

Andersonville Prison Student Worksheet

Introduction:

During the Civil War, thousands of Federal and Confederate troops were captured by opposing forces and sent to prisoner of war camps. Conditions in the camps were generally atrocious. Historians estimate that over ten percent of all soldiers taken prisoner eventually died in POW camps. By far, the worst POW camp was the one in Andersonville, Georgia. Over 33,000 men were jammed into a 26-acre area and had no shelter other than scratching holes in the dirt and rigging coverings of blankets and sticks. Twenty-nine percent of the prisoners at Andersonville died. After the war, Henry Wirz, the commander of Andersonville, was charged and tried for war crimes.

The Trial of Captain Henry Wirz: Dr. John C. Bates' testimony for the prosecution

http://www.socialstudies.com/c/article.html?article@bates_wirztrialtestimony

1. What does this source consist of? Why would this source be a good one for learning about what went on at Andersonville? What are the source's credentials?
2. How did Dr. Bates describe the "appearance of things" at Andersonville in relation to the condition of the men and their shelters?
3. Dr. Bates notes one case of a boy "of fifteen or sixteen years." Describe some of the medical problems the boy had, as well as what Dr. Bates did to try to help him.
4. Dr. Bates consistently referred to scurvy as one of the main diseases or complaints of the men. Read through Dr. Bates' testimony and describe his explanation of the effects of scurvy.
5. In reading Dr. Bates' testimony, list three other conditions that seemed to be harmful to the health of the inmates at Andersonville.
6. In your opinion, did Dr. Bates do enough as a medical officer to help the men? Explain your view.
7. By the end of the war, civilian populations in the South were affected by hardships of having too little food, medical care, and so on. If conditions for the Southerners in general were that bad, do you think Wirz should have been blamed for the conditions that affected the enemy prisoners in the Andersonville camp? Why or why not?