

every Sunday. Immediately upon the sounding of Church Call, all organizations fell into ranks and were marched in strict military formation to the reserved seats in the chapel. The only ones excused were on necessary guard or fatigue or who could plead anti-religious scruples. In the latter instance however, the agnostics were obliged to remain in quarters during the period of the church service and have the Articles of War and appropriate texts from the regulations read to them. Tradition holds many amusing instances of soldiers of that period who, after comparing the regulations and the chaplain's sermons, decided in favor of the sermons as the lesser of two evils.

Minor activities of the permanent station complement included the erection of a hospital at the north end of the park in front of the Commanding General's quarters and the establishment of a steam ferry service from New York. The first boat used was named the General Scott, followed by the General McClellan, both of the small tugboat type and operated only during daylight hours.

But, small though they were, these vessels once were contributory factors in bringing to Governors Island a war-time crisis of no mean proportions. When the Draft Riots of 1863 were raging through New York, all available troops on the island were hurriedly taken to the city to guard the Sub-Treasury on Wall Street. This left the Army post totally unprotected except for the usual sentries. Word of this situation soon reached the rioters who immediately decided to seize the Army ferries, invade the now-defenseless island, and capture for their own use, the great stocks of guns and ammunition they knew to be stored there. Learning of this plot, the authorities hastily withdrew the ferryboats to safety. Undaunted, the rioters promptly commandeered all the rowboats they could find around the Battery and determinedly set off across the channel. There were at that time 80 civilians employed in the ordnance arsenal on the island, and when they saw the water-borne mob approaching, they constituted themselves an official reception committee. Hurriedly grabbing up whatever clubs, guns, axes, or knives they could lay hands on, they lined up along the shore and ordered the invaders to

halt or be fired on. To carry further conviction to their demand, some of the Ordnance workers ostensibly busied themselves about a couple of cannon in a nearby battery, although they had neither powder nor shot for the pieces. Noting with dismay these unexpectedly belligerent preparations for their reception, the rioters reversed their convoy as rapidly as possible, with the island and its residents unharmed.

Early in the war, Washington provided added responsibilities for Governors Island by establishing there one of the country's most important prison camps for captured Confederate officers and men. There were frequently as many as a thousand "Johnny Rebs" in confinement in Castle Williams and its adjacent stockade. In addition, in the basement of the building on the east side of the Fort Columbus quadrangle there was a special com-

partment for particularly noteworthy prisoners. This consisted of an outer cell which gave entry to an inner cell - when the prisoner was safely locked in the inner chamber a guard was locked in the outer one and could thus keep his charge under constant surveillance. The duplex dungeon usually was reserved for those unfortunates who were awaiting execution. Its most celebrated occupant being Captain John Yates Beall, the erstwhile naval officer who practiced piracy on Yankee shipping and paid for his depredations with his life.

Needless to say, the necessity of properly caring for so many newcomers stretched the post's facilities to the utmost, but sometimes even that was not enough if we are to credit the following letter, perhaps not entirely unprejudiced, dated from Castle Williams, Sept. 30, 1861, to Secretary of War Cameron:

The undersigned are orderly sergeants of the companies taken prisoners at the surrender of Fort Hatteras on the coast of North Carolina, on the 29th ultimo. Our men are now suffering very greatly from disease. Today 115 of the 630 are confined by disease which threatens to prostrate us all. In this conflict now being waged by two sections of our country, prisoners have been discharged by both

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***During the  
Civil War,  
thousands of  
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