



In a documented 1876 interview, Dr. R. Randolph Stevenson spoke of a provision in the Confederate Constitution for captured Union soldiers. The provision says "and the rations furnished for prisoners of war shall be the same in quantity and quality as those furnished to enlisted men in the army of the Confederacy."

Union prisons did not uphold such guarantees. Many Confederate prisoners were denied basic needs by a nation with all kinds of resources. The Confederacy on the other hand even went so far as to sell valuable supplies in order to feed and care for captured Union soldiers.

Indeed, many surgeons commented on the poor health of returned Confederate soldiers who were in Union POW camps. They often spoke of abuse and neglect at the hand of their Union captors. It was not uncommon for prisoner trade barges to contain the bodies of dead and dying Confederate soldiers.

Some prisoners spoke of being placed in prisons where disease like Small Pox ran rampant and medical aid was denied. Such accounts were collected and published after the war. Such stories seem at odds with the fact that the Union had funds available to improve the well being of captured Confederate soldiers.

The Confederacy, on the other hand, made sure it upheld its belief in equal treatment of captured Union troops. When money became scarce within the Confederate prison system, cotton and tobacco were sold to provide additional funding. When disease began to ravage Union prisoners, Confederate officers tried to barter with Union commanders for medical supplies, only to be rebuffed.

The unequal treatment of captured soldiers by the two sides stands in contrast to the readily accepted notion the Union soldiers were treated much worse than Confederate troops. This is because of Northern propaganda like a Congressional report based on condition of soldiers, not on testimonials of POWs. In stating that it was fighting for freedom of all men, the Union prison system denied the rights to the Confederate soldiers.

The picture shown is of Confederate prisoners at Camp Douglas.