The Union Prison at Fort Delaware: A Perfect Hell on Earth by Brian Temple

Located on Pea Patch Island at the entrance to the Delaware River, Fort Delaware was built to protect Wilmington and Philadelphia in case of an attack by sea. When the Civil War broke out, Fort Delaware's purpose changed dramatically - it became a prisoner of war camp. By the fall of 1863, about 12,000 soldiers, officers, and political prisoners were being held in an area designed to hold only 4,000 - and known as the Andersonville of the North, a place where terrible sickness and deprivation were a way of life despite the commanding generals' efforts to keep the prison clean and the prisoners fed. Many books have been written about the Confederacy's Andersonville and its terrible conditions, but comparatively little has been written about its counterparts in the North. The conditions at Fort Delaware are fully explored, contemplating what life was like for prisoners and guards alike.

My Personal Review:
The Union Prison at Fort Delaware: A Perfect Hell on Earth by Brian Temple is one of those books that should be required reading. Author Temple, obviously a history scholar, relates tales and information about the prisoners at Fort Delaware in a genuinely interesting manner. For those of us who have the former prison at Fort Delaware in literally our own backyard, we all can fathom what it was like to be there, but for those halfway across the country, or world, this book is a damn good substitute.

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