

drummed off the island. Another three-day transient in the "Black Hole" was a sentry who permitted unauthorized visitors to enter the South Battery and then swore at the sergeant of the guard who reprimanded him; the extra punishment which he probably felt most keenly was having his whiskey ration stopped for 30 days.

More elaborate punishments were reserved for the really serious evil-doers, as witnessed by a private who stole another's watch. His sentence was "to be drummed once up and down the Parade with the Rogue's March, with his coat turned and the word THIEF written thereon in large letters; further, that he stand within view of the evening parade each day for one week with his coat in the same manner except when on guard duty and to have his whiskey stopped for one month." Perhaps it was this same sentinel who was the cause of a robust reprimand administered to one "Mary of Capt. Watson's Company" who had added to what was apparently her time-honored profession the equally illicit conveyance of whiskey to sentinels; she was ordered "to be drummed off the island and never to be suffered to return." Although as a civilian, Mary was not properly subject to court martial action, there is no doubt that the erring maiden went and did not come back.

In line with the general severity of the military legal code of this post-colonial period, capital punishment was frequently visited upon the criminally guilty, and Governors Island witnessed several such executions for which the procedure was as definitely prescribed as for the Manual of Arms. These death sentences were usually carried out at 11:30 a.m., when the troops would be paraded to

form three sides of a square before the fort – artillery on the right side, infantry on the left, and in the center the execution party of a sergeant and 12 privates under the command of the Provost Marshal. To this grim formation would then come the prisoner, preceded by fifes and muffled drums playing "Roslyn Castle," the dirge traditionally reserved for such occasions, and escorted by the Provost Marshal and guards. Arrived at the square, the condemned man would kneel on his coffin in the center, the Provost Marshal would signal the music to stop, the execution party would fire, and there would be one less disciplinary case to worry about.

But there was a more cheerful side to life on Governors Island, as evidenced by the happy correspondence exchanged between a group of public-spirited ladies – who would be Red Cross workers today – calling themselves "The Stocking, Hood and Moccasin Society of New York." Upon the occasion of the Society sending to the island "46 Hoods and 46 prs of mittens to be presented to the Soldiers and Sentinels on Duty." The record of Governors Island in the closing days of the period of the War of 1812 could not enjoy a more fitting finale than that offered by the island's gallant commanding officer in officially acknowledging the gift just before peace was declared:

"I beg leave, madam, to assure you that this flattering attention to the wants and privations of the Soldier from so respectable a Body of Ladies cannot fail to animate every bosom with a degree of Chivalry ardor when it is recollected that the service in which they are engaged is the defense of the City of their amiable and virtuous patronesses."