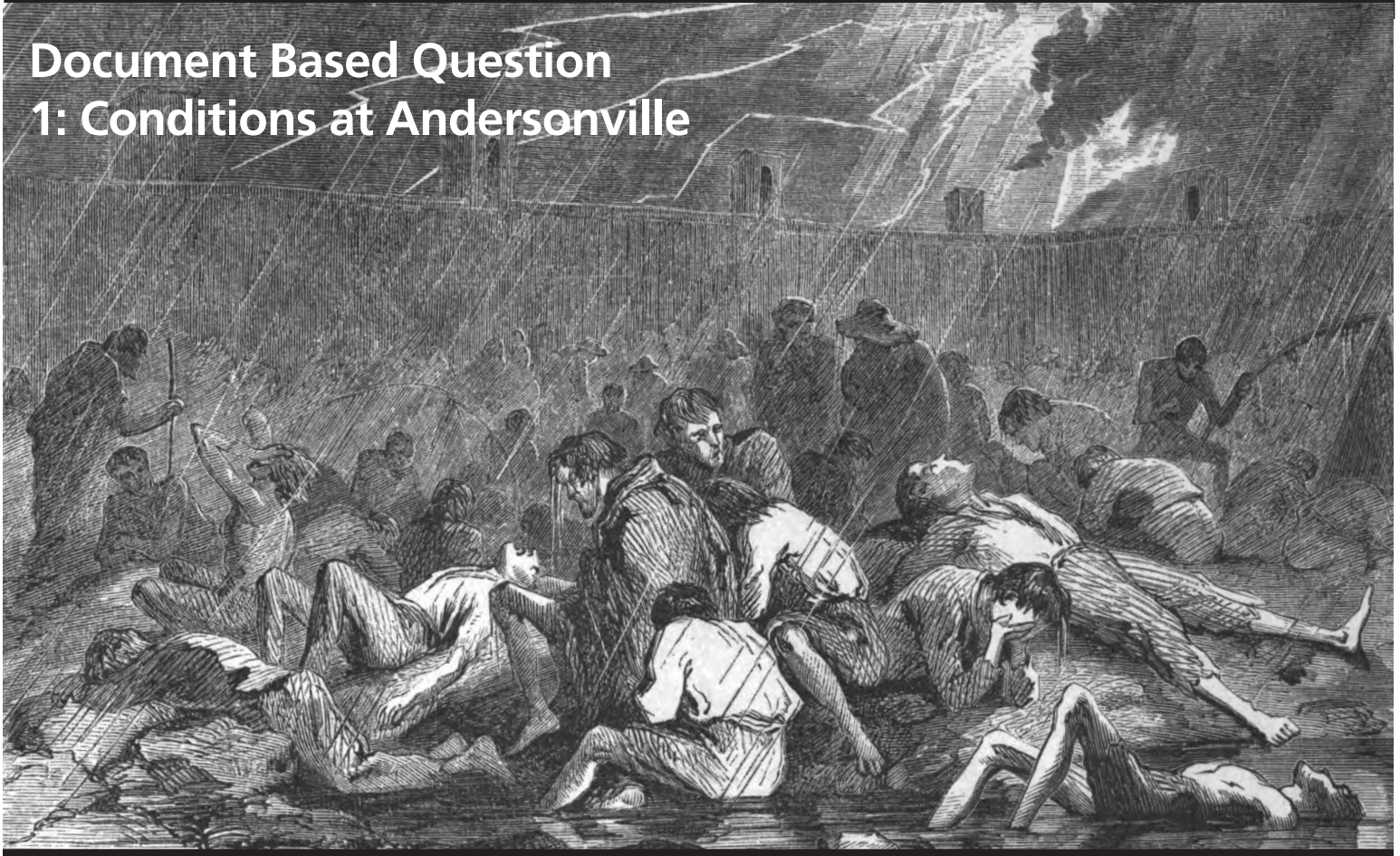




## Document Based Question 1: Conditions at Andersonville



This activity is modeled after the College Board's Advanced Placement United States History Course Document Based Question (DBQ). Its purpose is to have students work with primary sources related to Andersonville Prison and to evaluate and find meaning from these sources. Students are asked to write an essay that answers the question while utilizing the provided documents as sources. It is designed for use in high school Advanced Placement Courses, but could certainly be used in other courses.

This DBQ is neither sponsored nor reviewed by the College Board and was created by park staff at Andersonville National Historic Site. For more information on the College Board's Advanced Placement United States History program visit <http://bit.ly/bGyz8>

## Directions

The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A-H and your knowledge of the period referred to in the question. High scores will be earned only by essays that both cite key pieces of evidence from the documents and draw on outside knowledge of the period. Some of the documents have been edited, and wording and punctuation have been modernized.

1. Camp Sumter, or Andersonville Prison, was in operation for 14 months and during this time approximately 45,000 Union Soldiers were held there and 13,000 of them died. What issues led to Andersonville's horrific conditions and death rate? Limit your response to the years 1863-1865.

### Document A

Source: Richard B. Winder, former quartermaster at Andersonville Prison, writing to Major N. Church, Acting Assistant Adjutant General, August 30, 1865, Printed in *The Official Records of the War of Rebellion*, Series II, Volume VIII p. 730-735.

...I did all in my power to remedy the evil, but the number of prisoners at Andersonville was so rapidly increased it was simply impossible. In the first place, I could get no lumber scarcely at all...I earnestly advised the use of tents...; but I was informed by the Quartermaster General that they could not be supplied for the simple reason they did not have them. There were some tents in Savannah, GA, belonging to the State, which I tried in every way in the world to get, but could not succeed, as they said they needed them for their own troops."

### Document B

Source: Robert Kellogg, former Andersonville prisoner, *Life and Death in Rebel Prisons*, 1865.

Scurvy began to be fearfully prevalent. We had had no vegetables given to us since we entered in April [passage written in August], and we were without money to buy any. Sergeant L., who had been in command of the 'ninety' ever since we had been in prison, became so disabled by the disease in his ankles and feet, as to render him unfit to perform the duty of drawing rations...This is the form which the disease often takes, so contracting the cords of the limbs as to deprive the sufferer of the power to walk. Again it will be seen in the swelling of the different parts of the body, and still again in the decaying of the gums and loosening of the teeth. Hundreds of poor fellows lost their lives by this disease alone. Nearly the whole of our regiment were more or less affected by it."



### Document C

Source: Photograph of the 'sinks' at Andersonville Prison. Taken August 16, 1864 by photographer A. J. Riddle.



### Document D

Source: Charles Hopkins, *The Andersonville Diaries and Memoirs of Charles Hopkins, 1st New Jersey Infantry*, republished 1988.

...one third of the original enclosure was swampy – a mud of liquid filth, voiding from the thousands, seething with maggots in full activity. This daily increased by the necessities of the inmates, the only place being accessible for the purpose. Through this mass pollution passed the only water that found its way through the [prison]. It came to us between the two sources of Pollution, the Confederate camp, the cookhouse; first, the seepage of sinks [were prisoners used the restroom]; second, the dirt and filth emptied by the cook house; then, was our turn to use it for all purposes, until later. Near the deadline all took water for all purposes, and drink...

### Document E

Source: Letter from General Ulysses S. Grant to General Benjamin Butler, August 18, 1864, Printed in *The Official Records of the War of Rebellion*, Series III.

...On the subject of [prisoner] exchange, however, I differ from General Hitchcock. It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man we hold, when released on parole or otherwise, becomes an active soldier against us...If we commence a system of exchange..., we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those caught they amount to no more than dead men. At this particular time to release all rebel prisoners...would insure Sherman's defeat...

### Document F

Source: George Fetchner, October 4, 1865 testimony of a former prisoner as printed in *The Trial of Henry Wirz*, 1868.

There were quite a number of store keepers of different kinds there; I would be safe in saying there were a thousand of different kinds in the stockade; they would keep their stores in their tents; they dug holes in the ground to put them in; they got the stores from the post adjutant—the rebel sutler; they got the largest part of them from him; they got a good many stores through the hospital, and by paying the guards at the gate \$5 or such matter for leave to go into the country to buy them. All kinds of trades that are calculated to make men comfortable were carried on there, such as shoemakers, tailors, watchmakers, &etc. There were two watchmakers there, five or six shoemakers, and five or six tailors. The streets were full of soup jobbers; there were about thirty eating houses there; they consisted of tables made out of rough boards and long benches; coffee, tea, ham and eggs, biscuit, butter, and honey could be got there; there were at least five hundred bakers in the stockade; they would bake biscuit, bread, pies, cakes.

### Document G

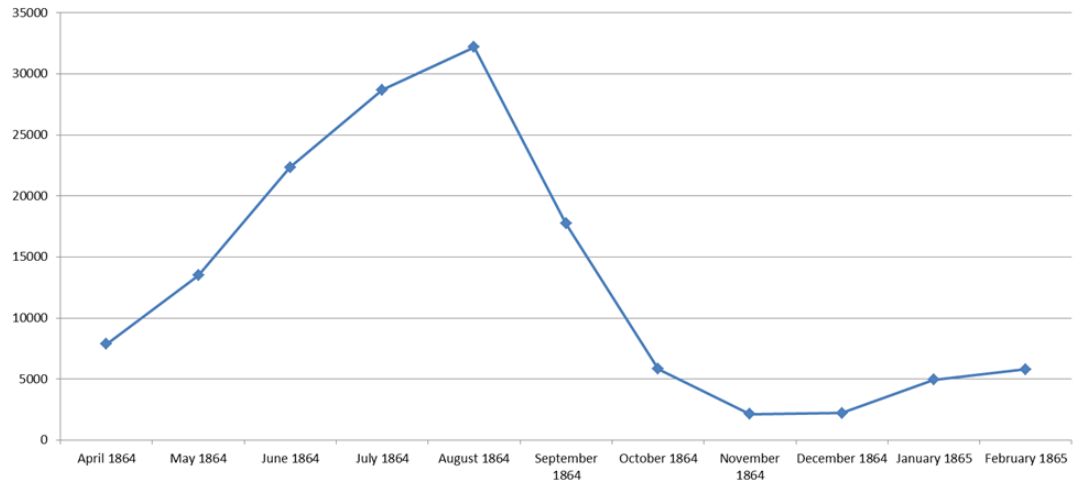
Source: John Ransom's Andersonville Diary

June 27, 1864: Raiders going on worse than ever before. A perfect pandemonium. Something must be done, and that quickly. There is danger enough from disease, without being killed by raiders. Any moment fifty or a hundred of them are liable to pounce on our mess, knock right and left and take the very clothing off our backs. No one is safe from them. It is hoped that the more peaceable sort will rise in their might and put them down. Our misery is certainly complete without this trouble added to it. We should die in peace anyway. Battese has called his Indian friends all together, and probably a hundred of us are banded together for self protection. The animal predominates.

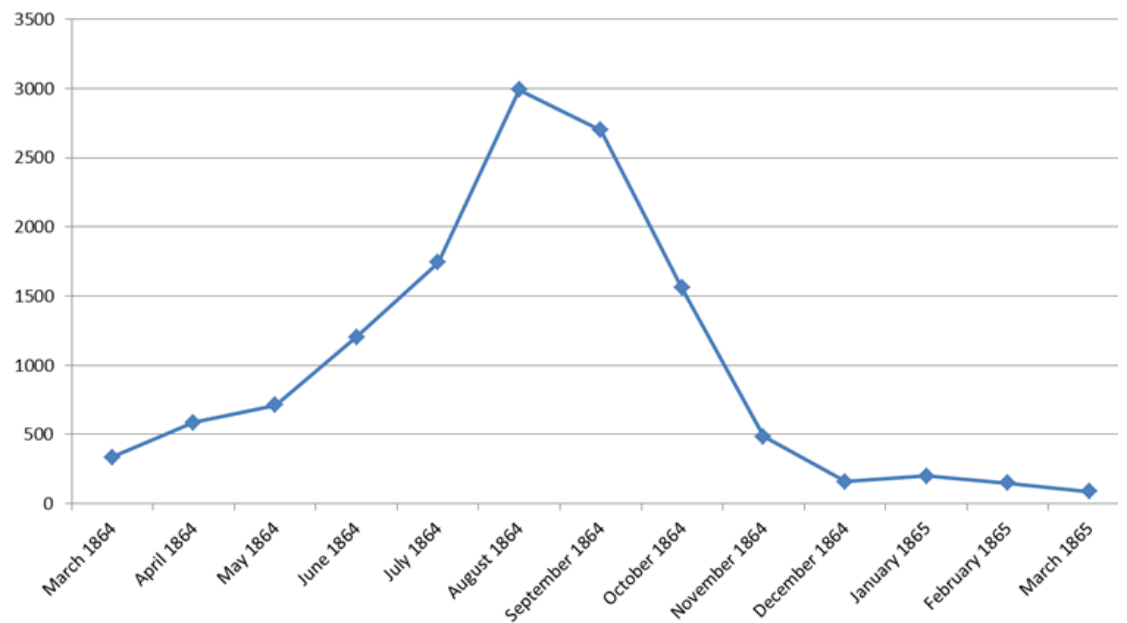
## Document H

Source: Andersonville National Historic Site

**Number of Prisoners**



**Number of Deaths**



Source: Plan of the Stockade and Surroundings at Andersonville, by J. Wells, found in "A Yankee in Andersonville," *Century Magazine*.

