville prison, by far the most infamous of the American Civil War prisons. Officially known as Camp Sumter, Andersonville was one of the largest of many established prison camps during the American Civil War and was the largest Confederate military prison. It was built early in 1864 with slave labor after Confederate officials decided to move the large number of Federal prisoners kept in and around Richmond, Virginia, to a place of greater security and a more abundant food supply. During the 14 months of the prison's existence, more than 45,000 Union soldiers were confined there. Of these, almost 13,000 died from multiple factors including poor sanitation, diarrhea and other diseases, malnutrition and starvation, and exposure to the elements, all stemming from overcrowding (Fig. 2.2).

The first prisoners were brought to Andersonville in February 1864. During the next few months, approximately 400 more arrived each day until, by the end of June,



**Fig. 2.2** *Top*: 1864 photograph of interior of Andersonville Prison camp; *Bottom*: Historical sketch map of the stockade and immediate environs



some 26,000 men were confined in a prison area originally intended to hold 13,000. Handicapped by deteriorating economic conditions, an inadequate transportation system, and the need to concentrate all available resources on the army, the Confederate government was unable to provide adequate housing, food, clothing, and medical care to their Federal captives. These conditions, along with a breakdown of the prisoner exchange system, resulted in much suffering and a high mortality rate.

Andersonville Prison, housing nearly 33,000 men at its peak in August 1864, became one of the largest “cities” of the Confederacy. Inmates were crowded into 26.5 acres (11 ha) of muddy land, constructing primitive shelters, “shebangs,” from whatever material they could find. Lacking sewers or other sanitation facilities, camp inmates turned “Stockade Creek” into a massive, disease-ridden latrine. Summer rainstorms would flood the open sewer, spreading filth across the settlement. Visitors approaching the camp for the first time often retched from the stench. Medical supplies were woefully inadequate as the Confederacy had great problems obtaining these after the Union naval blockade began to tighten in 1862. Medical personnel had to resort to remedies derived from indigenous plants and herbs for stimulants, tonics, and astringents, such as calamus, snakeroot, bearberry, sumac, dogwood, white oak, white willow, sage, and a host of others (Denney 1995:11). At Andersonville, “The supplies for a month are usually exhausted in 10 days, and the remainder of the time we are compelled to rely on such indigenous remedies as we can procure from the adjacent woods.” (Thornburgh 1864).

Inmates at Andersonville formed societies and ethnic neighborhoods. A polyglot of languages could be heard throughout the camp as German, Swedish, and Norwegian prisoners often conversed in their own tongues. In prison neighborhoods, barter systems developed as tradesmen and merchants sold primitive trade goods. Available shelter was limited to crude huts of made scrap wood, tent fragments, or simple holes dug in the ground; many had no shelter of any kind against the elements of rain, heat, and cold. No clothing was provided, and many prisoners were left with rags or nothing at all. The daily ration for the prisoners was the same as for the guards: one and one-fourth pound of corn meal and either one pound of beef or one-third pound of bacon. This sparse diet was only occasionally supplemented with beans, peas, rice, or molasses.

The guards, disease, starvation, and exposure were not all that prisoners had to face. A group of prisoners, calling themselves the “Andersonville Raiders,” attacked their fellow inmates to steal food, jewelry, money, and clothing. They were armed mostly with clubs, and killed to get what they wanted. Another group rose up to stop the larceny, calling themselves “Regulators.” They caught nearly all of the “Raiders,” who were then tried by a judge and jury selected from a group of newly arrived prisoners. This jury, upon finding the “Raiders” guilty, set punishments that included running the gauntlet, being sent to the stocks, wearing a ball and chain, and, in six cases, hanging. In the autumn of 1864, after the capture of Atlanta, Georgia, all the prisoners who could be moved were sent to Camp Lawton at Millen, Georgia, (discussed below) and Florence, South Carolina (Chap. 3). At Camp Lawton better arrangements prevailed and when the prisoners were returned to Andersonville, after General William Tecumseh Sherman began his March to the Sea, the conditions there were somewhat improved.



**Fig. 2.3** *Top row:* Sections of excavated in situ stockade remains and exposed banded soils (Prentice and Prentice, 1990); *Middle row:* Reconstructed stockade, prisoner huts, and an interpretive sketch “Crossing the Deadline”; *Bottom row:* National Prisoner of War Museum and sample of interior displays, Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia

## *The Stockade*

The stockade enclosure initially covered about 16.5 acres (6.7 ha) of land defined by a 15-foot (4.5 m) high stockade of hewn pine logs (Fig. 2.2, bottom); it was enlarged to 26.5 acres (10.7 ha) in June of 1864. The stockade was in the shape of a parallelogram 1,620 feet (494 m) and 779 feet (237 m) wide. Sentry boxes, or “pigeon roosts” as the prisoners called them, stood at 30-yard intervals along the top of the stockade. Inside, about 19 feet from the wall, was the “Deadline,” which the prisoners were forbidden to cross upon threat of death (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3). Flowing through the prison yard was a stream called Stockade Branch, which supplied water to most of the prison. Two entrances, the North Gate and the South Gate, were on the west side of the stockade. Eight small earthen forts located around the exterior of the prison were equipped with artillery to quell disturbances within the compound and to defend against feared Union cavalry attacks (Fig. 2.2).

## Archaeology at Andersonville PoW Camp

Work was carried out within three field seasons from 1988 to 1990 with the objectives of determining the nature and locations of the prison's stockade walls and gates; adding to understanding of prison conditions; and providing details that had escaped documentation. This information was vital to the park's interpretative programs in allowing for partial reconstruction of the stockade walls and the installation of associated exhibits that provide a sense of scale and spatial orientation for the visitor. This work also revealed important archaeological information about the different techniques used in constructing the original stockade, the main gates, and later expansions (National Park Service 2001; Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

### *Soil Color Banding*

The soil color banding observed in the West Stockade wall trench in plan view was duplicated in the cross-section trench profiles. These profiles made it readily apparent that the banding was the result of the manner in which the soils had been removed from the wall trench and backfilled around the posts. The soils in this portion of the site naturally grade from an orange color at the ground surface to a dark red color at a depth of 1.5 m (Fig. 2.3). The banding in the wall trenches indicates that when the wall trench was excavated the uppermost orange soils were thrown toward the exterior of the prison, while the deeper red soils were thrown toward the interior. When these soils were backfilled into the wall trench, the posts placed in the center of the trench prevented the two soil colors from mixing, thereby creating the banding effect noted near the surface (Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

Artifacts recovered during the North Gate investigations included one iron axe head and an axe head fragment, a brass and iron buckle, cut nails, a brass utensil fragment, probably part of a spoon handle, stamped with a crown symbol and the letters GR (or GB), and an alkaline glazed stoneware sherd. The axe heads were probably the remains of tools used in the construction of the original prison stockade by the African American slaves encumbered with the task. The cut nails were also probably used in the construction of the prison (Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

### *Slave Versus Prisoner Construction Phases*

During the 1989 investigations the original north wall of the prison was located, appearing as a whitish inner, central, fill zone (Prentice and Prentice 1990). The original north wall had been torn down by the prisoners following the building of the northern prison extension in July 1864. Trench 3 was excavated to examine the original north wall; the west profile exhibited the same wall trench shape and form as the western stockade trench, having a flat bottom with slightly inwardly sloping



sides. No posts were found in the trench, and the sides of the wall trench showed no signs of distortion or collapse. This suggests that when the prisoners pulled the post from this section of the original northern stockade wall trench on 1 July 1864, they pulled it to the east, thereby preserving the original trench shape. This is in contrast to the opposite or east profile where the northern side of the wall trench flairs outward near the ground surface. The flaring at this point in the trench suggests that when these posts were removed by the prisoners they were pulled toward the north. This flaring was probably the result of digging along the north side of the wall to loosen the poles so that they could be tipped or pulled out.

The profiles in Trench 3 also provided enough evidence to conclude that the method used to dig and backfill the wall trench of the original North Stockade was the same as that used for the original West Stockade—during the digging of the wall trench the uppermost soils were piled toward the exterior of the prison and the deeper red soils were piled toward the interior. When the soils were backfilled around the posts, these prevented the two soils from mixing, thereby creating a banding effect. Although the trench fills were later disturbed when the prisoners pulled out the posts on 1 July 1864, portions of the original fill zones were preserved at the bottom of each profile (Fig. 2.3). Numerous pig and cow bones, some with butchering marks, were recovered during the excavation of the stockade wall trenches. They were probably the remains of meals consumed by the African American slaves who built the original prison.

Trench 5 was placed parallel with the west stockade line at the point where the northern stockade extension intersected with the original northwest corner to reveal the method in which the stockade extension was added to the original corner of the prison stockade (Prentice and Prentice 1990). The point of intersection between the northern extension and the original stockade was evidenced in the west profile of Trench 5 by a vertical zone of red soil roughly 30 cm wide. South of the point of intersection, the remains of several posts showed that they had been hewn square before being placed in the trench. North of the point of intersection, the remains of several posts indicated that those posts that had been used in the construction of the extension had not been hewn square, as was noted by Walker during his 1987 investigations of the northeast corner of the camp (Prentice and Prentice 1990).

### ***Banded Soils Observed in the Southeast Corner Excavations***

Excavations were conducted at the southeast corner of the stockade in 1990, with surface deposits removed by machine with the trench then cleaned and investigated by hand excavation (Prentice and Prentice 1990). A consistent pattern of trench fill was revealed: a yellowish brown sand strip ran along one side of the stockade wall trench, and a band of whitish sand along the other side. The two bands were often separated by a band of grayish brown soil resulting from the decomposed posts located in the center of the trench. A similar banded pattern of stockade wall trench fills had been noted during the 1989 North Gate investigations.

As observed in the excavation profiles at the West Stockade, the banded pattern of wall trench fills found at both the southeast corner and the North Gate confirmed the consistent manner in which the stockade wall was constructed by the slave gangs. While digging the wall trench, the uppermost soils were consistently thrown to the outside of what would be the prison enclosure, while the deeper subsoils were thrown to the inside. The posts were then set in the middle of the trench and the fill on both sides of the trench was then packed around them. In the area of the southeast corner, where the deeper soils are naturally whiter than the light brown soils near the ground surface, this resulted in a white band on the interior side of the stockade posts and a light brown band of soil bordering the exterior of the posts. In the area of the northwest gate where the natural soil colors grade from orange to red, this resulted in an inner red band and an outer orange band of soil separated by posts (Fig. 2.3, top right).

### ***Failed Escape Tunnel***

A failed prisoner's escape tunnel was discovered along the southern stockade wall during the 1990 excavations (Prentice and Prentice 1990). These excavations currently provide the only archaeological evidence thus far on prisoner escape tunnel construction at Andersonville. Within the excavations, the widest section of the escape tunnel was about 90 cm. Based on profile map reconstructions, the height of the tunnel was approximately 40–50 cm—just big enough for a man to crawl through. This corner of the prison was apparently chosen as a tunnel location because of the soft, easily dug, sandy soils. Unfortunately for the attempted escapees, the soft soils also caused the downfall of the escape attempt. Digging just deep enough to pass beneath the bottoms of the stockade posts, the sandy soil and several stockade posts collapsed into the tunnel before the tunnel could be extended more than 1 m past the stockade line.

### ***Locating the “Deadline” Posts***

During the southeast corner investigations, an attempt was made to locate some of the deadline posts by excavating six 1-by-1 m units within the stockade enclosure. Two post locations were found: posthole 1 and feature 4. Both post locations were cross-sectioned, and flotation samples were collected for analysis. Artifacts recovered posthole 1 included a metal button, some bone fragments, some unidentifiable metal fragments, and a silver-filigreed writing instrument. Feature 4 yielded a metal button, a cut nail, cloth fragments, carbonized floral remains, and two pieces of bone, one of which exhibited evidence of butchering. The carbonized floral materials consisted of pine straw, pine bark, beans (*Phaseolus* sp.), and unidentified plant remains. These items were probably contemporaneous with the prison's occupation (Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

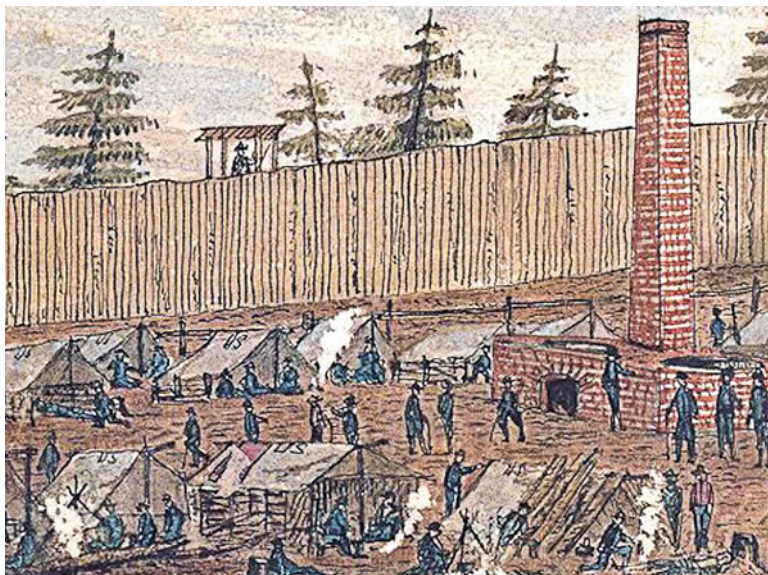
## Public Interpretation

Public interpretation until the early 1990s consisted of a few outdoor wayside exhibits and a map showing the location of the stockade and fortified compound. Visitors saw a large grassy field with these few visionary and interpretive aids, and they no doubt took away the mental image of that big, grassy, and fairly empty, landscape. In January 1987, the National Park Service proposed that certain portions of the inner prison stockade at Andersonville National Historical Site be reconstructed (Fig. 2.3 middle row) to enhance visitor understanding of the prison and prison conditions of the infamous Civil War prison camp (National Park Service 1988:1). Three of those portions of the prison were slated for reconstruction: the northeast corner, the southeast corner, and the North Gate. In 1970, Andersonville National Historic Site was designated by the US Congress as a memorial to all PoWs in American history (Fig. 2.3, bottom row). Park programs interpret the accounts of other Civil War PoW camps, both Northern and Southern, as well as the accounts of more recent conflicts.

Today, Andersonville National Historic Site offers three distinct localities within the park for interpretation: the Camp Sumter Civil War prison and landscape, including historic earthworks, monuments, and several reconstructed structures (Fig. 2.3, middle row); the National Prisoner of War Museum (Fig. 2.3, bottom row); and Andersonville National Cemetery, located about a quarter mile from the prison site and visitor center. The cemetery includes Civil War gravesites and monuments as well as twenty-first century burial spaces. A common visitor center within the museum building serves all three locations with a staffed reception desk, regularly scheduled interpretive tours, self-guided tour materials (print and CD), and a bookstore and gift shop. The visitor center also houses a small research library and archives, although with limited capacity for public access. Current interpretation programs and exhibits, with the benefit of the archaeological work, depict the grim life suffered by prisoners of war, both Southern and Northern, during the war (National Park Service 2010).

## Archaeology at Camp Lawton, Georgia

Camp Lawton, a successor PoW camp to Andersonville that operated for 6 weeks in October and November 1864 at Millen, Georgia, approximately 150 miles (240 km) northeast of Andersonville, has only recently received systematic archaeological study. Conditions at the camp were only mildly better than Andersonville (Fig. 2.4), and in the only existent official report 10,299 PoWs were listed at the prison, of whom 349 had enlisted in the Confederate Army, 486 had died, and 285 were working at the prison. When Confederates attempted to recruit their captives for military and other service, some joined the Confederate Army while others signed paroles and worked as butchers, administrative clerks, or cobblers. In the middle of November, shortly before the arrival of Union forces under General Sherman and



**Fig. 2.4** Inmate drawing of scene at Camp Lawton, Macon, Georgia, showing structures reminiscent of Andersonville. (Courtesy Virginia Historical Society)

the evacuation of the PoW camp, an exchange of sick prisoners was arranged. Many Camp Lawton inmates were among the several thousand Union and Confederate PoWs who were exchanged through the port of Savannah (Derden 2010).

Archaeologists from Georgia Southern University conducted a combination shovel-testing and metal-detecting survey program at the site of Camp Lawton in 2010 (Chapman 2010). The results of the survey were surprising given the pattern and paucity of artifacts, at Andersonville. An impressive assemblage of artifacts has been found at Camp Lawton, including keepsake items such as pipes, a tourniquet buckle, and bullets. Coins of German or Austrian origin would have come with the large number of recent immigrants who had enlisted on both sides. Artifacts such as a private coin minted in Columbus, Ohio and a New York State button suggest the geographic origin of some of the prisoners.

## Archaeology at Fort Pulaski National Monument

Fort Pulaski fell to the Union in 1862, in the process exposing the total obsolescence of masonry fortifications against rifled cannon that could penetrate masonry walls. Following the Civil War, with the advent of longer ranging cannon, Fort Pulaski fell into disuse. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, public relief projects such as the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) were wide ranging and many of them were occupied with the restoration of historic sites. Work at Fort Pulaski aimed to restore and stabilize the fortifications complex, including restoration of the wet moat and tidal gate system (Fig. 2.5).



**Fig. 2.5** Aerial view of Fort Pulaski

### ***The “Immortal 600”***

The “Immortal 600” was a group of 520 Confederate officers held as prisoners of war at Fort Pulaski during the bitterly cold winter of 1864–1865. They were moved there from Charleston, South Carolina, where they had been placed in a pin in the line of artillery fire in retaliation for what was viewed as similar treatment of Union PoWs in the city. The Confederate officer PoWs were treated harshly, partly as a result of news coming out of Confederate prisons, especially Andersonville, and they were given a 6-week diet of rancid cornmeal and pickles. While some Union officers tried to lessen the misery, they were generally overruled by superiors in favor of harsher treatment. Prisoners suffered from dysentery, chronic diarrhea, scurvy, and pneumonia, and 13 of them died while imprisoned at Fort Pulaski. They were buried in a cemetery near the fort, and the location of the burials of these men has been an important focus of much of the research done at the cemetery of Fort Pulaski (Groh 1999, 2000; Kane and Keaton 2005).

### **The Search for the “Immortal 600” Grave Sites**

#### ***1994 Remote Sensing Investigations***

Remote sensing survey at the eastern end of the cemetery area was undertaken by the NPS Southeast Archeological Center archaeologists in 1994 to locate the section containing the “Immortal 600” burials. The survey was unable to locate the area



**Table 2.1** List of “Immortal 600” Confederate dead buried at Fort Pulaski (after Groh 1999)

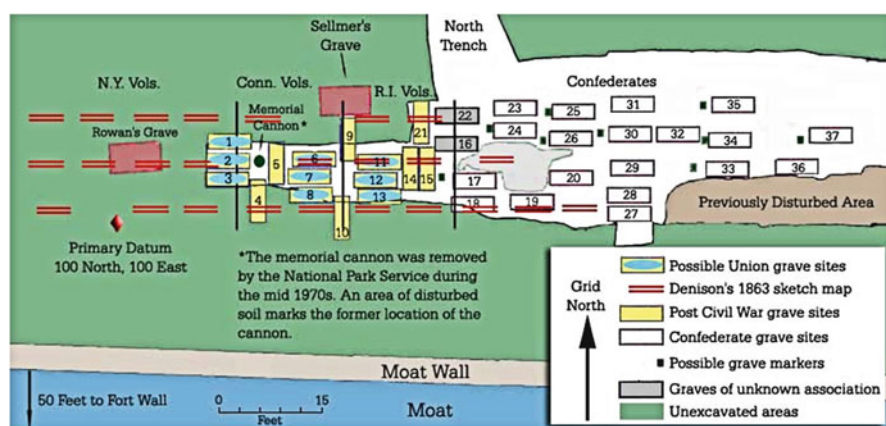
Name	Grave no. in Joslyn	1873 Burial list no.	Roster date
Burney, I.L.	—	11	Nov 12, 1864
Fitzgerald, George	3	—	Nov 13, 1864
Lane, C.C.	—	13	Dec 8, 1864
Burgin, John M.	—	—	Jan 28, 1865
Legg, Russell W.	5	—	Feb 7, 1865
Bradford, Moses J.	6	12	Feb 13, 1865
King, Alex M.	7	—	Feb 15, 1865
Rosenbalm, E.A.	—	10	Feb 18, 1865
Goodloe, T.J.	—	8	Feb 27, 1865
Brumley, O.R.	—	6	Mar 4, 1865
Eastham, C.B.	—	7	Mar 6, 1865
Gannoway, J.T.	—	9	Mar 10, 1865
Tolbert, J.H.	—	—	Mar 14, 1865

of the Confederate graves due to the past introduction and mixing of multiple soil types, although it did identify an area of 1930s disturbance in the southeast portion of the cemetery.

### *Archival Research and the 1998 Investigations*

Research performed at the National Archives by Mauriel Joslyn (1996b) and John Jameson (1997, 1998) identified information relating to the Fort Pulaski cemetery. While initially focused on materials related to the “Immortal 600,” Joslyn and Jameson also showed that most if not all of the Union soldiers buried at Fort Pulaski were exhumed following the war. Joslyn’s research pointed specifically to the removal of burials from the Rhode Island section of the cemetery. In addition, she compiled a list of the 13 members of the “Immortal 600” who were known to have died at Fort Pulaski (Table 2.1). Jameson recovered a list of burials in the Fort Pulaski cemetery initially dated to 1873, but containing two additions from 1879; the eight members of the “Immortal 600” on the 1873 list are indicated in Table 2.1 with a corresponding number. A newspaper article reported the names on eight Confederate grave markers as well, but the names appear to be derived from the 1873 burial list because of the spelling inconsistencies seen in both.

A few days since, while on an excursion with some up-country friends to Fort Pulaski, our attention was attracted by a neat enclosure containing several graves marked with head-boards, marking the graves of deceased soldiers. Upon enquiry of Colonel Howard, Commandant of the Fort, we learned that the graves were those of Confederate officers, whose remains had been gathered and buried there by his direction (*Savannah Morning News*, July 16, 1874).



**Fig. 2.6** Confederate prisoner cemetery grave location map, also showing Denison's 1863 sketch map

This implies that United States troops stationed at Fort Pulaski after the Civil War possibly moved some of the burials and placed grave markers showing their locations. Furthermore, the presence of an enclosure indicates that there may have been some additional disturbance caused by its construction. These inconsistencies could have occurred due to the fact that the Confederate troops imprisoned at Fort Pulaski were not allowed to place grave markers at the burials of their deceased comrades. When markers were finally placed years later, the exact information and spelling was sometimes lost.

There are eight possible grave markers in the Confederate section of the graveyard (Fig. 2.6). These markers probably coincide with the eight names in both the 1873 cemetery list and the 1874 newspaper article, though whether these eight names actually correspond with those buried in these locations may never be known.

With the available archival and remote sensing information, the 1998 field season sought to pinpoint the cemetery location and the location of the "Immortal 600" burials. Specifically, the archaeologists' main goals were to locate the unmarked graves of the Confederate officers imprisoned at Fort Pulaski and to define the boundaries of the cemetery. Much of the search for the Confederate graves was confined to the eastern half of the cemetery, based on a sketch map produced by Reverend Frederic Denison, Chaplain for the third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (Denison 1863). The map indicated that the eastern section of the cemetery was reserved for Confederate burials, of which there were four dating to the time before the arrival of the "Immortal 600"; the 1863 map indicated the position of a memorial cannon, buried muzzle down, marking the location of the cemetery. This cannon was removed by National Park Service staff in the 1970s and conserved, and now sits atop the walls of Fort Pulaski.

A number of burials oriented perpendicular to the previously discovered east–west burials were located and mapped during the 1998 excavations. The north–south graves were probably coffin burials used by post-Civil War military personnel and their families.

### *The 1999 Investigations*

Extensive excavations were conducted in 1999, leading to the complete delineation of the cemetery’s boundaries. Thirty-seven separate burials were identified, including the ones recorded during the 1998 field season (Fig. 2.6). Of these, 19–21 lie in the general area of the Confederate section and are therefore thought to be burials of Confederate prisoners at Fort Pulaski. To date, however, only 17 Confederate dead can be accounted for in the archives. Based on documentary research and the 1999 excavations, most of the Union troops who died during the Civil War were probably exhumed and their cemetery plots reused by civilians and post-Civil War military personnel. This interpretation is based mainly on the nonstandard orientation of burials going north–south as opposed to east–west (Groh 1999, 2000).

The disturbances in the middle of the cemetery, such as the pit dug to remove the cannon, and the addition and subsequent removal of the Fort Screven monument, probably affected the surrounding burials.

The cemetery at Fort Pulaski is an incredibly complex archaeological and historical site. Only through the combined efforts of archaeology and archival research will its many and varied uses be more fully comprehended. Archaeological investigations defined the extent of the burials so that future maintenance and restoration work at the fort would not disturb the cemetery area. This helps to ensure that the information contained within this area will be preserved for further study (NB Southeast Archeological Center 2003).

### *Need for Additional Research*

The majority of the known cultural resources located within and around the monument are related to the construction and functioning of the Civil War fortification of Fort Pulaski. Former Park Superintendent Ralston B. Lattimore and historian Rogers W. Young have carried out research on the construction history and events relating to the fort. However, outside these aspects very little is known regarding the Civil War era archaeological resources. Systematic subsurface testing should be conducted on all of Cockspur Island where Fort Pulaski stands to identify and determine all aspects of the resource. Archaeological investigations that focus on identifying construction methods and materials, site boundaries, structure function, and structure associations would greatly aid current site interpretations. The resulting data recovered from the investigations would also aid in evaluating the national, state, and local significance of archaeological resources associated with the Civil War era at Fort Pulaski National Monument.

## Public Interpretation

Interpretation at the cemetery is aided by an on-site wayside exhibit that includes an artist's rendering of a scene showing the burial of one of the Immortal 600 (Fig. 2.7). Although evidence of wooden grave markers was found at eight grave locations in the Confederate section of the cemetery during the 1999 archaeological investigations, the grave markers may have been placed by Federal troops after the war (Groh 1999:68; Joslyn 1996a:234).

## Conclusions

That the subject of treatment in war camps, of war detainees, and of PoWs, is still a contentious issue today explains, some believe, why relatively little scholarship and research has been conducted to date, though this volume indicates a welcome rise activity in this field. Over time, with continuing archival and archaeological research, the cruel legacy of Civil War prisons on both sides is being revealed. The healing process for all Americans continues with every generation. It is the comprehension of the benchmark of suffering set during the Civil War that continues to shape American self-questioning and introspection on modern-day wars. Just as Andersonville and the story of Civil War PoWs are of great interest within historical research, the issue of fair and ethical treatment of PoWs continues to be a concern around the world today. Indeed, it was Andersonville, and the public interest in the treatment of prisoners of war associated with it, that contributed to worldwide concerns and eventually to the Geneva Convention.



**Fig. 2.7** Artist rendering of Confederate prisoners at Fort Pulaski burying one of their own. Oil painting by Martin Pate

## References

- Chapman, J. K. (2010). Archaeology at Camp Lawton. Georgia Southern University. Retrieved 26 August 2011 from <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/camplawton/index.php/archaeology>.
- Denison, F. (1863). *Sketch map of Fort Pulaski burials*. Washington, DC: National Archives.
- Denney, R. E. (1995). *Civil war medicine, care and comfort of the wounded*. New York: Sterling.
- Derden, J. K. (2010). About the Camp. Georgia Southern University. Retrieved 26 August 2011 from <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/camplawton/index.php/about>.
- Groh, L. (1999). *Archaeological investigations at Fort Pulaski National Monument, Chatham County, Georgia*. Report on file, National Park Service, Southeast Archaeological Center, Tallahassee, FL.
- Groh, L. (2000). Fort Pulaski National Monument: Archaeological overview and assessment. Report on file, National Park Service, Southeast Archaeological Center, Tallahassee, FL.
- Hall, Y. (2003). U.S. Civil War Prison Camps claimed thousands. *National Geographic News*, 1 July 2003. Retrieved August 8, 2009 from [http://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/07/0701\\_030701\\_civilwarprisons.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/07/0701_030701_civilwarprisons.html).
- Jameson, J. H. (1997). *National archives research final report, background for Fort Pulaski General Management Plan*. Manuscript on file, National Park Service, Southeast Archaeological Center, Tallahassee, FL.
- Jameson, J. H. (1998). *Archaeological issues at Fort Pulaski National Monument, Georgia: Background to preparation of the general management plan, 1997–1998*. Manuscript on file, National Park Service, Southeast Archaeological Center, Tallahassee, FL.
- Joslyn, M. (1996a). *Immortal captives*. Shippensburg, PA: White Mane.
- Joslyn, M. (1996b). *The biographical roster of the immortal 600*. Shippensburg, PA: White Mane.
- Kane, S., & Keaton, R. (2005). *Echoes from the past, archaeology at Fort Pulaski*. Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National.
- Ketchum, R. M. (1997). *Saratoga: Turning point of America's revolutionary war*. New York, NY: Henry Holt.
- National Park Service (1988). *Andersonville National Historic Site, General Management Plan, Development Concept Plan*, Environmental Assessment, June 1988.
- National Park Service (2001). Archaeology at Andersonville. Retrieved 5 August, 2009 from <http://www.nps.gov/seac/andefiel.htm>.
- National Park Service (2010). *Andersonville national historic site long-range interpretive plan, February 2010*. Document on file at Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, GA.
- NB Southeast Archaeological Center (2003). The Fort Pulaski Cemetery. Retrieved February 15, 2012 from [http://www.nps.gov/seac/pulaski/2-civil\\_war/index-2.htm#cemetery](http://www.nps.gov/seac/pulaski/2-civil_war/index-2.htm#cemetery). National Park Service, Southeast Archaeological Center, Tallahassee, FL.
- Peoples, M. D. (1980). Henry Wirz: The scapegoat of Andersonville. *North Louisiana History*, 11(4), 3–18.
- Prentice, G., & Prentice, M. C. (1990). *Three seasons of excavations at the Andersonville Civil War Prison Site, unpublished paper on file at the Southeast Archaeological Center*. Tallahassee, FL: National Park Service.
- Prentice, G., & Prentice, M. C. (2000). Far from the battlefield: Archaeology at Andersonville Prison. In C. R. Geier & S. R. Potter (Eds.), *Archaeological perspectives of the American Civil War* (pp. 166–187). Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Randolph, T. J. (Ed.). (1829). *Memoirs, correspondence, and private papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Vol. 4, p. 323). Charlottesville, VA: F. Carr.
- Thornburgh, A. (1864). Report on gangrene. Assistant Surgeon, Provisional Army, C. S., C. S. military prison hospital, Andersonville, Georgia. Retrieved August 25, 2011 from <http://www.civilwarhome.com/andersonvillegangrene.htm>.



Prisoners of War

Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and  
20th-Century Mass Internment

Mytum, H.; Carr, G. (Eds.)

2013, X, 342 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4614-4165-6