

## YHBA NOVEL RESOURCE #4

Submitted by Nancy Dawson  
Ben Davis Ninth Grade Center

*Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

By  
Mary Blair Immel

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mary Blair Immel has been writing and illustrating stories practically her whole life. She wrote her first story at age 5, and two years later it was published in *Wee Wisdom*, a children's magazine.

She has also won awards for her storytelling. Dressing in costume and performing *Mother Goose* stories is a favorite activity of hers.

Ms. Immel is a retired school teacher with a Masters Degree in U.S. History. While she was researching another book, she discovered a petition regarding the fate of a fourteen year-old boy who was a prisoner of war in Indianapolis. The more she investigated, the more intrigued she became.

Her research took her from Indiana to Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. She spent five years trying to solve the mystery of Johnny Ables.

Some of her published books are:

*Beneath these Stones*

*Taste of Manna*

*No Longer Sings the Brown Thrust*

*River if Wind*

*Call up the Thunder*

*Two Way Street*

*Key to Many Doors*

Mary Blair Immel's address is 603 Fourth Street, Covington, IN 47932. There is no email address listed.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**Theme:** Civil War, Prisoner of War Camps, Friendship

The Civil War completely disrupts the life of Johnny Ables, even though he is not a willing participant. Good people who were neutral and just trying to survive from day to day were caught up in a terrible situation.

Camp Morton in Indianapolis was a Union Prisoner of War camp that housed thousand of Confederate soldiers during the war. The conditions of the camp depended on the commandant.

The affection and friendship between the youngest boys, and the protection of the older soldiers creates a life-saving petition for Johnny.

Reading Level: 4.0

Interest Level: 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades

Setting: Time period 1862

Places: Calloway County, Kentucky; Fort Donelson, Tennessee; Indianapolis, Indiana

Point of View: Third-person Limited with Johnny Ables as the main focus

If you liked *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*, you'll love *My Brother's Keeper: Virginia Civil War Diary* by Mary Pope Osborne; *Freedom's Wings: Corey's Underground Railroad Diary* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth; *Growing Up in the Civil War 1861 – 1865* Duane Damon; and *Shadows on My Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia* by Lucy Rebecca Buck.

## ANNOTATION

### *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

Mary Blair Immel has researched a real-life mystery through several states over a five-year period to determine the fate of Johnny Ables.

Johnny Ables was only fourteen years old in 1862, but he was the man of his family, which consisted of his widowed mother and two younger sisters. One day he took their wagon and team of horses to cut firewood for the winter. He crossed the border between Kentucky and Tennessee into a forest. While working he was captured by a band of Confederate soldiers and taken to Fort Donelson, Tennessee, where they could use his wagon and horses. When Johnny thought nothing could be worse, he was involved in a major battle and captured by Union soldiers. He and the 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi regiment were transported to Indianapolis, Indiana, and put in Camp Morton, a Union prisoner of war camp.

Ms. Immel captures the fear, desolation, and homesickness of Johnny. She vividly describes the squalid conditions of the camp. Authentic pictures help readers make the settings come alive. More action scenes during the battle would make this book more interesting to the intended audience.

The open ending is frustrating, but often the case in the results of war. Ms. Immel's book is a good introduction to the Civil War for younger readers.

## BOOKTALK

### *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

What could be worse than being captured by Confederate soldiers? Perhaps also being captured by Union soldiers.

Johnny Ables took the horses and wagon early on a February morning in 1862. Leaving southern Kentucky, he crossed the boundary into Tennessee. He was going to cut firewood for his family, which consisted of his widowed mother and two younger sisters. He could not possibly imagine the frightening adventure that awaited him.

Johnny was captured by a band of Confederate soldiers, engaged in a battle at Fort Donelson, and eventually captured by Union soldiers. The 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment, his original captors, and Johnny were crowded onto steamboats and trains for transport to Indianapolis, Indiana, where they were imprisoned at Camp Monroe, now known as Fort Benjamin Harrison.

This is the story of a real boy. What happened to him? What happened to his family? Read about the connections to Indianapolis in this story.

Remember this story when you think **you** are having a bad day.

## CHARACTERS

### *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

Johnny Ables – Johnny is a fourteen year-old boy who lives in southern Kentucky with his widowed mother and two younger sisters. While gathering wood in northern Tennessee, he is captured by confederate soldiers and engulfed in an adventure that will change his life.

Johnny Roche – Johnny Roche is only a year older than Johnny Ables. He lied about his age to join the Confederate army. He is proud to be in the 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi regiment and is optimistic about the outcome of the war. The two Johnnys become good friends.

Richard Owen – Colonel Owen is the first commandant of Camp Morton. He is the son of Robert Owen, the founder of New Harmony, Indiana. The colonel is a kind, compassionate man who is overworked and barely able to keep up with his daily duties. He plays an important role in Johnny Ables's life.

4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment – Many of the captured men of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment try to protect Johnny Ables. The men write and sign a petition explaining Johnny's circumstances, and they ask Colonel Owen to release him.

## CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION

### *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

Both types of conflict are in this story. External conflict happens when Johnny Ables was forced to go with the Confederate soldiers to meet the rest of their regiment. The bad weather also was a problem for Johnny. The overcrowding on the steamboat and train on the journey to Indianapolis affected Johnny physically. The conditions at Camp Morton were less than adequate.

Internal conflict torments Johnny. He is extremely frightened, not only for himself, but for his mother and sisters. He is afraid of being injured or killed in battle, he is homesick, and he cannot figure out why he is caught in the middle of a war in which he had remained neutral.

### READ ALOUD PASSAGES

Johnny has crossed into Tennessee to cut wood.

Chapter 1, pages 7, 8

“He took off Pa’s coat and tossed it up onto the wagon seat.” . . . “All he could do was follow along behind his horses and wagon while these strange men led the way.”

Johnny tries to get used to being a prisoner at Camp Morton.

Chapter 9, pages 75, 76

“As days passed, life in prison camp began to seem like a strange dream to Johnny.” . . . “This was not a horrible nightmare from which he would awaken.”

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### 1. Geography

#### 6<sup>th</sup> grade assignment

- Assignment – Students will draw Johnny Ables’s route from Calloway County, Kentucky, to Fort Donelson, Tennessee, to Indianapolis, Indiana. Students will develop a legend designating modes of transportation as given in the book *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*.
- Students may work with one partner or alone.
- Materials – Blank map of Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee  
Colored pencils  
Copy of *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*  
Rubric for grading

### SOCIAL STUDIES

- Indiana Standard Geography 6.3.1 - Explain the components of most maps (title, scale, legend, grid, and projection) Grade 6

Indiana Standard Geography 3.3.1 - Distinguish between physical and political features on maps and globes and label a map of North America identifying countries, oceans, major rivers, the Great Lakes, and mountain ranges. Locate the United States, Indiana, and the local community. Grade 3.

Indiana Standard Geography 4.3.4 - Locate Indian on a map of the United States; indicate the state capital, major cities, and rivers in Indiana; and be able to place these on a blank map of the state. Grade 4

Indiana Standard Geography 5.3.2 - Name and locate states, major cities, major regions, major rivers, and mountain ranges in the United States. Grade 5

- Resources – Map from [www.googleearth.com](http://www.googleearth.com) Appropriate cities have been added. Students will be required to create a legend to identify modes of transportation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

On the attached map, please follow the route that Johnny Ables took on his unexpected adventure from the time he left Calloway County, Kentucky, to when he started his journey home.

Make a legend that will indicate the different types of transportation that Johnny used.

You may work alone or with one partner.

This assignment is due \_\_\_\_\_.

Use your copy of the book *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*. Use the map that is attached. You may use colored pencils in the classroom or work on this at home.

Attach this paper with your map when you turn in this assignment.

The rubric below is where I will grade your work. Good Luck!!

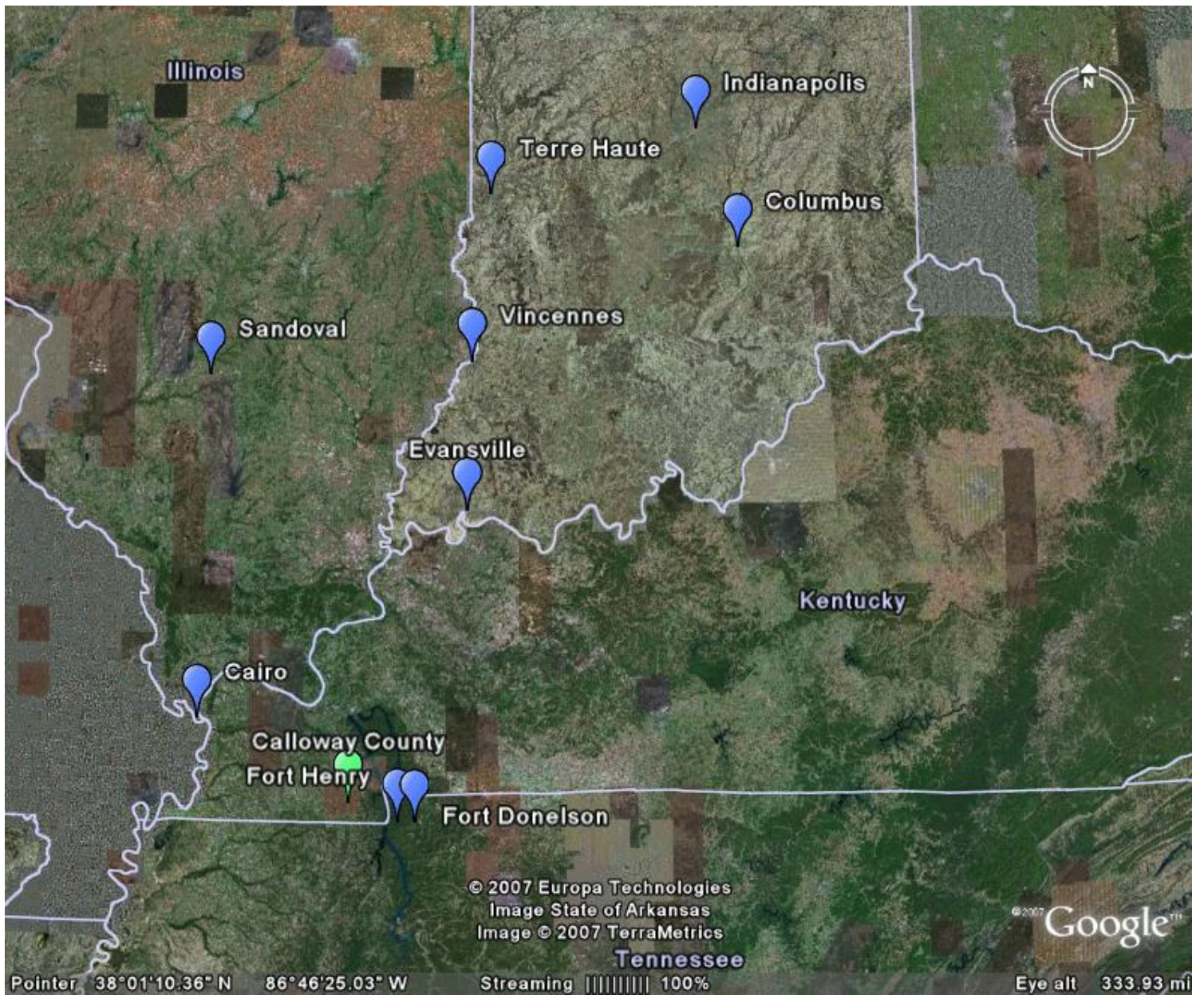
**RUBRIC:**

Legend - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
20 pts.

Effort - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
10 pts.

Neatness - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
5 pts.

TOTAL - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
35 pts.



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### #2 MATH 6<sup>th</sup> grade

- Calculate the distance Johnny Ables traveled during his adventure from Calloway County, Kentucky, to Fort Donelson, Tennessee, to Indianapolis, Indiana, and home again.
- You may use the map from the previous assignment, your copy of the book *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*, and maps and atlases that are in the classroom. **Remember:** In 1862, super highways did not exist. Most of the travel in the forests would have been cross country
- You may work individually or in a group of no more than 4 people.
- Show all your work and write a brief explanation of how you or your group arrived at your solution. Be neat and legible.
- This assignment is due \_\_\_\_\_. You will have 45 minutes on two class periods to work on this project. The assignment will be due the day after your second work day.
- Return this paper with your completed assignment.

#### RUBRIC:

Calculation - - - - -	_____
	20 pts.
Work shown - - - - -	_____
	10 pts.
Written explanation - - - - -	_____
	10 pts.

## MATHEMATICS

- Indiana Standards - 3.2.1 Add and Subtract whole numbers up to 1,000 with or without regrouping using relevant properties of the number system. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards - 3.5.1 Measure line segments. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards – 4.1.1 Read and write whole numbers up to 1,000,000. 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards - 4.2.1 Understand and use standard algorithms for addition and subtraction. 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards – 4.7.2 Decide when and how to break a problem into smaller parts 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards - 4.7.4 Use a variety of methods such as words, numbers, charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, tools, and models to solve problems, justify arguments, and make conjectures. 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards – 5.7.2 Decide when and how to break a problem into simpler parts. 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards – 5.7.3 Apply strategies and results from simpler problems to solve more complex problems. 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
  
Indiana Standards – 6.7.1 Analyze problems by identifying relationships, telling relevant from irrelevant information, identifying missing information, sequencing and prioritizing information and observing patterns 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards – 6.7.3 Decide when and how to break a problem into simpler parts. 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
Indiana Standards – 6.7.4 Apply strategies and results from simpler problems to solve more complex problems.
- Resources – Map from geography assignment, atlases, state maps of Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois; assignment sheet with rubrics, rulers, pencils, calculators.

**BOOK ACTIVITIES**  
**LANGAGE ARTS #1**

- Write one more chapter to this book. Tell what **you** think happened to Johnny Ables. Do you think he got back to Calloway County, Kentucky? Did he find his family? If so, describe their reunion. Had his family moved? How did he search for them? If he didn't make it home, what do you think he did? Use your imagination!
- Your chapter should be at least two pages handwritten **OR one full page** typed. Your handwriting must be legible and in black ink. Read over the glossary and use words that would fit in the time frame. Use some dialogue.
- Each student is responsible for his/her own work. No partners.
- Materials: You are welcome to refer back to your copy of *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*.
- You should turn in a rough draft. You will be given two class periods of one hour each to work on this project. The due date is \_\_\_\_\_ . Return this paper with your final draft.

RUBRIC:

Length - - - - -	_____
	20 pts.
Content - - - - -	_____
	20 pts.
Vocabulary - - - - -	_____
	10 pts.
Neatness - - - - -	_____
	3 pts.
Black ink or typed - - - - -	_____
	2 pts.
TOTAL - - - - -	_____
	55 pts.

## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

Indiana Standards 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Writing 3.5.3; 3.5.7

Indiana Standards 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing 4.5.1; 4.5.2

Indiana Standards 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing 5.5.1; 5.5.2

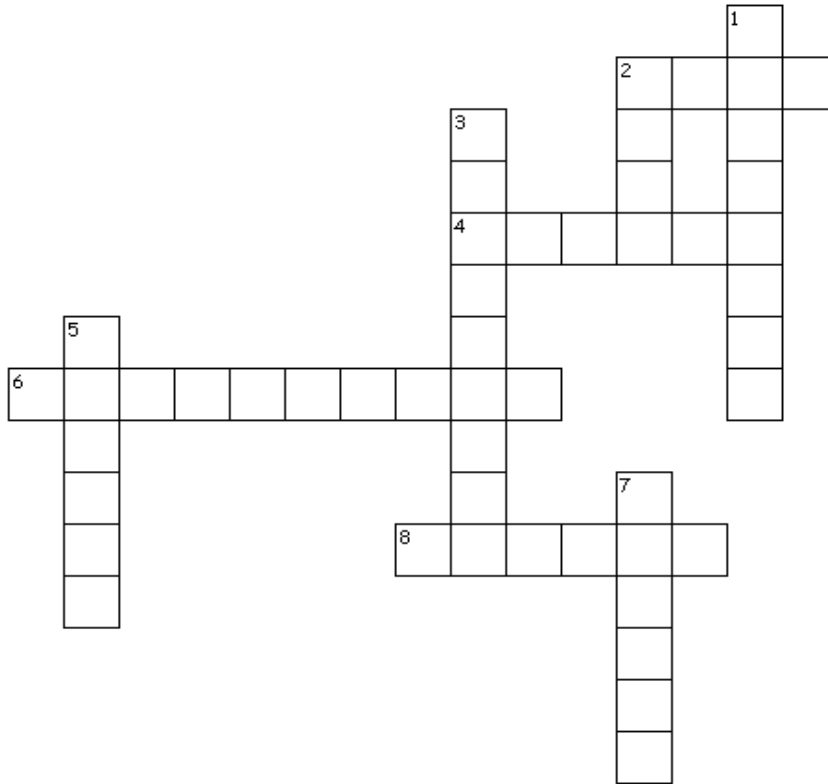
Indiana Standards 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing 6.5.1; 6.5.4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use your vocabulary list to complete the puzzle.

**BOOK ACTIVITIES**  
**CROSSWORD**  
**PUZZLE #2**



Across

- 2. small, weak
- 4. confederate soldiers
- 6. gauntlet
- 8. union soldier

Down

- 1. backpack
- 2. cornbread
- 3. mouth organ
- 5. rifle
- 7. barely enough

## KEY TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### Across

2. puny
4. rebels
6. punishment
8. yankee

### Down

1. knapsack
2. pone
3. harmonica
5. musket
7. meager

Indiana Standards 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Reading Word Recognition 3.1.1  
Reading Vocabulary 3.1.4; 3.1.6  
Indiana Standards 4<sup>th</sup> grade Reading Word Recognition 4.1.1  
Indiana Standards 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading Word Recognition 5.1.6  
Indiana Standards 6<sup>th</sup> grade Reading Word Recognition 6.1.4

## VOCABULARY LIST

1. **pone (cornpone)** – baked or fried bread made of corn meal pg. 2
2. **musket** – a gun with a smooth bore inside the barrel. It is not as effective as a rifle. Pg. 9
3. **Confederate soldiers** – soldiers who fought for the South during the Civil War. Sometimes called Rebels. Pg. 9
4. **Fort Henry** – Confederate fort in Tennessee near the border of Kentucky. Pg. 11
5. **Yankee** – a soldier who fought for the Union during the Civil War. Pg. 11
6. **Fort Donelson** – Confederate fort in Tennessee. It was the site a major battle in the Civil War. Pg. 11
7. **meager** – barely enough; not very much. Pg. 16
8. **mouth organ** – like a harmonica; a musical instrument played by blowing into it. Pg. 18
9. **knapsack** – a bag strapped on the back used for carrying supplies. Pg. 23
10. **minie balls** – a rifle bullet with a cone-shape head. First used in the Civil War. Pg. 25
11. **haversack** – a canvas pouch used by soldiers for carrying food. Pg. 32
12. **oath of allegiance** – a solemn vow of loyalty. Pg. 50
13. **puny** – small or slight in size, weak Pg. 54

14. **gauntlet** – a form of punishment in which a person or persons have to run between lines of people who hit at them with sticks; used to describe a difficult experience. Pg. 65
15. **secesh** – a nickname that some Northerners called people from the Confederate states because they had seceded from the United States. Pg. 66
16. **sutlers** – a merchant who followed armies and sold supplies to soldiers. Pg. 106

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

#### **Pre-reading**

1. List and be ready to discuss three causes of the Civil War.
2. Who were Confederate soldiers? Who were Union soldiers?
3. What was a POW camp?

#### **During reading**

1. Why was it necessary for a fourteen year-old boy to travel a distance to cut wood? Chapter 1, page 1
2. Why would Johnny go into another state to gather wood? Chapter 1, page 4
3. What happened to the Confederate soldiers at Fort Henry? Chapter 2, page 11
4. Give **two** reasons that Johnny didn't try to escape. Chapter 2, page 18
5. Describe the camp at Fort Donelson. Chapter 3, page 22
6. What childhood disease did many soldiers have? Chapter 3, page 25
7. Why was Johnny Roche eager to fight again? Chapter 4, page 29
8. What was Johnny Ables main concern during his first few days of captivity? Chapter 4, page 36
9. Where did Johnny and the men go for safety during the attack? Describe them. Chapter 5, page 37
10. What happened to Ben, Jackie and the wagon? Chapter 5, page 42

11. What was the true outcome of the Confederate “victory”? Chapter 6, page 48
12. What usually happened to captured soldiers? Chapter 6, page 50
13. Who decided NOT to do this at Fort Donelson? Why? Chapter 6, page 51
14. What news about their punishment did the Confederate soldiers receive? Chapter 7, page 54
15. What was their first type of transportation? Chapter 7, page 54
16. Describe the conditions. Chapter 7, pages 56-58
17. What was the final destination for the captured troops? Chapter 8, page 65
18. Describe “running the gauntlet”? Why was Johnny humiliated? Chapter 8, pages 65-66
19. How did the Union soldier write Johnny’s name? Chapter 8, page 74
20. Who was Richard Owen? Chapter 9, page 77
21. For whom was Camp Morton named? Chapter 9, page 77
22. Name two complaints the POWs had about Camp Morton. Chapter 9, page 82
23. What did Johnny’s friends do to try to get him released? Chapter 10, page 93
24. How many men signed the letter? Chapter 10, page 95
25. Name and describe THREE major problems at Camp Morton that confronted Colonel Owen. 11, pages 103-104
26. Who visited Johnny in his barracks? Why? Chapter 11, page 109

27. Colonel Owen wrote to whom concerning Johnny? Chapter 12, page 114
28. Name THREE items that Colonel Owen gave Johnny for his trip. Chapter 12, pages 117-119

**Post-reading**

1. Do you think Johnny got home? Why or Why not?
2. Give two examples of obstacles he may have faced on his trip.
3. Describe Johnny's possible reunion with his family.

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