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# Andersonville, the Auschwitz of the Civil War in the United States, in Word and Film

## Andersonville Auschwitz občanské války ve Spojených státech, slovem i filmem

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## **Poděkování**

Na této stránce bych chtěl poděkovat všem, kteří mi při vytváření této práce pomohli, nenáležeje na tom, jak velká jejich kontribuce byla. Především bych chtěl poděkovat PhDr. Christopheru Koyovi, M.A., Ph.D., který téma této práce navrhl a pomohl vypracovat. Chtěl bych také poděkovat své rodině, která při mně stála a také kontrolovala pravopis této práce.

## **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá Andersonville. Toto místo sloužilo jako koncentrační tábor Konfederovaných států během Americké občanské války. Hlavním zaměřením práce je popsání toho, jak je Andersonville vyobrazen v historické knize MacKinlay Kantora a dalších knihách zabývajících se tímto tématem. Tento knižní popis je poté porovnáván s filmovým zpracováním Johna Frankenheimera, a je tudíž porovnáno, jak se tyto dvě zpracování sobě podobají či liší, a jak jsou obě daná zpracování věrná historickým faktům.

## **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis focuses on Andersonville. This location served as a concentration camp of the Confederate States during the American Civil War. The main focus of the thesis is the description of how Andersonville was described in the historical novel of MacKinlay Kantor, and other books written about this subject. This description from the books is then compared to the movie made by John Frankheimer, it is then noted what are the similarities or differences of both adaptations and how faithful they are to the historical facts.

**Klíčová slova:** Andersonville, román, film, porovnání

**Keywords:** Andersonville, novel, movie, comparison

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## Introduction

Andersonville, a name that is not known to many people who historians are not, after all, why should they care about some place and what happened in it during the past. However, some people look more closely at the history of this site and what they will find may shock, dismay, or surprise them. After all, it is not common to encounter a predecessor to Auschwitz.

Andersonville, or as it was known to the Confederates Camp Sumter, was a small camp surrounded by a wooden palisade, where captured soldiers of the Union army were held, prisoners. What makes this so shocking, however, is how poorly the prisoners were treated, how abysmal their supply was and how bad the hygiene had become.

My main goal however is not to describe the various crimes and mistreatments that happened in this camp, but to describe the novel written by MacKinlay Kantor and the movie that focused mainly on Andersonville. Both genres, after all, have certain notoriety about them, that they are not restricted about historical accuracy and tend to change the facts to suit either the narrative or to add more drama to the plot.

My main goal is then to describe both the novel and the movie, focusing on what is accurate according to history, which aspects they changed, and what events the novelist and filmmaker have left out entirely. I will subsequently compare the novel and movie, and attempt to describe how similar they are if the way they handled certain aspects of Andersonville were better or worse than the other.

My main sources for this work shall be the novel written by MacKinlay Kantor simply titled "*Andersonville*", and a movie directed by John Frankenheimer also simply called "*Andersonville*". For more general information concerning the camp, I would use mainly Catherine Gourley's "*The Horrors of Andersonville*" and William Marvel's "*Andersonville the Last Depot*".

## **Chapter 1 – A Look at Andersonville**

Although the main concern of this work is a comparison of the novel and the movie, it is necessary to provide the historical facts about Andersonville, by which both the movie and novel will be judged. As such the first chapter and its subchapters of this thesis will be dedicated to succinctly describing Andersonville as historically accurate as is possible.

### **Chapter 1.1 The Beginnings of Andersonville**

Andersonville, or Camp Sumter as it was called by both the Confederate soldiers and high command, was a prison camp that was supposed to hold captured Union soldiers until the war ended unless the prisoners were exchanged for Confederacy soldiers held by the Union.

The camp's construction was based on its location, far from the front so that the Union forces could not easily liberate the prisoners or for them to easily escape, it was built near a railroad so that the prisoners could be easily transported inside without risks. Also, a small river, run through the camp's core for water supply, a nearby forest supplied wood for building the camp and farmland grew crops to feed the prisoners.

The construction of the camp itself began in December 1863 under the watchful eye of General John Winder. The camp itself however received its first batch of prisoners in February 1864, when the camp was not completely built yet. These prisoners arrived from an overcrowded prison camp at Belle Isle and were quite surprised at the state of Camp Sumter. As explained by prisoner John McElroy,

*“A quarter of a mile (0.4 km) down the road, the prisoners came to a great wall of squared pine logs standing upright in the ground, rising 15 feet (4.6 m) high. A pair of massive wooden gates hung from the palisade (fence) with iron hinges. As the prisoners watched, the wide gates slowly began to open. Beyond, in an open space stripped of trees, lay the camp. It was “a hole cut in this wilderness,” McElroy wrote. “<sup>1</sup>*

Although the prisoners were surprised by the state of the camp, they nevertheless started to settle in, building small tents out of their spare uniforms, wood that they collected nearby, and any other scraps that could get their hands on. The

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<sup>1</sup> Gourley, Catherine: *The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2010. pp. 39.

stockade keeping the prisoners inside was finished in March, by then a system was established that twice a day a mule would carry the rations inside for the morning and afternoon. To the chagrin of the Union soldiers, there were no utensils or dishes, but this was solved by improvisation.

In that same month, however, news emerged of a new commander of the camp who disliked all Yankees and spoke English with a German accent. This new commander was none other than Captain Henry Wirz, an emigrant from Switzerland who had found employment in the Confederate Army. He was allegedly wounded in the Battle of the Seven Pines, which happened in May and June 1862 in Virginia, it is however suspected that his arm injury was self-inflicted in a bid to gain more prestige with his Confederate superiors, whether this was the truth or not Wirz had earned himself a promotion to a Captain, after which he traveled to Europe to heal his arm. This was undone by a trip back to the States when his wound reopened.

Wirz arrived on 25 March of 1864, and a week later went into the stockade, and the first impressions of the soldiers were not favorable, as attested by John Ransom:

*"[Wirz] came inside today and looked us over. Is not a very prepossessing [impressive] looking chap... skin has a pale, white livered look, with thin lips. Has a sneering sort of cast of countenance [look], Makes a fellow feel as if he would like to go up and boot him."*<sup>2</sup>

Wirz's first impressions of the camp were also not favorable, the camp itself was designed to hold a maximum of ten thousand prisoners, but that capacity was slowly starting to fill up. There were no reports of the prisoner intake getting smaller. The river which ran through the heart of the camp was not sanitary because the Confederate guards used the upper stream to wash themselves and their belongings, which led to the pollution of the lower portion of the river which flowed through the prison camp. No sanitation policy is in place to keep the camp clean. The prisoners themselves lacked basic necessities such as cutlery, dishes, or just plain old cups. Even the hospital itself, which had suspiciously managed to get many tents erected was located inside the stockade to prevent the escape of any prisoners, nevertheless, its setting endangered the lives of its tenants. These problems were no fault of Wirz's,

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<sup>2</sup> Gourley, Catherine: *The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2010. pp. 48.



after all, he arrived when all these problems were already hard to solve. What he did however was to construct a “deadline”, an interior fence.

As was written by John McElroy *“To build the deadline, workers drove stakes into the ground inside the pen and hammered together a railing. This interior “fence” was 15 feet (4.6 m) from the stockade walls and encircled the entire pen. The guards threatened to shoot—and began to do so—anyone who ventured under or beyond the rail. “<sup>3</sup> What neither Wirz nor prisoners knew, was that harder times were coming.*

### **Chapter 1.2 Andersonville under the Leadership of Captain Henry Wirz**

The arrival of Wirz signaled the beginning of harsh times for the camp and its inhabitants. Wirz after all deeply disliked all Yankees and was not shy in admitting so. It was not uncommon for him to escort the newly arrived prisoners, who were dubbed as “fresh fish” by the other prisoners, they would regale them with tales of what would happen to them if they tried to run, the most common threat was setting the dogs on them and not stopping them from biting escapees to death.

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<sup>3</sup> Gourley, Catherine: *The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2010. pp. 52.



*The photo of Captain Henry Wirz*

The situation in and outside the camp also became worse quite quickly. Guards of the camp were not professional soldiers but mostly consisted of fresh conscripts, or soldiers who for various reasons were unfit to serve in combat on the frontline, and from the local militia, which itself was made from men who were either too young to serve, or men who were far too old to do so. Discipline was not found among the ranks of the local guard, nor was any sort of competency, on which Wirz would regularly complain to his higher-ups.

Conditions worsened as the numbers kept increasing and soon eclipsed the planned ten thousand inmates for which the camp was built. Necessities were in high demand, as was food. The prisoners who had some valuables however could trade with the guards, who went on grocery expeditions to gather food. As pointed out by

William Marvel, *“On their grocery expeditions the guards sometimes accumulated more food than they needed, and they traded the surplus with the prisoners, finding vegetables particularly marketable when they could get them.”*<sup>4</sup>

When it came to other necessities, the Union prisoners found a few ingenious solutions, among which was for example the creation of trade within the camp by crafting buckets. Which could hold valuable water or other contents and could be bartered away for other provisions.

When it came to food, they also used bricks made from mud to build small furnaces, where they baked bread from plants that managed to grow inside the camp. Buckets were not the only items crafted inside. Other assortments of tools mainly picks were also produced. The picks, however, were contraband, because they were used to dig tunnels, through which the prisoners tried to flee. What the prisoners did not know at the time was that their lives would be made harder by fellow Union prisoners, who called themselves the Raiders.

### **Chapter 1.3 The Rise and Fall of the Raiders**

Since ancient times, the word Raider was used to describe those who would attack and raid, ergo they would steal everything from their victims and sometimes even kill them. The same definition applied to the gangs formed within the prison camp. They mostly comprised people who were for the most part just desperate and willing to do almost everything for their survival.

Over time, however, the word raiders became a designation of a gang led by a certain Willie Collins, also called “Mosby” by others. Over time the gang become *de facto* rulers of the portion of the camp, owing to the fact that they were the only ones armed with knives and clubs. Thus, they were better armed than other prisoners in the prison camp. Over time they started a reign of terror over the rest of the inmates of Andersonville camp. *“Estimates of their total number ran as high as 400 or*

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<sup>4</sup> Marvel, William: *Andersonville – The Last Depot*. Chape’s Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. pp. 39.

*500; one who was in a way to know thought them only 150 or 200 strong, but that constituted a sufficient force to terrorize the milling masses.* <sup>5</sup>

In the end, their power started to go downhill after they stole from a man named Dowd, who then complained to Wirz. Wirz himself was furious and threatened to withhold rations until the Raiders were brought forth.

These bullying and thieving actions of the Raiders had serious repercussions, some of the braver men in the camp started secretly organizing a defense force, spearheaded by a sergeant named Key. These efforts were later supported by Wirz himself, who wished to have better order in the camp, which at the time of the June of 1864 housed some twenty-three thousand prisoners.

This defense force, later called Regulators, was led by a prisoner named James Laughlin, who was nicknamed Limber Jim. One morning in July, the Regulators launched an attack on the Raiders to capture them. This was not a bloodless affair as several regulators and raiders were killed, but most of the leadership was captured. With the capture of the Raiders, the other inmates at camp breathed a little more easily, and slept far more deeply, since they no longer needed to fear attacks at night.

What followed was a trial. An effort was made to prevent a sham trial, but a fair trial with a judge, jury which consisted of captured Union soldiers who recently arrived at the Andersonville. They had not been attacked by raiders, and finally, there were prosecution and testifying witnesses. The trial was official and was even sanctioned by Wirz, who had been asked for permission for the trial to even happen.

The result of the trial was clear. Six leaders of the Raiders, Mosby included, were pronounced guilty and were subsequently sentenced to death by hanging. The only one pleading for mercy for their lives was the local priest Whelan, However, the other prisoners did not listen to him. In the end, the six leaders of the Raiders were hanged and later buried apart from the other prisoners as revealed by Catherine Gourley.

*“Wirz appears to have granted the prisoners’ request to bury the Raiders in a separate site. They did not want the men to be in the same cemetery as honorable Union soldiers who had died at Andersonville. Rumor later*

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<sup>5</sup> Marvel, William: *Andersonville – The Last Depot*. Chape’s Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. pp. 70.

*circulated that the men assigned to bury the Raiders had placed the bodies face down. It had been the custom for executed criminals and the final retaliation.”<sup>6</sup>*

This marked the end of one phase in the existence of imprisoned Union soldiers of Andersonville.

#### **Chapter 1.4 The Final Days of Andersonville**

After the disbanding of the Raiders, life in the prison camp returned to its previous miserable state, but at least there were no more raids and wanton thieving and killings. In August 1864, however, the camp was dealt a lucky hand. A small spring of water erupted in the camp. It was beyond the deadline, however, but this was solved by using buckets attached to sticks. The spring with its clean water undoubtedly saved many lives of the prisoners.

To say that clean water was one of the rarest commodities inside the stockade, both for survival, cleaning wounds, and obtaining somewhat clean clothes, would be an understatement. Clean cloth and medication were especially in high demand given the fact that the camp suffered from various illnesses, such as dysentery or highly contagious smallpox which killed many of the prisoners, this collection of diseases was later joined by gangrene. The guards were not spared from infections either and it became a somewhat common occurrence for stockade guards to suffer the same diseases as their prisoners, though they had notably higher chances of surviving thanks to the access to clean bandages and medication.

It would be incredibly easy and wrong of me to understate the sheer lack of resources with which the Union prisoners had to live. When this prison is compared to the infamous German concentration camp Auschwitz it is not done as a hyperbole. While on average the prisoners in Andersonville looked better than those in Auschwitz, it is still undeniable that among the prisoners in Andersonville were those that would not look out of place in Auschwitz. These prisoners were severely malnourished, wracked by diseases, and by the neglect of the guards, they resembled walking skeletons who decided to wear the skin of a human. So thin they were that not a wisp

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<sup>6</sup> Gourley, Catherine: *The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2010. pp. 96.

of muscle could be seen on their frames. Some of these prisoners managed to miraculously survive their ordeals in Andersonville and were later photographed and archived to serve as a reminder of what cruelty happened in Andersonville.



*Picture of Jackson Broshears after his release from Andersonville*

In September 1864, Atlanta the important strategic hub of Confederate States was burnt to the ground by General William T. Sherman of the Union forces. Therefore, a decision was made to transport the prisoners elsewhere, since resupplying Andersonville would be much harder if not impossible. Therefore, in the early days of September, the gates of Andersonville swung open, and the prisoners were escorted to the trains to be transported to other camps where they would be held further captive. The portion of prisoners that were sent to Millen was later returned to Andersonville after Millen itself was destroyed. While the prisoners were undoubtedly depressed to return to Andersonville, they nevertheless had better odds of surviving now, that there were substantially fewer prisoners here.

One of the other prison camps of the Confederate states was one Salisbury prison, not much bigger than Andersonville, and similar to it, it was meant to hold substantially fewer prisoners than it ended up holding. At its height approximately 10, 000 prisoners were interred in Salisbury, when it was meant for 2, 500 prisoners. It began its functions in 1861 long before Andersonville and over time approximately 4,

000 of its prisoners died within its walls, an estimated 26% death count for all the prisoners ever held within its walls.

Andersonville would continue to function until the May of the year 1865 when the camp was finally liberated by the Union forces. The prison camp where approximately 13 000 thousand Union prisoners died, roughly 28% of the prison camp's total population, was disbanded.

### **Chapter 1.5 The Trial of Henry Wirz**

The description of what exactly happened inside the stockade of Andersonville was later revealed to the public in the North, which reacted with shock and then demands justice for the mistreatment of the captured Union soldiers. The Federal government agreed with this and sought someone to punish for the heinous crimes and treatment of prisoners which constituted, who would be better to persecute than the man who led the camp for most of its existence?

As such Captain Henry Wirz was put on trial, prosecuted by one Norton P. Chipman who fervently believed that the south needed to pay for its crimes. The trial also highlighted the heroic effort of the assistant Dorence Atwater. *“And so, Atwater secretly began to copy the entire list of men who had died at Andersonville. In addition to their names, he recorded their company and regiment, cause of death, date of death, and grave number.”*<sup>7</sup>

The trial of Wirtz was a real trial, analogous to the war crimes trials in Nuremberg Germany after World War II. It was not the question of whether Wirz was guilty or not, it was a question of how much responsibility he would be pronounced guilty of, and subsequently how he would be punished. In the end, Wirz was pronounced guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. He was hanged on 10 November 1865.

Later there would be controversy, about whether Wirz was truly guilty, or if he was simply a scapegoat. Could Wirz have prevented the deaths of Union soldiers? Undoubtedly, he could have made a few small changes that would make the lives of prisoners easier, but as his defense claimed at the trial, the most significant changes,

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<sup>7</sup> Gourley, Catherine: *The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2010. pp. 135.

such as making the camp bigger, required resources from higher authorities, resources that he had not been given. He did not do even the said minimum, but it is hard to say if this was due to malice or a deadly incompetence

In the South, however, Captain Henry Wirz is still regarded even to this day as a small national hero and a victim of unjust Northern trials in their bid to show their power and dominance over the South.

Andersonville and memoirs written by its prisoners spawned many books over the years among which is a subject of the Bachelor thesis's next chapter. "Andersonville" written by MacKinlay Kantor, is a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and one of the most famous war novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*The Execution of Captain Henry Wirz*

*“Nevertheless, it surprised me that some historically minded admirers of the book, such as Bruce Catton and Henry Steele Commager, have [End Page 253] said that Andersonville was the best novel about the Civil War.1 I naively assumed that such an accolade would have to go to a book that depicted battles primarily. But now I think I see what they meant. 8”*

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<sup>8</sup> Cesarini, Patrick: *Andersonville and the Literature of Violence*, in: *CEA Critic*, vol. 79, no. 3, (November 2017): pp. 253-258.



## **Chapter 2 – Andersonville through the Pages of the Novel**

Andersonville is one of the best war novels written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The awards won by the said novel certainly support this point of view.

### **Chapter 2.1 MacKinlay Kantor**

Mackinlay Kantor was born on October 11 in 1904, an avid writer who was deeply interested in the Civil War as can be attested by his other work Gettysburg. The reason for his interest in Camp Sumter was his German heritage and his attempt to understand the horrors of Auschwitz and other concentration camps set up by the Germans and how the civilians around the camp reacted, this all lead to writing Andersonville which will be more thoroughly explored in subsequent chapters.

### **Chapter 2.2 The Beginning Through the Eyes of the Southern Locals**

The plot itself starts before the founding of the camp itself, through the eyes of a local named Ira Claffey, a humble local who owns a few slaves and whose son has gone to fight for the South. In the end, all Claffey's sons die in battles against the Union. His wife Veronica mentally breaks down, now all that remains to him is his daughter Lucy and his slaves.

During one of his outings on the more abandoned parts of the local lands, he encounters two Confederate officers, W. S. Winder and Boyce Charwick who are scouting local land to build a prison camp and briefly interrogate Ira about the layout of it. *"Prison said Winder. A prison? Here? It's possible. I'm charged with locating a site. We're considering several locations. This is one of them. Ira had thought of murderers and lunatics in chains. What sort of prison that would be? A stockade to keep the damn Yankees prisoners in replied Charwick."*<sup>9</sup>

In the following pages, we start to slowly get the lay of the land where the future prison camp will be built, near a small river and a pine forest. The forest would soon be chopped down to provide wood to build the stockade. We also start to see more of the locals, for example, the Tebbs family whose members will play important

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<sup>9</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 10.

roles in the prison camp. We are also introduced to the doctor Harry Elkins a friend of Sutherland Claffey who visits the rest of the Claffey family and grieves with them.

Eventually, the building of the prison's stockade begins, and Confederate soldiers commandeer locals to help them in building, what they mainly commandeered however were the slaves of the locals including the slaves of the Claffey family. They also had to provide tools for these slaves.

The first prisoners arrived in the evening of Wednesday, February 24, when the stockade was not yet truly completed, it lacked in some parts, but it was nothing that a few guards could not handle. There were also artillery pieces aimed into the gaps, daring any Union prisoner to escape. It is in these moments that a new emotion starts to appear in the heart of Ira Claffey besides hate for Yankees, pity, and perhaps even sympathy and he reflects on whether he should be grateful that his sons were not taken, prisoner. As he indicated.

*“Oh, thank Heaven, cried Ira Claffey in his heart, that Moses was never captured. He might have looked like one of these, like one of these, he might have been marched to one of those evil places of which I’ve heard, Yankee prison pens, Rock Island or Johnson’s Island or Point Lookout. But if he had been captured, instead of shot in Maryland, he might be alive still. Are these alive? Walking, it is true – parading now before our gaze – but are they The Quick? Might not this be a procession of The Dead?”<sup>10</sup>*

### **Chapter 2.3 The Important Characters**

Andersonville is a work of countless hours, which reflects the simple fact that it is 750 pages long. Many stories are in its pages told from many perspectives both the Union and Confederate. However, not all characters survive Camp Sumter. It is only prudent that a short introduction is given to the more prevalent characters. It should also be noted that many characters, predominantly the locals, did not in reality exist and are a fictitious addition made by Kantor.

First among them is the Claffey family and their slaves, the internal conflicts of their members about the prison camp are a constant throughout the whole plot. The novel itself after all begins with the Claffeys and ends with Claffeys. Of note is Ira Claffey, a veteran of the Mexican-American war and its horrors, hardened by the loss

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<sup>10</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 108.

of his sons and his wife's insanity. In the beginning, he curses the Yankees and all they stand for, but over time he becomes more sympathetic towards the prisoners.

In Tedd's family, another family of locals who survive by various means, the matriarch of the family called Widow Tebbs earns money through prostitution to feed her children. Coral, her eldest son, was wounded in the battle of Gettysburg where they were forced to amputate his left leg. This makes him bitter towards the Yankees. Through one of the widow's clients, named Captain Ox, her second son Floral is hired as a guard on the stockade. The last is her daughter Laurel who does odd jobs for the other locals.

Henry Wirz the eponymous captain and superintendent of the stockade would in the end be hanged for the crimes committed in Andersonville. John Winder one of the Confederate generals who oversees prisoner camps for Union soldiers, was the true leader responsible for Camp Sumter. Known for his outright hatred of Yankees, he is later demonstrated as not having cared a little for the prisoners inside the camp, even refusing to give them supplies that were to be given to them through the charity of the locals. He is also suspected of nepotism, given the fact that there were suspiciously many Winders surrounding the general in higher officer positions.

Eben Dolliver a bird lover from Iowa indicates how the inmates grow and occasionally hunt food inside the stockade, from him the degeneration of prisoners inside the stockade is revealed as hunger and disease make them progressively more desperate.

Edward Blamey of the First Rhode Cavalry shows how the eponymous Raiders were born and what could drive people to join these groups of murderers and thieves. He was valued among the Raiders for his excellent eyesight.

Willie Collins nicknamed Mosby was the leader of the first and most prominent Raider band in Andersonville, a man who crawled from the ghettos of New York and who through his charisma and brutality created the Raiders.

Nathan Dreyfoos, Seneca MacBean, and Limber Jim created the Regulators, a group of prisoners who grouped to bring order into the stockade and eliminate the Raiders and their ilk.

Cato Dillard a Catholic priest of the Confederate States, an old man who should have been nowhere close to Andersonville, yet still fearlessly went inside every day to give last rites to the dying and rekindle hopes of other prisoners.

Colonel Alexander Persons, a Confederate soldier tasked with commanding the post at Andersonville, was appalled at the conditions the prisoners were forced to live under and tried to help them by procuring more supplies, better living conditions, and other things which would ensure higher rates survivability among the Union prisoners. He is in the end denied by general Winder and is instead replaced by Captain Wirz. This enmity from Winder would cost Persons his career. In the end, the last we see of him is during the dialogue with Ira Claffey where he lists the reasons for which Andersonville will soon turn into hell.

*“Persons wiped his forehead. I’m talking entirely too much. But, to sum it up, we’ve got prisoners with diarrhoea, prisoners showing signs of scurvy, prisoners dropsical, prisoners gangrenous. What we need here is a first-rate hospital: thus far I haven’t been able to lay hold on any tents, much less lumber....do you wish to go below, gentleman? I reckon you’ve seen enough?”<sup>11</sup>*

Many could be named and will be described later in the thesis.

## **Chapter 2.4 Months inside the Stockade from the View of the Prisoners**

The living conditions of Andersonville were unacceptable from the moment the first Union prisoners arrived. The lumber was used mainly for the stockade and to construct a small hospital inside of it. Colonel Persons would be the main instigator in moving the hospital outside. There were no buildings beside the hospital inside of the stockade. The prisoners could find only pitched tents and holes in the ground covered by blankets or cloth. Living in somewhat decent conditions were only the Raiders. Trade was well and alive inside the stockade between the prisoners, as well as with the guards. Thievery was also quite prevalent, of warning was the case of Chickamauga who stole from others and later even sold out his fellow prisoners when he revealed information to the guards who were digging tunnels to escape. In the end, he died hated by his fellow prisoners, killed by one of the young guards when he crossed the deadline and begged to be let outside.

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<sup>11</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 152.

*" The explosion of the powder charge interrupted his cry. Ben Drawhorn had re-cocked his musket and this time the cap did not misfire. The buckshot tore Chickamauga's lower jaw into a loose red spray and went deep inside him, to rest in his breast somewhere. He fell, jawless, blood spurting wide. Up on the sentry's platform Ben Drawhorn dropped the musket and staggered back with both hands forced against his face, covering his eyes, but if he exclaimed no one heard him"<sup>12</sup>*

The prison was not proper nor kind to its prisoners, be it because of the weather, sometimes scorching or unbearably freezing, or because of the mood, it caused in its prisoners. A lethargy was impossible to shake, causing many prisoners to simply shamle around the stockade, unable to do anything even if there was something they could be doing. The food situation was abysmal, with the stockade slowly gaining in numbers until they exceed 30 000 prisoners in the year 1864, causing horrible shortages in food due to which many of the prisoners became famished and lost the strength to survive various diseases that plagued the inmates.

It is especially telling from the perspective of Eben Dolliver who, in his narrations, describes the way the prisoners slowly lost hope of being exchanged. Thereafter they started to sink into depression and eventually died. He also describes the utter desperation some of the prisoners exhibited when it came to obtaining anything to eat.

The creation of Providence spring, as seen from the perspective of Willie Mann the first to taste it, constituted one of the few positive events. It erupted under the eastern palisade during a ferocious storm. The spring itself was beyond the deadline but the guards were unwilling to shoot. Captain Wirz who would normally order the shooting, was lying sick in Augusta. Instead, the commanding officer was Lieutenant Davis, a man more sympathetic to prisoners who ordered elongating of the spring so that it would not be spoiled.

The spring was the only source of clean water in the camp. The river flowing through it was spoiled and drinking from it was a wager in which a prisoner bet their life, and many Union soldiers took this wager, though not many survived it.

The prisoners lived in lethargy and hopelessness, so it was that they looked at guards with both hatred and pity, for some of them were only boys. They lived in squalor and hunger under the cruel hands of the Raiders, but what few of them knew

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<sup>12</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 242.

was that the reckoning would come for the Raiders and that soon the camp would be more peaceful.

## **Chapter 2.5 The Raiders, Their Rise, Fall, and their Trial**

The Raiders, an infamous gang that resided inside the stockade of Andersonville and were for an unending amount of suffering inside its walls. The Raiders themselves however were formed even before members arrived inside Andersonville Prison. The first hints of this group were visible when the first captives were being held in the prison camp at Belle Island where Willie Collins, later more infamous as Mosby the Raider, started to gather similarly minded prisoners around himself, where within his hundred, he became rather renowned for his brutality and sometimes stealing property from other prisoners.

Once Willie with his group arrived at Andersonville, they continued with their operations, even expanding them by recruiting other prisoners who were either more criminally minded or were very desperate to survive. Among these people was Edward Blamey, a former cavalryman whom Willie recruited for his excellent eyesight. It is his perspective that introduces Willie, his gang, their thievery, and extortion.

In the following months, the raiders would expand their operations, in cooperation with Andersonville's guards, they would trade with them, first exchanging some of the property they brought with them and then exchanging goods that they stole from other prisoners. This led to an exclusive trade within the stockade, where the only way to get some goods from outside was to trade for them with the more pragmatic Raiders who traded them with the prison's guards. This of course hinged on the fact that the Raider in question would simply not steal from the prisoner which was very likely.

Over time Willie would manage to gather an entire group of like-minded individuals who would form gangs of their own, Willie's gang however was the largest so the other smaller gangs worked under him. Among the people who made up the leadership of these various gangs that consisted the Raiders were John Sarsfield, Patrick Delaney, and Teri Sullivan.

From their arrival within the walls of Andersonville, the Raiders became the *de facto* rulers of the entire stockade. This was supported by their continued trade with

the prison guards which ensured that the Raiders were armed with weapons such as bowie knives or other sharp implements. This was quite the power modifier inside the stockade where an average prisoner had access only to his fists or wooden sticks (used to build tents) for self-defense. Accordingly, the Raiders reigned supreme, stealing from whomever they liked without any consequence. Prisoners stuck in a depression about the hopelessness of the situation did not usually put up any resistance.

Over time, however, as the population inside the stockade grew and people started to become more desperate, an idea to stand up to the Raiders, who were stealing what little the other prisoners had left, started to form.

This group of prisoners would become known as Regulators, made up of various prisoners who despised Willie and his Raiders. This group would be formed by a collection of like-minded men, among them Seneca MacBean, Nathan Dreyfoos, Leroy Key, and Limber Jim. They went to the Northern gate where they were taken to Wirz to plead the Regulators' cause.

Negotiations with Wirz proved fruitful as the Regulators would receive an influx of clubs with which to fight, rope to bind the Raiders, and one of the Guard's cubicles to act as a temporary holding for captured Raiders. These items were given to the Regulators to end the ruckus inside the stockade.

Shortly after this meeting, the actual assault upon the Raiders took place by the Regulators in a cautious manner as the Raiders were well-armed. When enough of the Regulators gathered near the Raiders, they flew into a furious assault where no rules of combat applied, only the defeat of the enemy. The combat was beyond vicious as noted by prisoners observing the event.

*"Help one another to win, feel no obligation of pity or quarter. If a comrade staggered an enemy with his blow, and the raider came weaving toward you, and you had the split second to do it, you were to stagger him again. Forget the decency and Christianity, because decency and Christianity themselves had absolved you of any necessity to observe them. The bite would be there, the kick in the crotch, the pressing out of the eyeball, the tearing of the nostrils, the champ of your teeth to rip the muscle from an arm before the enemy's fangs went into your own. Win this first battle, in truth, it would be the last."<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Kantor, MacKinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 319.

The furious assault of the Regulators successfully defeated the Raiders, with the majority of them captured and the rest scattered across the stockade without any leadership. They ceased to be any serious problem in the future. Still, there was the question of what to do with the now captured Raiders and their leaders, the answer turned out to be a trial.

Not much attention is given to the court or its trial proceedings. Instead, entries in the diary of Johnny Ransom note that the trial was conducted with Wirz's blessings, though Johnny is skeptical if he is entitled to any credit. In the conclusion, the leaders of the gangs were sentenced to death by hanging. Other Raiders were sentenced to floggings, buckings, time in the stocks, or other punishments. It is noted however that Wirz was not exactly enthused by the trial's slow proceedings. He visited the stockade personally to yell at them. Afterward, he still gave them logs and timber with which to build the hanging spot and then left.

When the Raiders arrived back in camp, they were forced to run the gauntlet. This saved the lives of some of the Raiders as otherwise they would be dogpiled by the furious prisoners who would not pull their punches. This way they had a chance of making it out alive, even if they were severely beaten.

On the day of execution, when the leaders of the Raiders were brought forth, Charles Curtis attempted to flee somewhere in the stockade but was intercepted by prisoners who brought him back. The only one who would plead for mercy for the Raiders was Father Peter Whelan, but his words went unheard. The crimes of the Raiders were many and the prisoners were not forgiving. The leaders of the Raiders were hanged successfully, except for Willie Collins under whom the rope had snapped, so he had to be hanged twice. Before his death, Collins appeared to genuinely confess his sins to Whelan. Such was the end of the Raiders, a scourge upon the prisoners of Andersonville, and yet the problems and suffering of prisoners were not over.

## **Chapter 2.6 The Soldiers of the Confederacy Who Tried to Help**

One would like to believe that humans are by their very nature empathetic beings, capable of understanding the pain of others and as such will try to help others lessen their pain. Events and places such as Andersonville tend to make people lose faith in such statements. If they were true, such places of suffering would not exist,



and yet even there at Camp Sumter it was possible to find empathy among the soldiers who guarded the stockade, horrified by the conditions, tried to make the lives of prisoners better and even risked their careers in the process.

Among the first people from the Confederate side who showed any type of empathy towards the prisoners was Harry Elkins, assigned as a doctor to Camp Sumter he was outright appalled at the conditions of the prisoners and attempted to help them, but his low military rank hinders him from initiating any meaningful progress. One of the people Harry tried to get help from was Colonel Persons who was in command of Camp Sumter, he was quite empathic towards the prisoners and tried his best to ensure a steady supply of food, medicine, and other necessities for prisoners to survive and be more comfortable. However the colonel's empathy would prove his undoing as his superiors were more concerned with putting as many prisoners inside the camp as they could without caring much for their well-being, Colonel Persons is thereby reassigned elsewhere and replaced by Captain Henry Wirz.

Heroic efforts of the Catholic priests assigned to Camp Sumter, such as Father Dillard and especially Father Whelan have been noted inside the stockade day in and out. They were outside only during the night to sleep in a nearby shack, all day Whelan would be inside the stockade talking to the prisoners, hearing them confess their sins, and when necessary administering their last rites and listening to the last wishes of the dying prisoners.

*"Some might have thought that the bishop should never have sent so elderly a man to labor amid agonies, but to Peter Whelan, this was the accolade supreme: ardently he had dreamed of martyrdom, this was martyrdom, it was a reward scarce to be expected while he remained upon earth. He went about his tingling earnest creepings nerved by bitterness of the task. He felt pride, pride was a sin, he recognized this sin in himself, he was abject, he prayed with humility again."<sup>14</sup>*

Ira Claffey, one of the most reoccurring characters in the novel, holds little love for the Yankees in the beginning, given the fact that they killed his sons. Yet over time when he sees the suffering the prisoners have to go through, he begins to help them in little ways. Eventually, he even organizes help from other locals to deliver some

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<sup>14</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 330.

supplies of clothing and food to the prisoners only to be rudely turned away at the front gate of Andersonville with the supplies undelivered.

## **Chapter 2.7 The Fates of Prisoners and Guards after Andersonville**

The removal of Union soldiers from Camp Sumter was a question of time, due to the war not developing to the advantage of the Confederates. This led to the construction of additional camps further west, done under the orders of General John Winder. The designation of this new stockade was Camp Lawton and a significant portion of the prisoners from Andersonville was relocated there. Starting in August of 1864 when Wirz gathered the prisoners, in what seemed to be another one of his frequent speeches. Wirz however started to claim that the Union finally accepted the prisoner exchange program and that the prisoners from Andersonville were to be exchanged effectively immediately. This was a lie so that the severely understaffed guards could gather the prisoners more easily, and then relocate them to Camp Lawton or any other newly erected stockades. *“Prisoners: I am instructed by General Winder to inform you that a general exchange has been agreed upon. Twenty thousand men will be exchanged immediately at Savannah, where your vessels are now waiting for you. Detachments from One to Ten will prepare to leave early tomorrow morning.”*

<sup>15</sup>The only ones left in Andersonville were those that were too heavily wounded or too sick to make the journey.

One would expect that the situation inside the stockade would improve drastically with most of the prisoners gone, but this was only partially the case. The only ones left inside Andersonville were those too heavily wounded, too sick, or those left out of sheer necessity. This meant that the prisoners who used to take care of those wounded or sick were now gone. Thus the only ones capable of taking care of them were the already extremely overworked camp doctors who barely numbered one dozen. This led to an increased mortality rate inside the stockade for a short time before the situation could be stabilized. This final batch of prisoners who remained at Andersonville would see their freedom in May 1865 when the Confederate prison camp was finally liberated by the forces of the Union Army.

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<sup>15</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 566.

Over at Camp Lawton and other stockades, the situation was no better. These camps were quickly built and although on paper their conditions were much better than Andersonville, their mortality rates were still enormous. It is written that the soldiers carried their wounds from Andersonville and the conditions at Camp Lawton simply finished them off. This was not helped by General Winder who oversaw the operations of the stockade himself, establishing a set of brutally-effective penalties for breaking the rules of the Camp.

In the following months, however, justice would come for General John Winder as he would suffer a stroke after a very filling meal at the home of his officer Kight. His death would come to him on the platform of the Florence Station. He died under the care of the local surgeon without saying any last words. However, when the remaining Union prisoners of Camp Sumter heard of his demise, they supplied him with their version of his last words. *“My faith is in Christ. I expect to be saved! Wirz, cut down the Yankee’s rations!”*<sup>16</sup>

For Captain Henry Wirz, justice would arrive later during the Federal trial, where he would be put on trial as the first-ever war criminal in history. In the novel, however, this trial is not covered. Henry Wirz is lastly being escorted by Union soldiers away from a small mob of angry Union soldiers who were prisoners in Andersonville.

*“When Noyes saw Henry Wirz again the brim of his hat flapped, his coat was gone, his shirt dirtied and ripped: even his trousers appeared to have been half torn from his body. Wirz himself was close to collapse. He jabbered in German, he was talking also about his little daughter, and talking about a little red cap. He didn’t even make sense.*

*What the devil, Sergeant Howe! I told you to guard this prisoner with care! Well, by God, sir! Excuse me, sir – it’s on account of all these damn troops. Some of them were prisoners down there, and they kept yelling, Let’s kill the son of a bitch! Excuse me, sir. But that’s what they said – exactly what they were yelling. Christ sake, sir – Excuse me, sir – but they were almost done in! I got knocked down, and finally had to fire a couple shots in the air!”*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 661.

<sup>17</sup> Kantor, Mackinlay: *Andersonville*, New York: Penguin Group, 2016. pp. 734.

## Chapter 2.8 The Novel's Reception

Mackinlay Kantor's novel, published in 1955, was not an entirely historically accurate depiction of Camp Sumter. Some of the characters in the novel did not exist in real life. It was a faithful representation of the atmosphere of Andersonville, the sheer misery and suffering its inhabitants had to survive daily until they were so beaten down that they resembled walking corpses. The fact that many entries are written based on the diaries of the prisoners who survived the Camp is just another aspect that adds to the overall feeling of the novel.

This novel was an immediate best-selling hit in 1955, praised by both literary critics for its masterful writing and storytelling and by historians for the novel is such an excellent window into one of the darkest parts of the Civil War. The novel would continue to become the standard to which the other novels from the Civil War were compared. *Andersonville* would also win a Pulitzer Prize in 1956. It should be noted however that not all historians were as accommodating to the novel's approach of adding and using characters that never existed and criticized the novel quite heavily for it, although it should be noted that this is one of the most common criticisms for many other historical novels.

### **Chapter 3 – Andersonville through the Lenses of Cinema**

Despite being an important part of the Civil War history and despite the popularity of the novel, Andersonville was not given much attention by moviemakers, this statement was true until 1996 when the first and to this day only movie about Andersonville and its horrors came out.

#### **Chapter 3.1 The Inception of the Movie, its Cast and Production**

The idea of creating a film about Andersonville and its horrors was pitched by Ted Turner, a successful entrepreneur and a president of CNN who had an abiding fascination with the Civil War era. His fascination and effort to bring this era onto the screens can be witnessed by a previous production, the 1993 critically acclaimed movie *Gettysburg*, for which he would later in the year 2003 also create a sequel entitled *Gods and Generals*. Turner also gave a generous budget for the creation of this movie, with the only stipulation that it be a historically accurate film.

The production of the movie began in the fall of 1994 under the watchful eye of John Frankenheimer who was at the time already a renowned movie director with a few successful movies under his belt. Winner of four Emmies, one of which he won thanks to Andersonville, he was an excellent choice for a movie director for this kind of film. By the time he started to work on Andersonville in 1994, he had accumulated an enormous amount of experience from his previous works, such as *Manchurian Candidate* a Cold War political thriller, *Birdman of Alcatraz* detailing the life of a prisoner in the well-known prison Island, *The Fixer* a movie concerned with anti-Semitism since its main protagonist, a Russian Jew, is accused of murdering a young boy and finally *The Iceman Cometh* a 4 hour long drama film based on the play by Eugene O'Neill which was received well by the critics. Later he would also direct a biographical miniseries called George Wallace for which he would receive another Emmy.

The movie itself was shot about fifty miles south of Atlanta in the countryside where a set modeled after Andersonville was built. It was not based on McKantor's acclaimed novel but on the diary of the former prisoner John Ransom, which was also used as one of the sources for MacKinlay Kantor's novel.

The filming itself however proved to be anything but smooth and easy. Georgia would prove its rather infamous ability to change the weather at the drop of a hat, from hot to cold and from rainy to sunshine. This led to the director and the cast filming the scenes whenever the scene-appropriate weather would occur. These weather changes however also had an unpleasant effect on the cast and producers whose moods worsened daily. The greatest misfortune that struck the production was the loss of the crate containing raw film about the trial and execution of the Raiders. This led to a very costly re-shoot, which would financially damn any other movie, luckily for Frankenheimer, the movie was sponsored by Ted Turner who approved of re-shooting and gave them the necessary finances. The re-shoot happened amid the partially built set in North Carolina.

The cast of the movie itself consisted of quite a few professional actors, for example, Jarrod Emick who plays the role of the protagonist Josiah Day. Frederic Forrest plays the role of the always optimistic and steadfast Sgt. McSpadden who does his best to keep his men safe and healthy. Peter Murnik plays the role of the righteous Limber Jim who becomes the leader of Regulators. Frederick Coffin plays the role of the charming but villainous Mosby, leader of the Raiders.

One of the most surprising roles in the movie is occupied by Jan Tříska, who plays the main antagonist, the camp's commander Captain Henry Wirz. Tříska, a famous Czech Shakespeare actor, was a somewhat surprising addition to the cast of the movie, though it becomes less surprising when his previous roles are considered. Started as an actor in theatre, playing Romeo, Edmund and in a modern production, he starred as King Lear. He also acted in the theatre adaptation of the renowned Czech author Karel Čapek, specifically in *Bílá Nemoc*. He is also a renowned movie actor, having both important and secondary roles in many Czech movies and serials. In the United States, he also performed a few roles in films such as *Ragtime*, *2010: The Year We Make Contact*, *The People vs. Larry Flint*, and *Ronin*. His dedication to the roles he plays and his experiences with plays comes to the forefront in how he performs Captain Henry Wirz. He spent a lot of time studying how Swiss people talk, specifically how a Swiss sounds when speaking English which he successfully reproduced. In the movie he sounds like a Swiss that speaks English. Frankenheimer could have given the role to a German who speaks English, as Wirz was sometimes mistaken for a German

hailing specifically from Eastern Prussia. This might however, give rise to unpleasant implication and derail the audience from the main points of the movie.

Many of the extras visible in the movie were in many cases played by Civil War reenactors who voluntarily showed up for the movie's production. Thanks to them there were so many historically accurate uniforms as close to authentic as they can be.

### **Chapter 3.2 The Movie's Beginning, before the Arrival at Camp Sumter**

The movie itself begins by showing a perspective of a Union soldier being captured at the battle for Cold Harbor in Virginia in 1864. This battle was also the last major victory for the Confederate States, with high losses among Union soldiers. The movie shows us a small unit under the command of Sergeant McSpadden who is trying to keep his men together, this unit is a part of a larger regiment called 12<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. McSpadden orders young Josiah to go to the other unit so that they could swing around and attack the enemy from another angle, during this whole scene music plays which can only be described as suspenseful and tense. *"Josie go tell the captain, that there's just a few of them. I think we can swing around."*<sup>18</sup> Josiah is successful in delivering the sergeant's message to the captain who approves of the plan. On the way back from delivering the positive reply, Josiah is intercepted by Confederate cavalry. Together with his whole unit, he is taken prisoner.

What happened thereafter is a short segment showing how the prisoners were treated, in this case, told to lie down on the ground within a circle of guards and not get up unless ordered by the guards. Those who disobey were to be shot immediately. *"Y'all lie on the ground. Nobody stands. Nobody moves till morning!"*<sup>19</sup> In the beginning, the Union soldiers and mainly Josiah's cousin considers this an empty threat, thinking that the guards would just order them again or yell at them. The oppressiveness of the whole situation is shown brilliantly by the camera that stays at close-ups with the lying soldiers making the audience feel cramped just like the soldiers. This is quickly proven false when Josiah's cousin attempts to get up and is immediately shot dead, causing a nervous breakdown in one of the soldiers named Billy. Luckily for him, his fellow soldiers managed to keep him lying and thus save him

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<sup>18</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 0:03:11.

<sup>19</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 0:05:55.

from also being shot. The callousness of the Confederate guards is expressed in the comment: *"Told you, nobody stands, nobody moves around."*<sup>20</sup>

When the prisoners get up the next morning, the atmosphere is oppressing and soldiers are quite depressed, this is not helped when they are joined by another group of Union prisoners and then shortly ordered to march to a nearby railway, the said group of prisoners consist of the soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin. There they stay until the night when a transport train arrives. The prisoners are ordered to board the train while the higher positioned officers such as captains are ordered to stand aside, presumably to be taken to a more comfortable prison away from their men to prevent from potentially causing any trouble. This is enhanced by the camera showing the back of the officers while the soldiers board the trains. What follows is a long ride by train from Virginia southward, in wagons where Union prisoners are packed like sardines. Some of them visibly fall ill but still are forced to stand upright so that their fellows would not accidentally stomp on them. They finally disembark near a prison known as Camp Sumter in Georgia.

### **Chapter 3.3 The Arrival at Andersonville and the First Months**

The arrival at Andersonville is somber and filled with terror. The newly arrived prisoners see a few prisoners being chased by several guards before the prisoners are put into pillories, tense music playing all the while with a camera tracking their movements. Before stepping into the stockade, the new arrivals experience the sight of Captain Henry Wirz waiting before the gate stating that he would teach the prisoners to run, after which he authoritatively and loudly orders the guards to open the gate. A question is posed by McSpadden, the name of the prison camp where they will be locked up for foreseeable future. *"And what do you call this little piece of heaven?" – "This? This is Andersonville."*<sup>21</sup> To this question Henry Wirz played by Jan Tříska answers, with an accent that can only be described as a Swiss trying to speak English, with an outright glee at informing the prisoners of their impending fate, delivering a proverbial gut punch to the audience who have an idea about what happened in this camp, excellently assisted by both the music, which swells in that

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<sup>20</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 0:08:57.

<sup>21</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 0:19:15.



exact moment, and by the camera which immediately shows the stockade's inner condition immediately afterward.

The large group first entering into the stockade is quite shocked as they observe the terrible conditions the prisoners in the camp live in. This is assisted by a camera panning over the whole camp showing its overcrowded nature. They are also introduced to the Raiders led by Mosby the Raider who sends Munn to lure in the new prisoners nicknamed "Fresh Fish" by the Raiders. In later scenes we also learn that Mosby and a few of his men were from New York, its poorest areas to be exact, and it is commented that Mosby simply started to operate in Andersonville as he operated in the slums of New York City. Munn attempts to sway the soldiers to come with him but is interrupted by one of the prisoners who warns the new arrivals to stay away from them. This prisoner turns out to be Dick Potter, a fellow member of the same squad captured years prior at the battle of Antietam. *"Friend? You do not know who I am? Sarge? Josiah? Now old Dick, I signed up with you young man, and I fought with you all at Seven Pines and Chickamauga and Antietam. Dick Potter"*<sup>22</sup>

Dick shows the group of soldiers what they should do in the camp to stay alive. In the middle of explaining he is interrupted by the stockade opening and Wirz's arrival. He announces that he will not give the prisoners food until he gets back his bridle. This announcement causes outrage among the prisoners but in the end, they have no weapons and are surrounded by Confederate soldiers so they cannot resist. The tour under Dick continues: they are shown the small dirty creek flowing through the camp, utterly polluted by human waste. The camera shows prisoners in various states of ill-health near the river, thus punctuating the points made by Dick, accompanied by tense music. The group bears witness to one of the prisoners bartering with a guard who is a young boy too young to normally be on guards' duty. The child soldier taunts the prisoner and tells him to cross the deadline if he wants to trade. The whole time the camera looks at the young soldier from the perspective of the prisoner, thus making him seem bigger; the prisoner crosses and is immediately shot, punctuating the merciless nature of Andersonville. *"You know the rules. You all know the rules. I warned him, Lieutenant."*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 0:22:25.

<sup>23</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 0:30:50.

For a while things become peaceful. The battalion shaves Dick and thus gets rid of his flea-infested beard, also it could be argued that they also symbolically breathe a new life into Dick by their presence and willingness to associate with him once again, along with some food brought from outside. Thanks to him the new arrivals join forces with 184<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvanian under the command of Sergeant Greyson who are digging a tunnel to escape Andersonville. During the night, however, this group is ambushed by the Raiders. Sergeant McSpadden is wounded, and Dick is stabbed to death by Munn. Quite a few articles are stolen by the Raiders including a banjo owned by a Pennsylvanian named Martin. His newly-made friend Thomas tries to retrieve it from the Raiders. He is given a chance to “earn” the banjo by fist-fighting a member of the Raiders named Georgie, a giant of a man who certainly looks like he made a living by fighting in the ring. Thomas fights a member of the Raiders for whom honorable conduct does not exist. During the whole scene no music plays, only the impact of the fists and cheering of the onlooking Raiders can be heard. The camera closely tracks the fight between the two, showing graphically the violence they manage to inflict upon each other. As such, the fight ends with Thomas beaten and his friend unable to protest the nature of the duel due to the threat of violence from the Raiders. *“All right boys! All right! We have had our fun for the day, we wanna leave something for tomorrow, don’t we?”*<sup>24</sup>

As the tunnel is steadily being built, the formation of the Regulators is taking place as the various officers inside the stockade are starting to discuss ways in which they could destroy the Raiders. During these talks, however, a member of the squad accidentally blurts out the fact that he and his squadron are building a tunnel which is overheard by a small group of others. This is followed by a track of tense music playing and by camera closing-up on one of the nearby prisoners. One of this group turns out to be someone who rats out his fellows in exchange for protection or supplies necessary to survive. This causes the squad to hurry up with building the tunnel. They also successfully catch the rat before he informs the guards, holding him hostage in their communal tent. They decide to punish the man by carving out two letters T on his forehead. Of note should be the camera angle which in the beginning focuses on the

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<sup>24</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 1:02:30.

other prisoners, thus making the viewer uncertain if Sergeant Greyson is killing or punishing the rat. As stated by Sergeant Greyson, *“So now all the boys know he is a tunnel traitor.”*<sup>25</sup>

Escape via the dug-out tunnel takes place during the night. Everything appears to be going smoothly until Thomas gets stuck in the hole and makes a little too much noise. He is thusly noticed by the Confederate guards and shot. Others who managed to crawl out of the tunnel start to blindly run in hopes of encountering the nearby river that would mask their scent from the camp guard dogs. One by one, however, the escapees are caught, Josiah and Sergeant McSpadden are caught sitting on a bunch of logs just a few meters from the river, which they could not see during the night. The sight of the river and their freedom being so close yet snatched away from them causes them to laugh hysterically, this is also punctuated by the camera slowly panning away from Josiah and McSpadden to show the said river and how close it was.

After being caught, the escapees are put into stocks, which causes some of the prisoners, already half-starved and in bad health, to die. Luckily for Josiah and some of the others, this treatment is discovered by a Confederate officer assigned to evaluate living conditions in the camp. This officer immediately goes to Captain Henry Wirz to question him about the treatment of the prisoners. The Captain answers that he does not have enough men or supplies. However, he starts to unobtrusively suggest a promotion for himself, for if he had a higher rank, he could authorize the supplies the prison needs. However, the officer does not take kindly to this. The camera work during these scenes focuses mainly on the faces of Wirz and the officer, while a track of strange music plays in the background, making Wirz seem even more untrustworthy. The officer then goes to the pillories and orders soldiers to free the prisoners and bring them back inside. *“Colonel! Couple these here are dead! Looks like the legs gave out and they strangled. Think Captain Wirz knows that? I dunno if he does. Well, go tell him! Dear God, Almighty!”*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>: Frankenheimer, 1996, 1:18:40.

<sup>26</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 1:36:36.

### Chapter 3.4 The Fight against, and the Trial of the Raiders

Camp Sumter is infamous for the eponymous group of Raiders under Mosby. The film expertly shows the conflicts with them as one of the core events happening in Andersonville. The movie's portrayal of the Raiders is as it should be, an omnipresent threat in the camp that looms over everyone and spurs them into further action, while also putting the Union prisoners in a more negative light, showing that the army was made out of people with varying motivations and moral standards.

The fall of the Raiders comes during one of their regular actions, robbing newly arrived “fresh fish” by luring them into the proximity of their camp. During this particular day, Limber Jim, who utterly loathes the Raiders, has had enough of their wanton cruelty, and with a cry “*Who’s with me!*”<sup>27</sup> he begins to charge at the Raiders’ camp. Sergeant McSpadden immediately voices his support and soon other officers begin voicing theirs leading to their subordinates to join Jim in his charge. Soon over half of the camp is charging with Limber Jim. This is portrayed brilliantly by the camera, which shows in several shots the prisoners getting up and arming themselves after they hear their officers declare their support for Jim’s actions. The Raiders quickly form a wall against the charging campers, with Mosby symbolically located behind the wall, signifying his perceived self-importance which is higher than his subordinates, and villainy in his willingness to sacrifice his subordinates. Jim is the first camper to score a strike against one of the Raiders, thus showing his heroic attitude and strong moral compass and his willingness to sacrifice himself for other prisoners. The fighting is brutal. Raiders are armed with knives against the campers armed with small clubs and sticks. The giant Georgie eagerly joins the fight. Many times the camera shows the Raiders stabbing the other prisoners with knives or them being beaten with cudgels, showing the chaotic nature of such combat, with the combatants tightly packed together with fists and cudgels swinging at everyone in the vicinity. The numbers are an obvious advantage on the side of prisoners as they are shown dogpiling and holding the limbs of the Raiders so their fellow prisoners could beat them up. Even Mosby is taken out by a strong blow to the back of the head courtesy of Jim. A tense musical

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<sup>27</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 1:47:34.

score plays through the whole fight, enhancing the atmosphere. As a bonus Sergeant McSpadden gets to beat up Munn as revenge for killing Dick Potter.

After the fighting is over, a question arises about what to do with the captured Raiders. Many advocate to hang them immediately, although Josiah, McSpadden, and others persist in putting them on trial for their crimes. *"I say we hang them all! I am doing it with my own two hands!"* – *"Just hold your horses, Jim! We are not murderers."* – *"Murder? To hang them. What they did was murder!"* – *"We are not hangmen!"*<sup>28</sup> Thusly a small delegation including Josiah goes to Henry Wirz to ask for his aid in preparing the trial and holding the prisoners, Wirz, however, recognizes Josiah as one of the runners and asks him what he thinks of this, specifically if these actions will help keep the peace inside the stockade. Josiah replies that he regrets his attempts at fleeing but that these Raiders are a menace to everyone inside the stockade and asks Wirz once again for his support. Satisfied with his answer, Wirz decides to help them and with satisfaction gives them the instruction on what to do: imprison the Raiders under Confederate guards, and give the Regulators materials needed for a trial. The camera work in these scenes keeps a close up of Wirz's and the delegations' faces, but the angle of the camera makes Wirz seem more self-assured while giving the prisoners a nervous air about them. Any frame in which Wirz's face is visible is angled in such a way that his authority over the prisoners in the given scene is palpable.

*"I will get you the law books. Keep the proceedings in writing. You will send the findings and the sentences to me and if everything is in order the sentence will be ordered for execution. Keep the ringleaders under lock and key until they ask for it! So?"*<sup>29</sup>

The trial itself is messy, its judges and juries made of newly arrived prisoners who had not suffered under the Raiders. The prosecution and defense are made from officers who stayed in the stockade for some time. Mention should be made of the defense leader Jared Hopkins from 102<sup>nd</sup> New York volunteers, a former lawyer, and the prosecutor Sergeant Horace Trimble of the 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana volunteers. Trimble opens the trial with accusations leveled against the Raiders which makes the observing prisoners shout approvingly. Hopkins however opens his defense by stating that these

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<sup>28</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 1:52:53.

<sup>29</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 1:57:00.

men were not intentionally evil, but were driven into this behavior by the conditions, the surroundings, the lack of civilization, and the lack of enforceable laws which drove them into committing these atrocities. Therefore, they are understandable acts of desperation. This argument drives other prisoners into a state of rage. Hopkins did not envy the newly arrived men serving as juries, as they had little idea what “hell” they had walked into in Andersonville.

It should also be noted that although this process is called a trial, it is in reality a process called sentencing. On the surface the two processes appear to be near-identical, both have the persecuted, both have the juries who decide about the given verdict, and both have the defense and the prosecution, what they differ in however is their purpose. The point of a trial is to decide whether the persecuted is to be considered guilty or innocent, for this reason, various witnesses are brought in to testify, and the jury declares the verdict upon which they have arrived. The sentencing is the process that comes after the jury declares the persecuted to be guilty, judge will state the date for when the sentencing is going to take place and then they meet there again. Sentencing is not about deciding whether the persecuted is guilty or not, that was already decided, the sentencing is about deciding the severity of the punishment that is to be given to the persecuted. As for the process taking place in the film, it is not a trial, there is not a shred of doubt in the mind of everyone present that the Raiders were guilty of every single crime they are accused of. The sentence was a question: should it be the death penalty via hanging or some yet unstated other form of punishment? The goal of the defense, in this case, is to ensure that the Raiders are given the lightest sentence in this situation. Though notably, it is the judge who decides upon the severity of punishment by the presented evidence, in this case, it is decided by a non-biased jury of newly-arrived prisoners.

A phase witness followed whereby individual prisoners come before the court and testify about the atrocities the Raiders committed upon them. Finally, Josiah speaks, but instead, he asks the defense council if he truly believes that this is a place without laws, Hopkins answers affirmatively, but Josiah states that there are laws inside the stockade. Soldiers keep themselves near their sergeants, keep to the military regulations and uphold the unit cohesion as much as they can, on the other hand, Raiders while a tangible proof of his hypothesis was also a small group within the

stockade. Everyone else tried to mostly keep themselves and those close to them alive and moderately happy. This is met with thunderous approval from the observing prisoners. It should also be noted that during this whole passage a hopeful, yet sad track of music plays while the camera shows the faces of the prisoners, Dick Potter among them, who have not made it this far but are still about to see Raiders brought to justice.

All the evidence is presented, and the judgment is given, and the jury declares the punishments for all Raiders, first the punishment for the lower ranks of the Raiders and afterward the highest punishment for the leaders, for the men who organized all the thievery and killings. *“We have heard enough! Those are guilty of thievery and low cowardly assault on their fellows. Give them a ball and chain or make them run the gauntlet. These six, hang them!”*<sup>30</sup> As such a hanging spot is constructed and the prisoners are returned by Wirz who states that he returned as he got them, that they have tried them themselves, and may God have mercy on all of them. Munn and one other Raider leader try to run but are caught to which Mosby reacts with disgust, instead he tells his men to be more dignified and not to show weakness. *“This is nothing! Keep your peckers up, boys! We will have no weakness here! What did you think you were gonna live forever?”*<sup>31</sup> Before they are hanged Mosby and Jim have one last short conversation, after which Jim kisses Mosby on the cheek, symbolically wishing him good luck in the afterlife, or perhaps damning him to hell. The kiss is supposed to be the last good thing given to Mosby, after which the Raiders including the whimpering Munn are hanged and stunned silence envelops the prisoners, because finally the Raiders were gone and the finally thievery will stop.

### **Chapter 3.5 The Remaining Days of Andersonville**

The death of the Raiders gave the camp a more peaceful atmosphere, finally, the prison’s occupants would not need to worry about being robbed. Nevertheless, the conditions of the camp improved only marginally. Food was still a rare resource, water even more so, there was still a shortage of sleeping spots or anything to sleep on and general living conditions remained miserable.

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<sup>30</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 2:11:30.

<sup>31</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 2:13:42.

The film shows the remainder of the days with protagonists in Camp Sumter, including heavily ill Martin who contracted scurvy, unable to even eat mush, excellently showcasing his teeth rotting out of his mouth. On one of the rainy days, another group of prisoners comes inside the camp. This time however they bring joyous news, Sergeant Greyson who was long thought dead from his escape attempt managed to inform the Union command. However, no exchange program for the prisoners was in effect despite this critical information. On another sunny day, all the prisoners inside the stockade are gathered before the gate under the command of Colonel O'Neil who attempts to recruit the prisoners into the Confederate Army by pointing out the lack of an exchange program and promising better living conditions. This attempt fails as various officers order their soldiers to form ranks, turn back and march, thusly leaving the colonel with no recruits. *"First detachment form ranks! Attention detachment! About turn! Forward march!"*<sup>32</sup>

On a sunny but heavily hot day, the squad is portrayed as surviving on the bare minimum. Martin is on the verge of death, Young Patrick, a child drummer who was one of the first prisoners in the camp, jokingly called *the oldest man in Andersonville*, was a steadfast ally of Josiah and McSpadden, more than once helping them procure supplies. Patrick also falls ill and is cared for by the remaining members of the squad. On another miserable day in Andersonville, Wirz unexpectedly shows up in the stockade and tells the prisoners that they are to be exchanged and that the train leaves in two hours. Before Wirz's speech, however, we are given an excellent look at the situation inside Andersonville, with the camera slowly panning over the prisoners and their ramshackle tents, some living, some on the verge of death while some have died recently, and during all this a mournful track of music plays in the background. During these moments, however, Martin dies with the last words he hears being that the gate is open and that freedom from this hell on earth is finally at hand. The remaining members of the squad carry him out of the stockade and put him near the other dead prisoners but not before leaving a nametag on his toe for identification.

The movie concludes with a script stating the number of deaths that occurred in the camp: 19, 912 dead. It also somberly states that no prisoner exchange occurred.

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<sup>32</sup> Frankenheimer, 1996, 2:30:35.



Instead, the prisoners were transported to other prison camps where they stayed until the war's end. Captain Henry Wirz was later tried and hanged as the only war criminal of the American Civil war.

### **Chapter 3.6 The Movie's Reception and Final Thoughts**

The movie itself was received quite warmly and even won an Emmy in the year 1996. However, the critics received it less warmly. While praising its historical accuracy and visual effects the film failed to properly build tension and there were no outstanding performances by its actors, making it quite mediocre. It is still however considered to be an accurate representation of Andersonville with all its grime and horrors and is still acclaimed to this day.

The movie itself portrayed the horrors of Andersonville very accurately, even though the acting which at some points in the movie looked quite wooden does not deter from the movie that much. While on one hand, it is praiseworthy that authentic written materials were used as the basis for the film, relying heavily on a more unknown diary and not the renowned novel of MacKinlay appears a little strange. Watching this movie was quite a gripping experience and I am glad that I got to see the struggles of the squadron under the command of Sergeant McSpadden.

## **Chapter 4 – The Comparing of the Novel and Movie**

The main point of this thesis is the attempt to compare the adaptation of the novel and the adaptation of the movie and compare their differences in how they used historical source material.

### **Chapter 4.1 The Comparison of the Novel and Movie**

The first to compare are the opening portions of both adaptations. Both works begin outside of Andersonville in an effort to set the stage for the works in the second half of the American Civil war. After their defeat at the Battle of Gettysburg, the Confederated States started to deteriorate. The beginning of the novel and the film are quite different in how they set the atmosphere of the works. The novel opens on Ira Claffey's farm, mournfully exploring what effects the war has on the civilian population and how the families deal, or to be more precise do not deal, with the loss of their family members, usually their sons in their early teens. Unlike the novel, the film opens with the Battle of Cold Harbor, straight into the pitched combat of the Civil War, still retaining the tactics of the Napoleonic era, from the prior 95 years, with columns of men firing at each other, but with some more innovative tactics poking through, such as using an actual cover to hide behind. Charged with tension and questions of who will win, it is the group of Union soldiers who are taken into captivity, and the atmosphere turns cautious.

The first look at Andersonville proper is very different. In the novel, we bear witness to its beginnings under construction, and it takes a while before a glimpse is offered of the stockade's inside or the living conditions of the prisoners. In the movie, Andersonville is seen much later, from the outside as a group of escapees is herded back to the prison yard before being put into the stocks. Captain Henry Wirz greets the newly arrived prisoners and for an additional effect name drops the prison's name, this is of course just artistic liberty taken by the film, as no prison commander would greet the prisoners, it is however effective in its purpose of horrifying an audience which has even just the most basic understanding of what happened in Andersonville. In both genres, there is a large number of details describing the camp itself and the horrid conditions in which the prisoners are forced to live. Both the novel and the film have a

phenomenal horrifying atmosphere that stays in the back of the mind of both the reader and the audience.

#### **Chapter 4.2 The Comparison of Mosby's Raiders**

The infamous Raiders should be considered an integral part of the plot of both genres. In the novel the Raiders are introduced through the eyes of Edward Blamey, a cavalryman who first met Mosby and the origins of his Raiders previously during their captivity on Belle Island, Blamey himself is recruited by Mosby for his excellent eyesight and ability to judge situations, Blamey resists at first but as the living conditions inside the camp became much worse Edward accepts Mosby's offer and joins him and his group. In the movie we are introduced to Raiders from the moment the squadron under McSpadden enters the stockade: One of the members of the Raiders named Munn tries to lure the newly-arrived prisoners so the Raiders could steal from them, luckily for the new arrivals older prisoner named Dick Potter greets them and brings them to safety.

Another quite stark difference is the raids themselves. In the novel, we rarely are the raids depicted directly, what happens during them. Usually, the aftereffects of the raids are revealed by other prisoners that have come under attack. On the other hand, in the film the raid itself is shown directly on the first night of Josiah's arrival, the brutality of the fighting and its desperation are shown brilliantly. The stark difference in the equipment between the well-equipped Raiders and poorly prepared prisoners, during this fighting a casualty is taken in Dick Potter, the helpful prisoner who gets stabbed to death by Munn, this is due to Potter chasing away Munn from new prisoners and thus preventing Raiders from stealing from them, this was considered sweet revenge on Munn's part.

Raiders are in the end dealt with, but how we arrive at this conclusion is quite different. In the novel the attack on the Raiders is preceded by a few chapters worth of planning, of meetings between disgruntled officers who have had enough of Raiders and their tyranny, this effort is spearheaded by Nathan Dreyfoos, a man of the Jewish faith, Seneca McBean, a good friend of Dreyfoos's, and Limber Jim, who would create a unit called the Regulators, a sort of internal police force of the stockade. Their job was to ensure peaceful coexistence inside the walls of the stockade since the stockade's

guards did not attempt to do so. Before committing the attack, a small delegation of prisoners is sent to Henry Wirz to negotiate what is to be done with captured Raiders. They manage to bargain for cells for the Raider prisoners, then a formal trial for the Raiders, and even gain armaments in the form of several cudgels to be distributed among the regulators. The attack against the Raiders is short, brutal, and in the end successful. The following trial is described shortly and after that the execution, where Blamey tries to run but is killed by one of the Regulators. Mosby manages to survive his hanging by the rope that snapped but then is immediately hanged for a second time, whereby he is hanged successfully.

In the movie, only little hints are shown about the rebellion against the Raiders, but without the knowledge from the novel, the audience would be unable to guess the names of the officers with which Liber Jim speaks. The attack against the Raiders themselves is also different. Instead of meticulous preparation, the attack is instead presented in the film as more of a spontaneous burst from Limber Jim, who leads the assault and other prisoners join him. Like the novel, a detailed look is given at the fight between the prisoners and Raiders in all its brutality. After capturing the Raiders, the prisoners agree on a trial and send the delegation to Henry Wirz for providing holding cells for the Raiders, and all the necessary materials for their judgment are provided. The trial itself is given more detail in the film than in the novel. The trial is admittedly an excellent affair to watch and can even at points manage to make the impression that the Raiders might be pronounced not guilty by the jury. However, the guilty verdict is decided upon, and the leaders of the Raiders are to be executed.

The execution itself is a glorious event for the stockade, showing the enthusiasm of the imprisoned Union soldiers. Unlike the novel, the one Raider that tries to run is Munn instead of Blamey, Munn is also not killed but instead dragged back to his execution. All the Raider leaders are hanged at the same time and Mosby does not have the same luck as his counterpart as he dies on his first hanging. There is also no priest Whelan who tries to defend the prisoners and asks for absolution for them. He is denied and ends up giving the last rites to Mosby on his second hanging. What follows is stunned silence upon the realization that Andersonville would be a little more peaceful.

### **Chapter 4.3 The Comparison of the Remaining Days and Other Differences**

One of the greatest differences between the movie and the novel is the number of characters in the adaptations. This is understandable as a novel can work with a multitude of characters spread across multiple chapters limited only by the maximum number of pages, unlike the movie which usually lasts only for about two and as such has to condense many plot points and completely leave some of the others. The novel is of course also limited by its structure as too many plot points or characters can lead to confusion which turns the reader away, this is still more forgiving than a film that is too long.

Of note is also how both the novel and film are created. The novel is usually written by just one person who has unlimited time to write them unless they write the novels for a company and have strict deadlines. The film however restricted by the need to book the land on which they will film, props that they will use, and actors that will play, not to mention having a limited budget with which they must accomplish all these actions. This often leads to changes to the film from its source material that may seem bizarre but at the moment of filming made perfect sense.

One of the greatest differences between the novel and the movie is how the novel details the fate of Andersonville's prisoners and also describes the fates of people that lived around the prison, including the trials of Ira Claffey's family, his wife's insanity, and his journey to rediscover his humanity. The fates of the Tebbs family were irreversibly bound with Camp Sumter. The fates of Andersonville's various prisoners are also described, Nathan Dreyfoos and Seneca, the creators of the Regulators. The fates of so many inside and outside the stockade included the declining health and a karmic end of the prison's architect, General John Winder, and the stockade's Yankee-hating warden Captain Henry Wirz. Most characters in the novel have a stated end with few possessing a more hopeful outcome. This great effort to describe so many characters and their future after Andersonville is one of the novel's strengths and it is sorely lacking in the movie.

After the execution of the Raiders, several scenes in the film show the still deteriorating conditions inside the stockade, with several of the squadron's members becoming sick. Also, the recruiting attempt made by the Confederate officers fails spectacularly. Wirz's greatest act as the camp's warden to lie to the prisoners about

the exchange program enables the few guards to make them enter the trains which would transport them to other Confederate prison camps. The movie ends, with the prisoners leaving the camp and the somber knowledge of the viewer that their suffering is not ended while showing the audience the marked graves of the prisoners. The film's viewers are not given the resolution that comes in the form of a few Union cavalrymen liberating the camp at last like in the novel. The audience is not allowed to look at the constantly deteriorating state of the prison's guards and its warden Captain Henry Wirz. The film's viewers are also never given a look outside the stockade, once we enter it we follow exclusively the fates of the squadron, and the other events happening inside the stockade are shown according to their importance to the squadron. The movie does not depict the creation of a little spring in the stockade wall which became the only source of clean water in the stockade and certainly saved a large number of lives.

The movie leaves the viewer feeling somber and somewhat depressed at its ending. While the novel certainly can make the reader feel somber at its ending it can also make him feel hopeful, for it ends with Henry Wirz being escorted to his upcoming trial where he would be judged for his mishandling of the prisoners inside the stockade.

I would state that the movie is an excellent introduction to the realities of Andersonville, excellently showing the poor conditions and the various obstacles the soldier prisoners went through to survive. The novel is preferable to people who wish to uncover more details, such as the eventual fates of the various people who survived Camp Sumter.

#### **Chapter 4.4 The Reality and Faithfulness of the Two Genres**

As it is with nearly all works about some historic event, authors tend to take certain liberties with describing the events or sometimes adding or removing a few characters that do not fit into a certain narrative. There are examples of historic events done inaccurately in both the film and the novel. Below will be pointed out both the inaccuracies and the historical events the film and the novel described right.

In the case of the novel, one of the greatest criticisms from the critics and historians is its tendency to add fictional characters, in this case, the entirety of the

Claffey family. They are the sympathetic southern slave owners who possess basic human empathy, thus showing that not all people who lived in Confederate states were tolerant of such practices as was the prison camp Andersonville. But they did not exist along with the whole Tebbs family. The construction of Camp Sumter was indeed done by the locals, their slaves, with some help from the soldiers. Different was also the way the locals looked at the stockade. While Claffey tries to organize some relief effort for the camp which is denied. This event did not happen in reality. Ambivalent about the prisoners, the locals had enough of their problems and were simply too busy trying to survive. The fact that the sentiment that their miserable conditions were the fault of the Union war efforts did not help. The garrison of the prison camp indeed comprised of young boys who should not have held a rifle at their age and old men for whom the fact that they could even march might be considered a miracle.

The Raiders as portrayed in the novel are very faithful to their real-life counterparts, accurately reflecting their composition being made out of several bands of Raiders under the leadership of Mosby, or their heinous crimes committed upon the fellow Union soldiers held prisoner in the stockade. Their trial and execution although described briefly are also faithful to reality, and the inclusion of the priest Whelan who begs mercy for the Raiders is just one of those important details. The remaining days the prisoners spent at Andersonville are also closely tied to the reality of what happened, as is the speech Henry Wirz gives to prisoners to get them to board the trains.

Perhaps now would be a good time to consider the portrayal of Henry Wirz. In the novel, his well-known hatred for the Yankees is portrayed brilliantly, as is his outright callousness when it comes to treating the prisoners under his command. It should be pointed out however that there is still ongoing historical discourse on whether Henry Wirz was truly that much of an evil man or if he was merely a bumbling incompetent who just happened to land in a position that cost an enormous amount of Union soldiers lives, in the novel he is portrayed more of a scheming and conniving man who well and truly hates Yankees with every bone in his body, outright relishing giving them false hope of the exchange program.

Despite the many liberties, MacKinlay took with quite a few characters and their behavior, his novel remains one of the most faithful portrayals of the horrors of Andersonville.

The movie had many aspects altered to enhance the flow of the plot. This is understandable as the source for the movie is a historical diary and not the novel. Unlike the novel, it follows the experience of one squadron of soldiers incarcerated inside the stockade, while the novel follows the stories of many characters both inside and outside Camp Sumter. Also of note is the movie's length. At 2 hours and some 40 minutes the movie is already pushing the maximum allowed length for a movie targeted at cinemas, any longer and the audience might be bored to tears, as such it should be noted that Frankenheimer crammed in as many details as he could into the said timeframe and it is frankly impressive that the movie is not longer.

What the movie must be praised for is its graphical portrayal of the camp. It brilliantly shows the ramshackle nature of the stockade. The only things that appear built with any kind of plan in mind are the walls, and the huts built by the raiders, while everything else appears to be placed randomly, in random sizes and shapes. The guards themselves, are either too young or too old with a few exceptions of the officers. Another brilliant detail is the uniforms of the soldiers, with most of them still wearing their civilian clothes and only a few wearing uniforms that had clearly seen better days, this detail shows that these soldiers are not professional soldiers but the historically quickly put-together militia.

What must be said negatively are the circumstances surrounding the Raiders. While they are indeed brilliantly portrayed in the film there is an issue with the succession of the events that came to their fall. In the movie, there are a few hints of an upcoming alliance among the officers that would create the Regulators, but otherwise, there are no other hints, unlike the historical reality where officers would meet over the course of weeks to plan how to get rid of the Raiders, as was reflected in the novel. The attack on the Raiders also gives the impression that Limber Jim just snaps one day and begins the assault against the Raiders, while in reality highly detailed planned actions were taken against the Raiders. The decision to send the delegation to Henry Wirz for organizing the trial after they capture the Raiders also did not reveal that, while in reality they contacted Wirz beforehand and were even armed



by him. This decision was one of the few points in the novel where Wirz was portrayed in a more positive light.

The film portrayed exceedingly well the trial, actually managing to give an impression of an actual trial, instead of a kangaroo court that it was in reality, and while the hanging itself is also portrayed well excluding the historical presence of Priest Whelan and his attempt to save the lives of the Raiders. Not presented in the movie are the miracle spring and other less important details. The reason for not showing the spring is perhaps that they did not impact the destiny of the squadron overall that much.

The portrayal of Henry Wirz in this film is at points I feel quite ambiguous, at times he does indeed make quite a villainous impression, while at times, for example when he tries to beg for promotion, he makes an impression of not exactly being a bright officer who does not look like he understands what he is doing. What must be stated however is the fact that this was brilliantly portrayed by Jan Tříska performed his role convincingly well. Another point the movie shows excellently is the final speech of Henry Wirz to the prisoners, on the surface promising a bright future but with an undercurrent of malicious glee in knowing what in reality awaited the hated Union prisoners.

In the end, both adaptations have their highs and lows, and both have taken creative liberties with historical events that make some people frown upon them. Both have stayed overall faithful to their sources and usually portrayed more events accurately than falsely. Both novel and the film serve as examples of adaptations done well, and to this day they serve as an excellent look into the grim history of Camp Sumter or as it was known to its soldiers and prisoners, Andersonville.

## **Conclusion**

The tale of Camp Sumter is one of endless misery and death. To many it would undoubtedly serve as proof of man's inhumanity: Given that something like Andersonville existed and was crewed by soldiers and officers who at times appeared to take outright delight in the suffering they caused to its prisoners. However, it is also the truth that there were soldiers who could not stand the living conditions and tried to help, only to be stonewalled by their superiors. The vast majority of the guards were ambivalent and were doing only their duty, no matter how much they might dislike it, and only a few among them delighted in the suffering of the Union soldiers.

My aim in this work was to compare two different adaptations of the historical events that had happened in Andersonville, more precisely between 1884 and 1885. The novel was written by Kantor MacKinlay and the movie was directed by John Frankenheimer. Both artistic recreations had their moments of excellence, and both had their faults in how they chose to portray the events. Of the two the novel is the better one in giving the reader an endless number of details about the various events and the characters, while also describing Andersonville from various points of view, something that the film was unable to do. While not rich in details, the movie cut quite a few important events out, but still manages to do an excellent job of portraying Camp Sumter through the eyes of its prisoners and is still an excellent way of introducing Andersonville to someone who does not wish to read the novel.

In conclusion, both of these are excellent works of art, overall staying loyal to historical sources and managing to introduce new people to the horrors of Andersonville in their separate ways, each of which appeals to different types of people.

## Appendix

### 1. *Photograph of Captain Henry Wirz:*

[Der Schweizerische Beobachter](#), issue 13/2011, page 41; taken from the book «Captain Henry Wirz and Andersonville prison, a reappraisal», University of Tennessee Press, 2006. (A drawing based on this photo can be seen on the cover of the 1908 book *The True Story of Andersonville Prison: A Defense of Major Henry Wirz* by James Madison Page and Michael Joachim Haley)

### 2. *Picture of Jackson Broshears after his release from Andersonville:*

*Jackson Broshears, 65th Indiana Infantry was photographed in May 1864, nearly 8 weeks after his release from prison. Library of Congress*

### 3. *Photograph of the Execution of Captain Henry Wirz:*

Civil War photographs, 1861-1865 / compiled by Hirst D. Milhollen and Donald H. Mugridge, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1977. No. 0857

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