

Nov. 13th found me still on the sick list, though improving rapidly. Some of the boys were at work under the floor. The doctor came in again and left some more medicine, which went into the stove to keep company with yesterday's stuff. It cured me and soon I went down to work again and found Bennett, Sheldon and Magee had done well. This day we completed the journey through the first wall.

On the 14th of November we began digging the ditch from the cell wall to the outer wall of the main building, which was a distance of twenty feet. The first eighteen inches of this was loose dirt, made so by filling the trenches of the foundation walls. We supposed that the digging of the ditch would be an easy job, judging from the first foot and a half. But we soon discovered our mistake, for after getting through the stratum of loose dirt we came to a hard, tough clay, which did not yield very readily to our knives. I procured an additional knife, made by a convict out of an old razor blade; it proved to be the best tool for digging that we had been able to secure. I sharpened the end of it on a brick, and thus formed a kind of chisel of it. Captain Taylor managed to get a shovel from a convict who was wheeling in coal, but we could only use the shovel in the loose dirt after we had digged it out with our knives. The ground was too hard and the ditch or hole too small to use it as a spade.

After we had gone some four or five feet into the ditch Captain Taylor brought us a box eight by ten inches square and eight inches deep. It had been sent filled with provisions to some of the boys. In the box we bored a hole with our pocket knives, tied a rope to it, made of a piece of bed ticking, and with the stick used to prop our beds we would push the box back into the ditch, where it would be filled by the man who was at work. When full it would be hauled out and emptied into the air chamber.

On the 17th of November Captain Bennett was reported as not being able to work, on account of having blistered his hands; that left Sheldon, Magee and myself to complete the work, though Bennett sat at the mouth of the hole and drew out the dirt and emptied it. We were just seven days in cutting this ditch which was in size eighteen inches wide three feet high and twelve feet long. One day while engaged in this work I came near being caught. I had traded one of the convicts out of a prison cap which was