



## Finding Primary Sources in the Digital Age

Students and researchers now have greater access to primary source materials for historical research than ever before. The traditional use of sources available in print and microfilm continues to be the foundation for research, but in some cases primary material can now be found online more easily than through traditional means. Many Government documents and prisoner narratives exploring the subject of prisoners of war at Andersonville and elsewhere during the Civil War are now quickly accessible.

This brief guide is designed to provide students and researchers with information to help them rediscover the primary materials that can be found online which best illustrate this dark part of America's Civil War.

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### The Official Records

No serious study of the American Civil War is complete without consulting the Official Records. Affectionately known as the "OR," the 128 volumes of the Official Records provide the most comprehensive, authoritative, and voluminous reference on Civil War operations. Series II contains 8 volumes and 8 books, and includes Union and Confederate correspondence, orders, reports, and returns relating to Prisoners of War, as well as political prisoners.

Ohio State University has placed the text of the ORs on the internet at:  
<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/records/>

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### Where to Find Digital Documents

Two prominent internet sites make numerous public domain works, generally long out-of-print titles, available to the public. Both services make available digitized books from various libraries.

<http://www.archive.org/>

The Internet Archive is a non-profit digital library with the stated mission of "universal access to all knowledge." It offers permanent storage and access to collections of digitized materials, including websites, music, moving images, and nearly 3 million public domain books.

<http://books.google.com/>

Google Books is a service from Google that searches the full text of books that Google has scanned, converted to text using optical character recognition, and stored in its digital database. Books in the public domain are available in "full view" and free for download.

The listing of these online services is intended as a public service, and implies no endorsement by the National Park Service or Andersonville National Historic Site.

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## Government or Official Documents

During the war, and in the years immediately following it, a number of official documents were produced pertaining to the treatment of prisoners of war. Included here are reports of the private United States Sanitary Commission. When searching for these documents, use the title and author, or combinations thereof.

United States Quartermaster-General's Office, *The Martyrs Who, for our Country, Gave up their Lives in the Prison Pens in Andersonville, Georgia*. Washington, 1866.

House of Representatives. *Trial of Henry Wirz*. Washington, 1868.

United States Sanitary Commission. *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Rebel Authorities*. Philadelphia, 1864.

United States Sanitary Commission. *Contributions Relating to the Causation and Prevention of Disease, Camp Diseases; Together With A Report of the Diseases, Etc., Among the Prisoners at Andersonville, Georgia*. New York, 1867.

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## Prisoner Narratives

In the years following the war, many former prisoners published narratives of their experiences at Andersonville and other military prisons. These narratives can provide first-hand insight to individual experiences; however, issues of accuracy and sectional bitterness can render some narratives less valuable as primary sources. What follows is a listing of a small number of prisoner narratives; between 1863 and the 1920s, several hundred were published. When searching for these documents, use the title and author, or combinations thereof.

Braun, Herman. *Andersonville, An Object Lesson on Protection*. Milwaukee, 1892.

Burson, William. *A Race for Liberty: or My Capture, Imprisonment, and Escape*. Wellsville, Ohio, 1867.

Copley, John M. *A Sketch of the Battle of Franklin, Tenn.; with Reminiscences of Camp Douglas*. Austin, 1893.

Forbes, Eugene. *Diary of a Soldier, and Prisoner of War in the Rebel Prisons*. Trenton, 1865.

Kellogg, Robert H. *Life and Death in Rebel Prisons*. Hartford, 1865.

King, John H. *Three Hundred Days in a Yankee Prison, Reminiscences of War, Life, Captivity, Imprisonment at Camp Chase, Ohio*. Atlanta, 1904.

King, John R. *My Experience in the Confederate Army and in Northern Prisons*. Clarksburg, WV, 1917.

Maile, John L. "Prison Life in Andersonville" *With Special Reference to the Opening of Providence Spring*. Los Angeles, 1912.

Smith, W. B. *On Wheels and How I Came There*. New York, 1893.

Smith, Charles M. *From Andersonville to Freedom*. Providence, 1894.

Sprague, Homer B. *Light and Shadows in Confederate Prisons*. New York, 1915.

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## Looking Further

The sources listed here are only a small number of what is available. If more sources are needed, the bibliographies of most secondary sources on the subject can provide additional titles. See especially:

Futch, Ovid L. *History of Andersonville Prison*. University Press of Florida, 1968.

Hesseltine, William B. *Civil War Prisons: A Study in War Psychology*. New York, 1930.