



UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

from the archives of Museums on the Green

Boys Who Wore the Blue

by *Warren Chadwick (1833-1890)*

It was on the fourth of August,
Eighteen Hundred Sixty-two
When I joined the Union Army
And donned a suit of blue.

I left my friends and pleasant home,
For to save my nation's life.
I bid my neighbors all farewell
To engage in mortal strife.

I with others crossed the river,
Over into old Kentuck
With glistening arms and banners
For to try my war like pluck.

I was captured September eighth
Eighteen Hundred Sixty three
A place called Limestone Station
In the State of Tennessee.

There was about three hundred taken
Of us boys who wore the blue,
While fighting for the stars and stripes.
We were loyal, brave, and true.

We was in the fight from early morn
Until four o'clock that day
By the rebs were then surrounded
And to prison marched away.



George W. Swift
38th Massachusetts, Company H

Stowed in box cars for Richmond
With rebel guards at every door
We got nothing more to eat then
For thirty-five hours or more.

We was kept in Libby prison
Through all of one night and day
The rebs, they searched us every one
And took all our things away.

Our blankets now being taken
And our money being gone
We were transferred to Belle Island
Down hearted and forlorn.

Yes, in that Pandemonium
On an Island name of Bell
In the council hall of demons
Yes, in the powers of Hell.



L - *Walter Nye, 38th Mass., Co. H*
R - *Andrew Shiverick, 28th Wisconsin, Co. I*

There ten thousand men was huddled
Moving about so gaunt and lean
And all starving to death by inches
Such a sight not often seen.

Comrades, starving, dying, dying,
By numbers, both day and night,
While breathing skeletons move around
Each other to affright.

You ask what did we have to eat
In Belle Island prison pen,
One pail of bony beef a day
To a squad [of] one hundred men.

The bread that they furnished us
Was made of ground corn cob meal
So hard and indigestible
Would cause farmers' hogs to squeal.

All the incidents that happened
In that awful prison hell

I've no language that can picture
I've no words wherewith to tell.

Jeff Davis says it is a lie
That our men were treated so
He must be very ignorant
Or he does not wish to know.

May Jeff Davis float in open boat
A thousand miles from shore,
And there eat bugs all of his life
And that for ever more.

The rebel war has long been over
Twenty years and more has gone by
Yet in thought I keep my comrades
Who on Belle Island lie.

I trust the people yet to come
Will ever our memory cherish
And not forget our soldiers brave
Who for their country perish.

And may they never suffer
As we Union soldiers did
By starvation in prison pen
May loving heaven forbid.

Kind friends should you read these lines
Long after I'm in my grave
Please give to me a passing thought
Who suffered thus your homes to save.

Editor's Note: Warren L. Chadwick was born in Falmouth in 1833 and grew up on a farm near Coonamessett Pond. By 1855, he was a resident of Ohio. He served in the 100th Ohio infantry, Company A, and was taken prisoner in 1863. Warren died in Toledo, Ohio, in 1890, after a three-year illness with "brain congestion." He was 57. There is no picture of him in our archives.