ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Developmental History of Civil War Prisons in Indiana and Illinois.

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Many Civil War properties still exist, though only one prison camp from the western theater is still interpreted and little in the way of research has been conducted on the built environment of these sites throughout the North and the South. Therefore, addressing how the Civil War Prison Camps in Illinois (Camp Butler, Camp Douglas, Rock Island, and Alton Penitentiary) and Indiana (Camp Morton) developed throughout their use by the United State War Department is essential for those studying about Civil War-era prisoner of war camps. Currently, this topic is hidden in published documents regarding the entire site and other stories that may involve the camp. There are only remnants of the built environment that still remain on the original sites such as the small cell wall from the Alton Military Prison in Alton, Illinois. It is interesting to note how the camp developed structurally, through the materials and labor used. This project has the ability to become significant to historians who question why these sites were dismantled shortly after the war’s end and why very few of the structures that were built during this time period remained after the end of the war, especially when dealing with certain construction materials and their lifespan in the open environment. This thesis therefore examines how the prison developed throughout the war, the use of buildings in the area, the local labor provided by the prisoners, and whether there was a standard design for these camps.