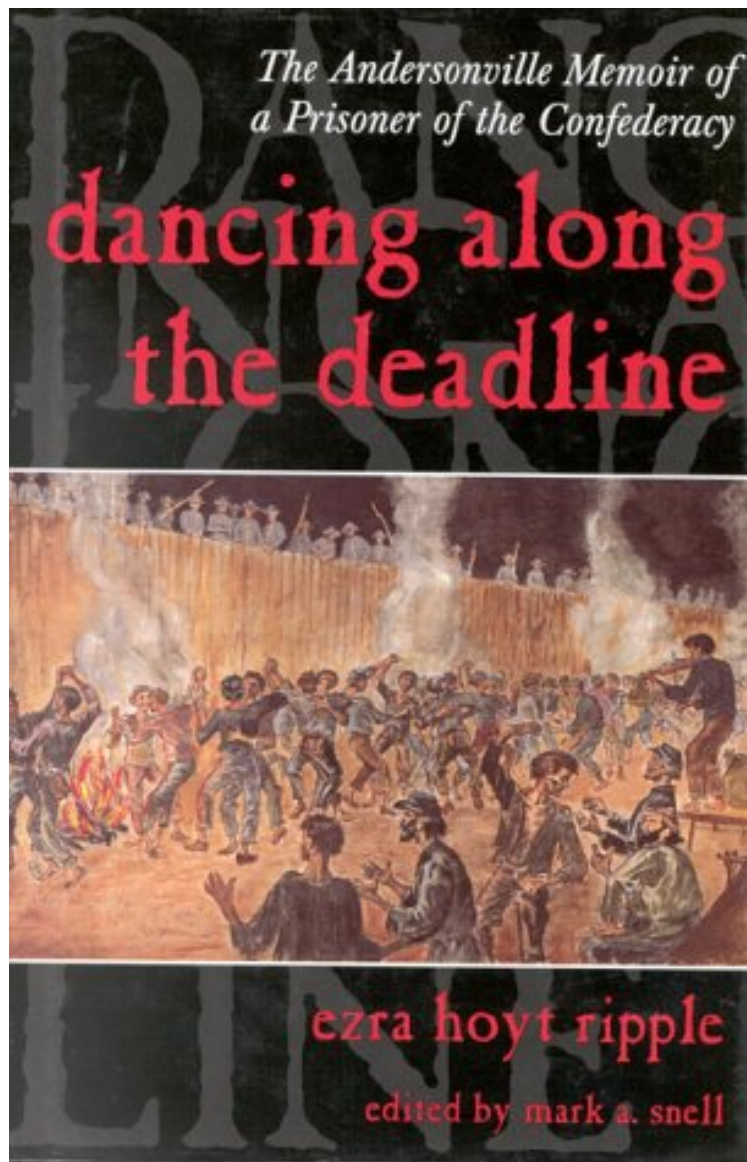


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Dancing Along the Deadline: The Andersonville Memoir of a Prisoner of the Confederacy

Ezra Hoyt Ripple

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Ezra Hoyt Ripple : Dancing Along the Deadline: The Andersonville Memoir of a Prisoner of the Confederacy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dancing Along the Deadline: The Andersonville Memoir of a Prisoner of the Confederacy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. For CharlesBy CathyExcellent book. Bought for hubby who is an Civil War re-enactor who has ancestors in the war. Charles Bush was captured and imprisoned in Andersonville then transferred to Florence, SC where he died outside the gates and was interred in the railroad cut. This book provides a focus on Florence and gave insight not found elsewhere.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. HistoryBy RRRichardsonThis is an amazing book and anyone who is interested in American history and specifically that of the Civil War period will enjoy the book.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Life and Death Inside Confederate PrisonsBy mirasreviewsEzra Hoyt Ripple served the Union as a private in the 52nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment during the Civil War. He spent 9 months in Andersonville and Florence prisons as a prisoner of war. "Dancing Along the Deadline" is his detailed account of his experience in these infamous prisons, written originally for his family, then published during his lifetime. Mr. Ripple commissioned Civil War veteran and war correspondent James E. Taylor to illustrate his memoirs with drawings that depict scenes that he describes. This edition of "Dancing Along the Deadline" contains 55 of Mr. Taylor's black and white drawings, captioned by the author. Ezra Ripple worked closely with James Taylor on these excellent drawings to ensure their accuracy, and they help the reader immensely in forming a mental picture of what the prisons and their residents actually looked like.In "Dancing Along the Deadline", Ezra Ripple paints a detailed picture of the conditions which captured Union soldiers endured inside Confederate prisons. As starvation was the greatest hardship, Ripple writes a lot about how the prisoners acquired food and how they made the most of it. He describes the physical layout of the prisons, the prisoners' routines, the prison guards and administrators, and his interaction with them. Although Andersonville was the Confederacy's largest and most infamous prison -and Ripple attests to its ruthless commandant- Florence prison actually had a higher death rate, in spite of its more sympathetic administration. And Ripple might have died there if not for his skills as a fiddler. He and several other prisoners formed a string band which performed for the officers and at local social gatherings. Ripple's memoirs are characterized by his general lack of malice toward his jailers. He was a religious man and a staunch patriot, so those are the eyes through which we see his world. He doesn't lump the Confederates who imprisoned him and his comrades into one "enemy" group. He criticizes the behavior of some, praises the character of others, and places the ultimate blame for the dreadful conditions in Confederate prisons on Brigadier General John H. Winder, who was in command of the prisons and whose goal seemed to be to bring all of the prisoners to their deaths. Although Ripple describes a lot of horror within the walls of Andersonville and Florence prisons, he claims to have omitted some "horrible details" of which "common decency" forbids mention. Reading his memoirs, I think we can guess what some of those "details" might have been."Dancing Along the Deadline" is required reading for anyone interested in the Civil War. And it's an interesting account of how people endure the unendurable and then how one man looked back on it. The "deadline" of the title is the line running around the outskirts of the prisons which any prisoner would be shot for crossing.

A first-hand account of the ordeal of prisoners at the notorious Civil War prison camp.

From School Library JournalYA. A readable account by a young Union soldier who was captured in July 1864, during the unsuccessful Northern assault on Fort Johnson, which protected Charleston, SC. These moving memoirs recall Private Ezra Ripple's incarceration at Camp Sumter, the horrible Confederate prison at Andersonville, and later at Florence, SC. This courageous young soldier was appalled by the filth, paucity of food and water, and the crowded, inhumane conditions that prevailed in these institutions. Ripple's skill in playing the fiddle provided a morale boost for his fellow inmates and even motivated some of the healthier men to dance and exercise in time with the music. Since these memoirs were written several decades after the war ended, Ripple's observations were somewhat softened by the passage of time. This slim volume is an excellent primary source for students interested in the Civil War. The author commissioned Taylor, an artist and Civil War veteran, to illustrate his story with sketches. Chapter notes and a list of illustrations provide adequate documentation.?Peggy Mooney, Pohick Public Library, Burke, VACopyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.