

Sgt. Berry Benson
Co. H – 1st South Carolina Infantry

Enlisted September 7, 1861 at Hamburg, South Carolina

January 26, 1862 appointed 4th Corporal.

1st Corporal Benson, on May 7, 1863, is wounded in the leg during Chancellorsville campaign. June 2, 1863 he is shown in Howard's Grove Hospital in Richmond with leg wound. June and August, 1863 shown absent wounded.

December, 1863 detailed to AAG office at Brigade HQ as a 5th Sergeant.

May 17, 1864 captured during battle at Spotsylvania.

May 25, 1864 from Point Lookout Prison, *“the new guard . . . did not come to close the gates . . . it was now almost sundown. I put on my jacket and stockings and stuck my hat inside my shirt . . . I went to the middle gate and stood in it, waiting for it to grow dark enough . . . backing slowly . . . I went into deeper water. When it came to my chin I turned and began to wade up the bay. . . . I was a good way past the prison . . . I figured I had come two miles . . . Breathing the fresh cool free air of Maryland . . . I was a free man once more.”*

On June 5, 1864, Berry is recaptured in northern Virginia near Accotink by the Home Guard and sent to Old Capitol Prison in Washington. On July 23, 1864 he was transferred, by train, from Old Capitol to Elmira Prison in Elmira, New York.

October 7, 1864 he escaped from Elmira through a tunnel and worked his way south pretending to be a Gettysburg farmer. On October 29, 1864 Berry rejoined his company near Petersburg. When Blackwood, his brother, sees Berry the excitement begins, *“Blackwood started up, saw me, and made a rush. He pulled my head down and without a word began pounding me heavily on the back with his fist. He pounded so hard I was obliged to break loose . . . The first thing Blackwood wanted to know was when I had been exchanged. I said . . . that I had escaped. Then he grabbed me and fell to pounding again.”*

Paroled at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, with the rank of 1st Sergeant, Berry and Blackwood walked home to Augusta. After the war Berry taught school and was a public accountant in Augusta, Georgia. He Married Jeanie Oliver on February 6, 1868 and they had 2 sons and 4 daughters. Berry died January 1, 1923 five weeks shy of being 90 years of age.

(Compiled Service Records – Confederate: Micro Copy 267, Roll 126 – United Daughters of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia & selected quotes by date from *No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion*, Jeff Toalson, editor, Lincoln, 2006.)