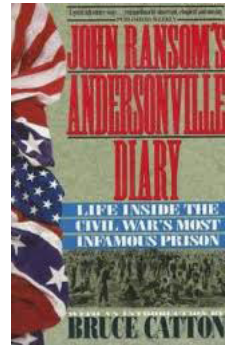
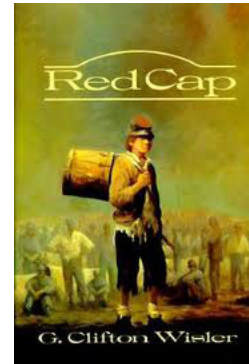
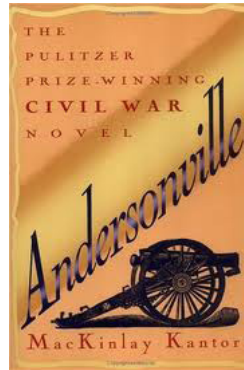
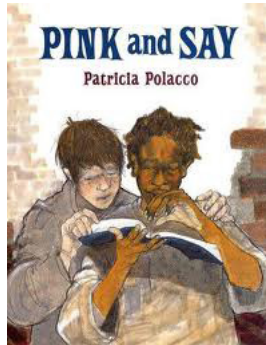




Literature of the Andersonville Prison



The story of Andersonville Prison is not confined to a history class. A wealth of literature has been created telling the story, both fictional and nonfictional. Former prisoners are a powerful source of this literary tradition, many of whom published memoirs, diaries, and poetry about their experiences. Their works are full of the rich literary symbolism that are a hallmark of American literature and are an important part of the story of Andersonville and how it is remembered.

Suggested Age:

5th-11th Grade

Objectives:

At the end of the activity, the students will be able to:

- Students will learn some of the problems faced by prisoners of war at Andersonville.
- Students will suggest possible causes for the hardships at Andersonville.

Materials:

Provided by Teacher – Books from library or photocopies of the poetry included with this lesson.

Applicable Georgia Performance Standards

ELA8R4 The student acquires knowledge of Georgia authors and significant text created by them. The student

- d. examines texts from different genres created by Georgia authors.
- f. explains how Georgia is reflected in a literary work through setting.

ELAALRL1 The student demonstrates comprehension by examining evidence (i.e. examples of diction, imagery, point of view, figurative language, symbolism, plot events and main ideas) in a variety of texts representative of different genres (i.e. poetry, prose, and drama) and using this evidence as the basis for interpretation.

ELAALRL3 The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to their contemporary context or historical background, as well as to works from other time periods.

READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM/25 BOOK STANDARD

Recommended works of fiction

This lesson plan does not develop specific activities for these works of fiction. Rather it is to provide you with suggestions of grade level appropriate books to recommend for your students and to provide you with copies of little published prisoner poetry for use in your literature class.

Elementary School / Middle School

1. Rinaldi, Ann. *Numbering All the Bones*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2002. (Lexile 600)
Numbering All the Bones is about a young African American girl who's enslaved in the south. One of her brothers has run away and joined the Union Army, and she finds out that he is a prisoner at Andersonville. This novel deals with issues of slavery as well as how families coped with having a loved one imprisoned inside Andersonville.
2. Wisler, Clifton. *Red Cap*. New York: Puffin Books, 1991. (Lexile 820)
Red Cap is a fictionalized account of a real prisoner from Andersonville named Ransom Powell. Powell was a 13 year old drummer boy and was captured. He was sent to Andersonville. This novel tells the story of Andersonville from the perspective of a young adolescent.
3. Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say*. New York: Philomel Books, 1994. (Lexile 590)
Pink and Say highlights the brief but intimate friendship of two young boys, Pinkus Aylee (Pink) and Sheldon Curtis (Say), during the Civil War.
4. Immel, Mary Blair. *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2005. (Lexile 860)
A rare book not about Andersonville or the Union prisoner of war experience, *Captured!* tells the story of a young man kidnapped into the Confederate service, captured in battle and imprisoned in the Camp Morton Prison in Indianapolis.

8th Grade/High School

1. Kantor, MacKinley. *Andersonville*. New York: Plume, 1993. (Lexile 1109)
First published in 1955, *Andersonville* is a novel about a group of prisoners who enter Andersonville and struggle to survive. This novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1955 and is a stirring account of the horrors faced by the prisoners at Andersonville. It remains one of the most popular Civil War novels.

Prisoner Narratives and Poetry

Perhaps the most important literary sources on Andersonville are the prisoners themselves. After the war dozens of prisoners published memoirs and diaries recounting their experiences inside Andersonville and other Confederate prisons. Around the turn of the century many prisoners and their families also eulogized their fallen comrades through poetry, some of which was actually inscribed on the monuments inside Andersonville National Cemetery or was recited at their dedications. This lesson plan does not develop specific activities for these memoirs or works of poetry. It is meant to provide you with a source of Andersonville works of nonfiction and poetry that you can use within the framework of your already established lessons on these literary genres. A selection of prisoner poems follows this page.

Published prisoner narratives from one hundred years ago may be available as reprints, or via Google Books. The list below is a starting point, and by no means comprehensive.

Smith, William B. [On Wheels and How I Came There](#). 1893.

Ransom, John. [Andersonville Diary, escape, and list of the dead](#). 1881.

McElroy, John. [Andersonville: A Story of Rebel Military Prisons](#). 1879.

Page, James. [The True Story of Andersonville Prison: A Defense of Major Henry Wirz](#). 1908.

Lyon, William Franklin. [In and Out of Andersonville Prison](#). 1905.

It Is Not Death to Die

Traditional Lutheran Hymn, told by Robert H. Kellogg, Andersonville Prisoner. Taken From His Memoirs, published 1865.

There were ten deaths on our side of the camp that night. The old prisoners called it “*being exchanged*,” and truly it was a blessed transformation to those who went from such as miserable existence on earth, to a glorious one above. We could not weep for such, but only rejoice that their cares and toils were ended. We could not wonder that they should feel in their last hours that-

‘It is not death to die-
To leave this weary road,
And, ‘mid the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.

It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed by tears
And wake, in glorious repose,
To spend eternal years.

It is not death to bear
The wrench that sets us free
From dungeon chain, to breathe the air
Of boundless liberty.’

Sacred to the Memory

Frontispiece poem in Robert H. Kellogg's memoir, Life and Death in Rebel Prisons, published 1865.

SACRED
to
the memory of
the thousands
of our brave
soldiers who
have sacrificed
themselves upon
the altar of their
country, in de-
fence of her laws
and institutions;
her liberties and
rights. With the
courage and ardor
of Patriots; with
the enthusiasm of
loyal subjects un-
der a good Govern-
ment; with the in-
telligence and zeal
of Union-loving citi-
zens, and an unself-
ish devotion to the
lofty principles of
truth and justice,
and an eye upon the
basis of a lasting
peace, they went forth
pledging "their lives
and sacred honor," in
maintenance of the
glorious cause. Many
have languished and
died in Prisons, and
thus sleep the noble
youth of our country;
the pride of the land;
the heroic sons of our
worthy sires, and the
honored brave of our
Spartan-like mothers. They
have fallen. Like autumn
leaves at touch of frost,
they have been swept to
the earth, where they lie
in undistinguished piles.
The hearts of the people
shall be their tombs, but
marble and granite should be lifted
high, as the testimonial of grateful
mankind for the deeds they have
done, and the radiant glory with
which they have crowned the nation

**ANDERSONVILLE, MILLEN, CO
LUMBIA, FLORENCE, TYLER
SALISBURY, CAHAWBA, DAN
VILLE, LIBBY, PEMBERTON
CASTLE THUNDER BELLE ISLE**

Excerpt from “Thoughts For The Unveiling of Ohio State Monument”

Composed and Read by Emogene Niver Marshall at the dedication of the Ohio Monument at the Andersonville Prison Park on December 18, 1901. Marshall's brother, Edwin Niver, was a prisoner who died at Andersonville.

Our boys, who are lying here so brave and true,
Who died to save the Red, the White, the Blue;
No! they have not suffered and died in vain-
Neither the march of hosts when war trod the plain.

For now that starry banner free
That floats above o'er you and me
Is loved by all; all hearts unite;
That banner true – the Stars and Stripes
No more shall the war cry sever,
For the generous deed has been done –
And we banish our anger forever,
And no braver battle was won.

So once again let us pause
And think of this great silent band,
That today are on that better shore –
Dwellers in the spirit land.
Strangers tread softly,
Our kindred are sleeping
Beneath the green mound
Your footsteps have passed.
And our hearts beat in silence
Yet evermore weeping
In anguish untold for its dearest and lost.

Aye, Look on the marble so cheerless and cold,
And learn that beneath it our idols repose;
Our soldiers! So young, so loving – now cold,
The stem broken lily, the bud and the rose,
Tread softly as you pass o'er the mound.
Remember! This is sacred and hallowed ground;
They are Liberty's martyrs – like Christ on the cross,
He died for humanity. They to cleanse our Nation from dross.

Farewell, dear fathers and brothers,
We bid the adieu once more;
Sleep on 'neath the sward that covers
They forms here on Southern shore,
The Father that watched o'er the battles
Still watches those in His keep;
And when no more life's drum rattles,
He will give His beloved sleep.

Selected Poetry by John Worrell Northrop

From *Chronicles From the Diary of a War Prisoner in 1864* by John Worrell Northrop.

Untitled

Composed after his capture but before he was sent to Andersonville.

On, on, on we go down to the Rebel jail;
I reckon this is rather rough a riding on a rail.
Oh, here are boys from many a hearth,
Dear to many a breast,
Many a mothers heart is dearth,
Many a wife with woe is press'd;
And many a kin and many a friend
Will long to know their fate;
But many a precious life will end
Within that prison gate;
And many a day ere we can see
That dear old home again,
And rest beneath that banner free
That traitors now disdain.
Many a long, long weary day,
Many a dismal night,
Our hope and strength may waste away
By hunger, pain and blight;
And many a vow may be forgot,
But we shall not forget
The glorious truths for which we fought.
The cause that triumphs yet.
But we hear their vaunting everywhere;
They never can prove true;
And yet what devils ever dare
These Rebels dare to do;
And matters look a little rough,
Things look a little blue,
You bet it is a little tough,
Going down to Rebel jail;
'Tis not so very pleasant, though,
This riding on a rail!

Misery

Composed after he had been in Andersonville 4 months.

I've looked on Misery undismayed,
His foul breath on my cheek;
I've felt him crawling where I layed
When wind blew chill and bleak,
And drenching rain fell on my head
And on my body beat,
And starved men, frozen, stark, and dead
Lay ghastly at my feet.
I've seen him creeping, mean,
ensconce,
To steal my scanty food,
But never suffered him, not once,
To scare me where I stood.
I've fought him upright like a man
That only fears disgrace,
And hit him hard, as best I can,
And scorned him at his face.
I've struggled hard for victory,
In pride, although in pain,
With soul serene and spirit free,
And so I must again.

In Memoriam of Pennsylvania's Sons at Andersonville

Poem displayed on the Pennsylvania Monument at Andersonville
National Cemetery.

Here sleep the loyal and the brave,
By kindly death from prison freed,
Who gave their previous lives to save,
The Nation in its time of need.

This monument cannot disclose,
Nor can the skill of mortals make,
A record of the countless woes,
They suffered for their country's sake.

To Him alone, who knoweth all,
Is known the anguish they endured,
Awaiting the last bugle-call,
With breaking hearts while here immured.

Denied a soldier's splendid death,
Where glory rolls her martial drum,
They tasted death at every breath,
And bravely met their martyrdom.

Enshrined in Pennsylvania's heart,
To flag and freedom every dear,
Are they who bore the patriot's part,
And nobly served their country here.
