

John Dana Civil War Diary

Lot 352 is a leather bound journal/diary, hand-written by John Dana, a Union soldier from Maine. The journal contains essentially three sections of interest. The first section describes the events between 11/3/-11/20/1864, during which he and a companion named Mattocks escaped from a Confederate POW camp in Texas.

The diary entries provide a very interesting account of the perils and hardships they encountered as they eventually made their way over the Blue Ridge Mountains on their way to Union lines and safety. Numerous and colorful incidents are described concerning river crossings, avoidance of Confederate picket lines, and the effects of cold, wet weather as they traveled mostly at night and through the woods, getting lost several times.

Along the way, there are a number of chance encounters with Negro families and individuals, who assist them with food, shelter, and directions.

A second section of the journal concerns primarily post-CW events between 4/4/-8/30/1865. These entries include reactions to historic events such as Lee's surrender, the assassination of President Lincoln, and the capture of Jeff Davis. Also described are actions taken against several deserters who had turned themselves in under the "President's Proclamation".

These interesting entries also describe recreational pastimes such as horse racing in camp, touring Washington, D.C., including the Smithsonian, and becoming re-acquainted with ex-POW companions.

Further entries discuss his train ride from Washington home to Maine and the welcoming speech given by Mr. Blaine (Congressman). Mr. Dana talks of his re-union with friends many of whom are named.

The third section of the journal consists of his personal expense account entries from 1865 through 1867.