

# CONVICTS MAY BE PUT TO WORK ON BAY VIEW PARK

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Workhouse convicts may soon be seen at work on city property outside the workhouse, according to the indications appearing at the meeting of the board of public service this morning. Milton Taylor was appointed as a committee of one to arrange with Superintendent Fred Ritter to secure the voluntary consent of twenty-five of the convicts to work under guard at Bay View park in grubbing out the scrub oak with which the place

seems to be infested.

There are a number of convicts at the workhouse who could well be spared, and as there is no money in the park fund with which to employ other labor, it is believed that this action will solve temporarily a troublesome problem. If the plan is carried out the men will be taken down to the park in the morning under guard, with dinner furnished, and will be brought back at night.

Of course, attempts to escape will be severely dealt with.



TOLEDO, O., SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 6, 1903.

DA  
WITTI

intendent



SUPT RITTER, MRS. RITTER, MATRON, MISS LADENBERG, ASST. MATRON, L. M. CARY, SECY.



Condon SETTLING A DISPUTE

The editor said, "Get up an illustrated story about 'A day with the workhouse superintendent.'" I instinctively shuddered at the thought of being obliged to spend a day amid the surroundings of Toledo's workhouse, where the inmates are in most instances poverty stricken, and whose love for the demon drink had caused many of them to be placed in the institution.

There was good cause for dreading and disliking it, as I found after paying the institution a visit; and if it had not been for the cheery good nature and whole-souled hospitality of Superintendent Ritter, who aided me at every turn, I would have been unable to spend the entire day on the island.

The first fact that impresses a stranger is that the present workhouse is entirely too small for a city the size of Toledo. With its present quota of about 115 inmates it can not care for any more, and it must be a question of only a short time when new and more commodious quarters must be sought. The city pays a yearly rental of about \$400 to the state for the privilege of occupying state property. In ten years this rental would be quite a nucleus for the starting of a new institution.

Another strange thing is that not many people of Toledo know where the workhouse is, and of those who know its location, but few know how to get to it. Many go down the west bank of the canal. They are thus opposite the place and can not get across except by swimming.

The first daily duty of the superintendent of the workhouse is the morning consultation, which Superintendent Ritter has with his assistant superintendent, J. M. Cary; the matron, Mrs. Ritter, and the assistant matron, Mrs. Ladenberg. The accompanying photograph shows the four executive heads of the institution in consultation. At this time all matters pertaining to the government and control of the prisoners, especially the women prisoners, is considered. Reports are made and conditions given as discovered each day, plans laid for the betterment of all things that need it.

Of course, urgent conditions that arise are met by the superintendent and matron as soon as they are discovered, but at this morning session improvements of quarters and the management of the inmates are discussed.

The next duty of the superintendent the day I was there was to pay a visit to the brick kiln, where the work of the guards and prisoners was inspected. The superintendent saw personally that all details, such as cleaning up the yard around the kilns, putting away the tools, etc., etc., were cared for.

Nearly all the inmates greet the superintendent with a glad word and an inquiry as to his condition, and that of the matron.

Within ten minutes after Superintendent Ritter started to inspect the condition of the yard, a discussion among the prisoners was noticed in one end of the yard. The reporter fearing a mutiny was about to break out, or possibly the prisoners objected to the presence of a

camera, was preparing for a rapid move in the direction of the office, when suddenly one of the inmates stepped forward and doffing his cap, said to the superintendent: "Mr. Ritter, us fellers and them two guards had a little trouble this morning, and we thought we would tell you about it, as we know that our complaints are always listened to. Can we have the right to tell you about it?" "Of course, boys," said Superintendent Ritter, "let us hear your story."

Guards and prisoners crowded around the superintendent, utterly ignoring the presence of the reporter. While they were engaged in relating what seemed to the reporter to be a trifling matter concerning a dispute between the prisoners and guards, the camera caught this mixed crowd.

In a few minutes the squabble seemed to be straightened out, according to the satisfied look on both the guards' and prisoners' faces. The superintendent evidently had settled it to the satisfaction of all concerned.

When asked what the conference was about, Superintendent Ritter said: "It was only a difference of opinion between the members of my family, a misunderstanding, and when both sides were given the straight of the affair, everything was settled."

The work of the teamsters was the next thing that claimed the superintendent's attention. The big, handsome horses are kept in fine condition by the prisoners, who are detailed as teamsters. But the luckless attendant who shirks his

work, and whose animal is not in the best of condition, will receive a reprimand from the superintendent as not a single point of the animal escapes the eye of Superintendent Ritter. The cleanliness of the stable, and everything pertaining to the barn is carefully looked after, the teamsters are required to bring out the horses so they can be inspected in the open air, and not in a dark stall. When the animals were brought outside the accompanying photograph was secured, but only under protest of Mr. Ritter, who said the fact that he examined the workhouse horses was of no interest to the public, and only a minor detail of his duties. However, the photograph was taken while the superintendent was good-naturedly protesting.

About 4:30 o'clock the supper bell began to ring, and the prisoners to the number of about 25, arrived from Bay View park on a street car. The male prisoners were sent to the toilet rooms to prepare for the evening meal.

As they were lined up after leaving the car before being taken into the dining room, Superintendent Ritter walked along the line inquiring as to the condition of the men and joking with them.

Of course, it is impossible, according to the present city ordinances to compel prisoners to work outside the workhouse, but each morning volunteers are called for and those who respond get their time lessened by one day in every ten and also one quarter of a day in addition taken off their time. There may be an ordinance passed soon that will allow the workhouse board to compel prisoners to work on city work.

When all the prisoners had been marched into the dining room a signal was given and all sat down to their supper, which consisted of savory beef stew, and bread and coffee.

"Here, get this man another plate of stew," said Superintendent Ritter to one of the guard waiters, as one of the prisoners had devoured his plateful and was

drumming on the table. This was only an instance of the solicitude taken in the prisoners by the superintendent.

"Aren't you afraid that some of the released prisoners will meet you down town after dark and do you bodily harm?" asked the reporter of the superintendent.

"Why, bless your soul, no," said Mr. Ritter. "I never go armed and only have a pen knife. My thoughts are the farthest from ever being attacked by prisoners. I have had men meet me on the street and shake hands with me, and inquire as to my welfare, whom I formerly had as boarders at the workhouse. I never punish a prisoner unless he gives me a good and sufficient cause, and then the punishment is given more as a humiliation of the man's feeling than as a chastisement. I never fear violence being done to me, as I have never done anything while I have been superintendent that would cause me to be solicitous about my own welfare."

The last Thanksgiving dinner was heartily enjoyed by the prisoners and was a source of delight to the superintendent. The menu consisted of roast chicken, mashed potatoes, brown gravy, pickles, celery, bread and coffee, and to quote Mr. Ritter's words, "There was nothing left after the dinner excepting chicken bones and celery tops."

Another very curious condition that is found among the prisoners is their insatiable appetite for onions, pepper sauce and other hot eatables.

Onions are eaten in the same manner as the average person eats apples and even after the food has been highly salted and peppered, the prisoners grab the pepper and salt shakers and still further deluge their food.

Just why this appetite is present is difficult to state. Some claim it is due to the fact that as nearly all of the prisoners have been drunkards and have been accustomed to squirrel whisky, the hot foods are the nearest approach to the "real thing."



THE MORNING INSPECTION OF HORSES.





THE MORNING INSPECTION OF HORSES.



# CITY TREATS ITS HORSES BETTER THAN PRISONERS

**Workhouse Inmates Are Denied Exercise During Winter Months.**

**PLEAD PITEOUSLY FOR A LITTLE SUNSHINE**

**No Money to Provide Guards Enough to Watch the Inmates While Given Exercise.**

"For God's sake, give us work. Take us out of these holes and give us something to do."

That is the constant plea of scores of men crowded into the narrow cells at the workhouse.

All they want is a chance to get out of the foul smelling prison, a chance to breathe the fresh air, a chance to draw the impurities out of the lungs, weakened by the unsanitary conditions that exist.

And they are willing to work at anything, no matter how hard the labor. Willing to labor in the low, cramped yard, until bones ache from the toll.

**EVEN ANIMALS ARE TURNED LOOSE IN PASTURE LOTS TO EXERCISE. BUT THESE UNFORTUNATE HUMAN BEINGS ARE RATED LOWER THAN THE ANIMALS.**

But the city denies them the right to a bit of sunshine and light and air. THE CITY HASN'T MONEY ENOUGH TO EMPLOY SUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF GUARDS TO EXERCISE HUMANITY.

**How Court Order Is Violated.**

This policy makes the workhouse officials violate the very order of the court in sentencing these men.

The commitment reads: "No part of this sentence shall be solitary confinement."

But they are confined in cells all day and night.

"These things make men criminals," said John Doelker, commenting on the confinement of the prisoners.

"They don't go out of here punished for their crime. THEY GO OUT WITH A SPIRIT OF REVENGE IN THEIR HEARTS."

"Day after day they beg to be put to work. If we had a modern workhouse we could find work for these men 10 months in the year. As it is now, we only work them six months. WE COULD EARN MORE THAN ENOUGH IN THE EXTRA FOUR MONTHS TO PAY THE INTEREST IN A MODERN PLANT."

**Evidence Is Visible.**

Talk to these prisoners of their physical condition and you find confirmations of the report that the present workhouse is a tomb.

Men who have been confined in the workhouse for more than two months are in the worst condition.

"I've been here less than two months and have lost 20 pounds."



**Narrow Cells at Workhouse.**

**When One Prisoner Is Standing Up the Other is Obligated to Crawl Into the Bunk.**

said one young man who works in the engine room.

"I ache in every bone in my body. I have rheumatism in my shoulders."

This young man's face was drawn and ghastly in its prison pallor.

An old timer, a nine months' inmate, was found on the second tier.

His features looked like putty.

Hollow, sunken eyes stared at you without a semblance of life.

A hacking cough sounded hollow in the cell as he limped to the grated door.

"I can't get around very fast," he apologized.

"What's the matter?"

"Rheumatism. My right ankle's so swollen I can scarcely bear my weight on it at times. I've got rheumatism all over. Say but this place is a fright. It's something awful in here. Sometimes you can scarcely breathe."

"I'VE BEEN HERE NINE MONTHS AND HAVE HAD RHEUMATISM EVER SINCE I CAME IN. You haven't any idea what it means to be locked up in a cell all day and night."

"But you can sleep at night," was suggested.

"Sleep," and the prisoner and his cellmate laughed. "Sleep, why we don't sleep here. You ought to try it once in these cells in this atmosphere. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT

IT IS TO GET A STRAIGHT NIGHT'S SLEEP. WE DOZE FOR AN HOUR AT A TIME AND THEN TOSS FOR AN HOUR OR SO.

"The rest we get here is worse than no sleep at all."

One of the worst places in the prison is the north side. The dump trough is located on this side.

The stench arising from this trough is something horrible.

"For two hours after the other boys bring down their buckets we can scarcely breathe. Sometimes we lay down on the stone floor to get better air."

Two young boys, 17 years of age, are locked in one cell within six feet of the trough. The youngsters made a tearful plea to be taken away from that section.

"The stench makes us sick," said the biggest boy. "Besides I've got pains in my shoulders from the dampness. Can't you get us out?"

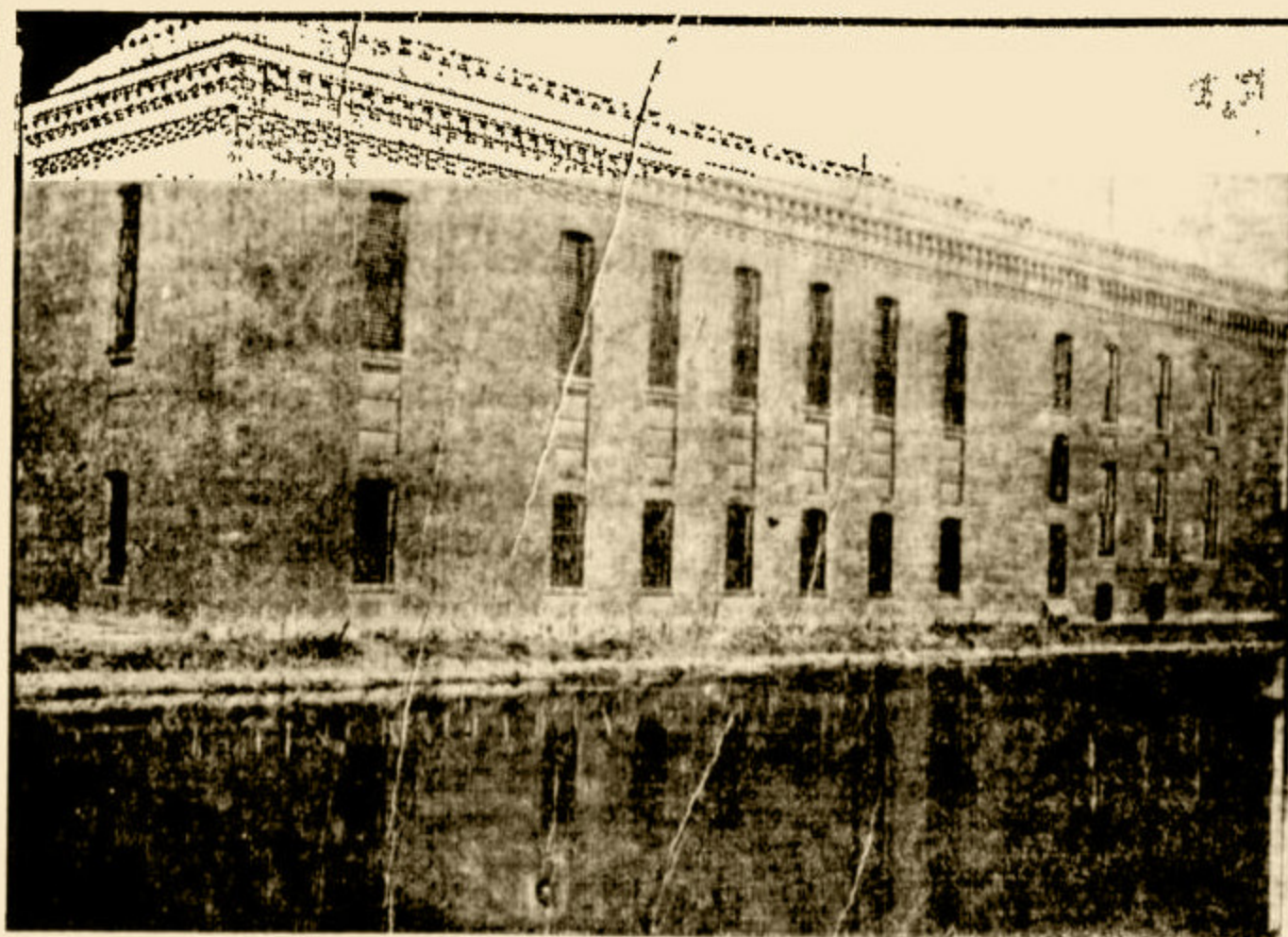
These are only a few of the stories told by the men behind the bars at the workhouse. EVERY ONE TELLS THE SAME STORY. IT BECAME SICKENING IN ITS MONOTONOUS REPETITION.

A condition of affairs exists in the dormitory for women that can only be hinted at.

All the women who are sentenced to the workhouse are put in this one dormitory, hardened criminals thrown in with the novices.

Because of this the moral tone of the dormitory at times, sinks down to the lowest depths of depravity. Practices are indulged in that are beyond belief.

## THE WORKHOUSE PRISON



The shadow of the prison in the water shows the location of the first floor of the prison. This floor is fully eight feet below the water level of the canal. A half hundred prisoners are confined in this section below the canal bank.

The second floor is shown on a level with the canal bank. This bank is within 10 feet of the prison walls through which water seeps.

**EXTRA BROWN STAMP DAY**



# NEW WORKHOUSE MUST BE BUILT

## Servers Unanimous on the Question.

### ESTIMATES OF COST MADE

Board Will Consider the Matter  
as Soon as Superintendency  
Is Settled by the Courts.

A new workhouse for Toledo is considered by members of the board of public service to be one of the most important needs of Toledo.

The disclosures in The News-Bee of the unsanitary conditions of the city's prison has aroused the servers. Some action looking towards legislation for a new institution is to be taken at once.

THE SERVERS SAY THAT NOT ONLY FROM A HUMANITARIAN STANDPOINT, BUT FOR BUSINESS REASONS AS WELL, A MODERN WORKHOUSE SHOULD BE BUILT. The city leases the present site at an unusually low rental. This lease expires within a few months. For business reasons a new lease will undoubtedly be taken.

In the event that a new workhouse is built, the island could be used for other purposes.

### Estimate of the Cost.

A rough estimate for a modern workhouse has been made. To include the farm feature, it is estimated that the cost will be about \$100,000. A site at the outskirts of the city is regarded as the best.

It is claimed that with a well-equipped workhouse it would be possible to manufacture brick ten months in the year. The present plant runs six months.

Assistant Superintendent Doelker estimates that over a million extra brick could be made in these four months.

This would provide an additional revenue of \$7,000, which would pay the interest on \$100,000 and leave a surplus to pay off the bonds.

This increased revenue alone would pay for the new plant in less than 20 years, says Oscar Sabin.

"Toledo should have a new workhouse," said Member Tonson. "It would be good business to have a workhouse that is more than self sustaining."

"I WOULDN'T KEEP A DOG IN THE WORKHOUSE."

That is the way Oscar Sabin voices his opinion of the place.

"Humanity and every other good interest demands a change. It's criminal to send men there.

"As soon as the superintendency of the institution is settled we will have some estimates made on the cost of a modern workhouse."







# TRUST MEMBERS SENTENCED

Continued from Page One.

"After all, when we get down to the essence of things, this proceeding is really only the throwing off of the mask. You men are here not because of a mistake, not because you have been led astray or have fallen into the error of violating a law that in your judgment should not have been passed.

"There is a higher law for the people who require these commodities for the protection of themselves and their families and to prevent the payment of higher prices.

"The books of the lumber men showed that they solemnly agreed that the management of their business should be turned over to a committee which fixed the discounts and to whom they had to report delinquents. They gave this committee the power to pass on a claim and put the claim into the hands of a lawyer. Then they all agreed to submit to a fine of not less than \$100 if they sold another foot to the man in question, unless for spot cash.

"The books show that they agreed to submit to a fine if they violated a single rule.

"An examination of the brick trust records shows that there has been a successful pool since 1897, and that there has been a constant and progressive rise in prices since that time. There was an association to dispose of the brick and to prevent interference with that disposition.

"The evidence shows that the cost of brick in 1897 was \$5.27, and that in 1906 it was \$6.86. In that time there was absolutely no loss, and the cost of making brick did not increase 10 cents a thousand.

## Competition Throttled.

"There was absolutely no chance for competition, and this state of facts existed before and since the passage of the Valentine act.

"It has been said that the forests are being cleared away, and that the local lumber men had to raise prices because they were at the mercy of a national lumber trust.

"IN ANSWER TO THIS, I WILL SAY THAT IT ISN'T NECESSARY IN THIS STATE TO VIOLATE THE LAWS TO LIVE DECENTLY AND WELL.

"It is absolutely necessary that the laws be observed, and it is not necessary to combine against the city of Toledo.

"It is not essential, but absolutely reprehensible, to engage in business against the people of Toledo who are trying to acquire homes, and to require them to pay more for necessities than you do those who do not live in Toledo and who do not pay taxes here.

"Those in whom you ought to have more interest are those who you have compelled to pay tribute, while those in other communities could have the commodities for less. This is neither city spirit nor patriotism.

"Any man engaged in that kind of work ought to be ashamed of himself.

"How could you justify your actions?

"None of you can look your neighbor in the face and justify your position.

"Although you might live in the same house, attend the same church, be members of the same society or club, you can't justify your position when you say to your neighbor, 'You can't have lumber only for more than you could buy it from another in a distant city, where I've shipped it.'"

The judge referred in this last statement to the showing made by the News-Bee, that Toledoans could have people in Ottawa order lumber from Toledo firms, have it shipped to Ottawa and then back to Toledo at less than the Toledoans could buy the lumber in Toledo.

## Saddened by Duty.

"What is this statute for " continued Judge Morris. "If there is anything in my power to bring about its enforcement I shall do it. In view of this statute and my views, which I have given frankly it is my duty to impose sentence. I approach that duty with sadness. But the law should be enforced in all its terms until it is repealed and, if I understand the temper of the people of this great state, it is in no great danger of repeal."

The judge then read the penalty. "All the men before me are of more than the average intelligence and are presumed to know this law and its penalties. None has claimed ignorance. There can be no misunderstanding of my position in re-

gard to the punishment that ought to be imposed.

"Fines are only makeshifts and do not bring prominent citizens to a proper relaxation of their positions.

"After full consideration I've determined that the proper punishment is imprisonment in the workhouse. The sentence, therefore, on those who have generally pleaded guilty will be that they be confined in the workhouse.

## Minimum Sentences.

"In view of all the circumstances, especially as the defendants have thrown themselves on the mercy of the court, I shall prescribe the minimum sentences."

He then ordered the bridge agents and lumber men to serve six months in the workhouse and ordered the brickmen to pay fines of \$1,000 and costs each.

The court then ordered the sentences suspended for ten days.

Surprise was shown in the faces of the accused men when Judge Morris gave his first intimation that fines created no hardship on the members of the trust.

Then with one exception the men became stolid. The exception was Hummard, the bridge agent, whose facial expression was a cross between a smirk and a smile. He was the only one who did not search the judge's face for some expression that could be construed as hopeful. Cleveland was laboring under a great strain.

## Hung Their Heads.

The other men, many of whom knew Judge Morris personally, seemed under even a greater strain than Cleveland. When he declared that their conduct was not patriotic and showed no civic pride, many of the lumbermen winced and hung their heads.

Because of the criticism they apparently forgot that they were being sentenced, and it was not until the judge declared that "fines were only makeshifts," that they looked up.

The final words numbed the accused.

No formal adjournment was taken at the time, but none was necessary, as nearly all the spectators left the room. The men seemed not to know what to do. After whispering among themselves for some time there was some evidence of enforced mirth, but the men generally had no time for laughter.

## Did Only His Duty.

Several hastened to congratulate Judge Morris, but the judge said to all that he had only done his duty.

Prosecuting Attorney Wachenhelm was congratulated right and left. The prosecutor was greatly pleased at the sentences.

"They got just what was coming to them," he said.

Generally the lumbermen said they expected to serve their sentences. They did not think there was much to be expected from the service board. It was a disconsolate lot that straggled from the courthouse.

## OTHER SENTENCES IMPOSED.

Before the bridge agents, lumbermen and brickmen were sentenced on Friday, Judge Morris fixed the punishment of several other offenders. Stephen Boyce, who was convicted of unlawfully killed Chauncey Porter on the night that Boyce and Porter's sister, Mrs. Sarah North were to have been married, was given seven years in the penitentiary. Boyce is 60 years old and frail. The judge said he could not look lightly on this crime as Boyce had not learned anything by experience and carried a revolver habitually.

Evident familiarity with court procedure hurt the cause of John McCoy, accused of holding up a drunken man. McCoy was given three years. He said his accomplice, James McCoy, who turned state's evidence, had sworn falsely. James, who is not related to John, was found guilty of assault. He was sentenced to six months in the workhouse—the same as the lumbermen.

James Henry, a one-legged negro burglar, was given one year in the penitentiary.

Charles Stornberg, 20 years old, admitted that he stole a suit case containing valuable dresses, and was sent to the reformatory.



# JUDGE BENDS TO WILL OF PEOPLE

Continued from Page One.

## Made Bidding a Farce.

Of this latter class two were agents for bridge manufacturers. These two men were representatives of a pool of bridge manufacturers which pool made competitive bidding on all bridge contracts a farce and a sure thing for some one previously designated member.

The profits which accrued to the successful bidder under this system were so large that all members of the pool made a handsome profit.

These two men could write a treatise on the ethics of the sentence. They have both been sentenced many times, but as the sentence always was a fine, have not suffered the profits taking ample care of that.

The others were lumber dealers and brick manufacturers. The lumber dealers were a wealthy class. One of them, Marcus V. Barbour, was not present. His profits enabled him to journey abroad and he was at the time sentence was passed in Europe. He will serve his sentence when he gets back.

The lumbermen were unqualifiedly guilty. The brick manufacturers had an organization which was recognized as criminal when the ice trust members were convicted, and they at once sought counsel, seeking whereby they could evade responsibility under the law and still reap the profits of an illegal conspiracy.

## Offered to Plead Guilty.

They succeeded in so far as their new organization was lacking some of the aggravating features which attached to the bridge and lumber combinations, and their offer to plead guilty under a certain section of the anti-trust law was accepted.

Conviction under this section provides for fine only and so the brick trust was not harmed other than by the shock which the fate of their fellows produced.

Around the walls of the courtroom stood spectators, mainly attorneys. The entrance of the room was jammed with people anxious to see what the law would do with the rich men; they know what it would do with the poor men.

Then the court commenced talking. After briefly disposing of the poor prisoners whose cases were too ordinary to require exhaustive treatment, he dismissed them, and the rich criminal confronted him.

## Court Prepared Rebuke.

As the court spoke he made it plain that there was shame even in a violation of the anti-trust law, which some eminent lawyers have contended against. As the court reminded the defendants that they had plundered their friends and neighbors just as certainly as did the man with a mask who entered in the night season and took by stealth or force the property or money of his victim, many bowed their heads.

As the court progressed all spirit of

levity disappeared. One man whispered something to a man standing beside him. A while later the man returned and handed a box of cigars to the prisoner.

THE TENOR OF THE COURT'S REMARKS HAD BEEN SUCH AS TO CONVINCED THE DEFENDANT THAT HE WOULD GO TO JAIL, AND SO HE SOUGHT TO PROVIDE AGAINST TEDIIOUS HOURS IN PRISON.

The court was in earnest. Long before he pronounced the words which condemned the men to prison it was apparent that he intended to do so and they were depressed accordingly.

They had pleaded guilty unconditionally, however, and there is no apparent hope that they can escape the imprisonment.



## CITY DUNS THE COUNTY

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The amount now due Toledo from Lucas county for care of county prisoners in the city workhouse aggregates \$60,000. The city charges outside counties 60 cents a day for each prisoner, and 40 cents each for Lucas county prisoners. The county refuses to pay the city anything. City Solicitor Schreiber will take up with the county authorities next week some settlement of the claim.

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## JAIL, WORKS AND PRISON CROWDED

"Full house" is the problem at the Workhouse again. The normal capacity "over there" is 154 prisoners. The sending over of 40 men on Monday boosted the amount to 219. And on Tuesday some 20 or 25 men were committed to the workhouse.

Many offenders have been sentenced to the County Jail because of the crowded condition at the Workhouse. Now county officials are crying "full house" also. And nearly every day the cells at Central Police Station are filled in excess of the capacity of 42.



—Conditions at the Central Police Station and workhouse are reported poor by a Council committee, of which Councilman Charles Scally is chairman. Bond issues to meet immediate repairs necessary will be recommended to Council.



# WORKHOUSE TO COST \$90,000

## New Plans Nearly Double Those Given First

The new stone workhouse, to be built on the Whitehouse farm this summer is to cost about \$19,000 or nearly twice the estimate supplied according to previous plans, which were pronounced unworkable.

To make up the deficit Finance Committee of Council on Wednesday night approved an additional issue of bonds for \$50,000, which Council

may approve next Monday night. There is about \$45,000 in a fund already available.

The new prison, when completed will be able to house 100 prisoners, but it is not expected to abandon the present old workhouse immediately.



## ESCAPE WORKHOUSE; THREE CAUGHT

Three negroes, alleged to have escaped from the Workhouse Farm at Whitehouse, were captured by Detectives Brown and Peters at 531 Center-st. The prisoners are Clarence Lewis, Linton Horton and James Crawford. The former two live at the Center-st address, and Crawford lives on Canton-st.

All will be returned to the institution to serve out six months' sentences. Crawford, the detectives reported, dropped in on the other men for a call while the detectives were in the house.



# 300 MEN FILL ROOMS FOR 75 IN WORKHOUSE

Prisoners Crowded Into Stuffy Rooms While Live Stock Is Comfortable

## FARM IS WELL KEPT

Green Fields, New Sheds Contrast With Poor Quarters of Convicts

*This is the first of a series on the Toledo workhouse. The second will appear in an early issue.*

By ELMER WILLIAMS.

At Toledo's model workhouse farm there are two "bull pens."

One is the great white barn, an immaculate, clover-sweet building where "Joe," head of the Holstein herd, resides in stately contentment. The floor for his pen, which is about 20 feet square, is covered with more than a foot of clean, fresh straw. It is a wholesome and inviting place.

The other bull pen is in the main prison building, where at various times from 15 to 25 men are confined. The space for all of these human beings is just about the same as that provided for big Joe.

Of course, any normal person probably would prefer Joe's pen to the other. The men in the prison bull pen must go into a narrow corridor at night and sleep on the floor. Between their bodies and the cold concrete there are thin straw mattresses

### CURE FOR STUBBORNNESS.

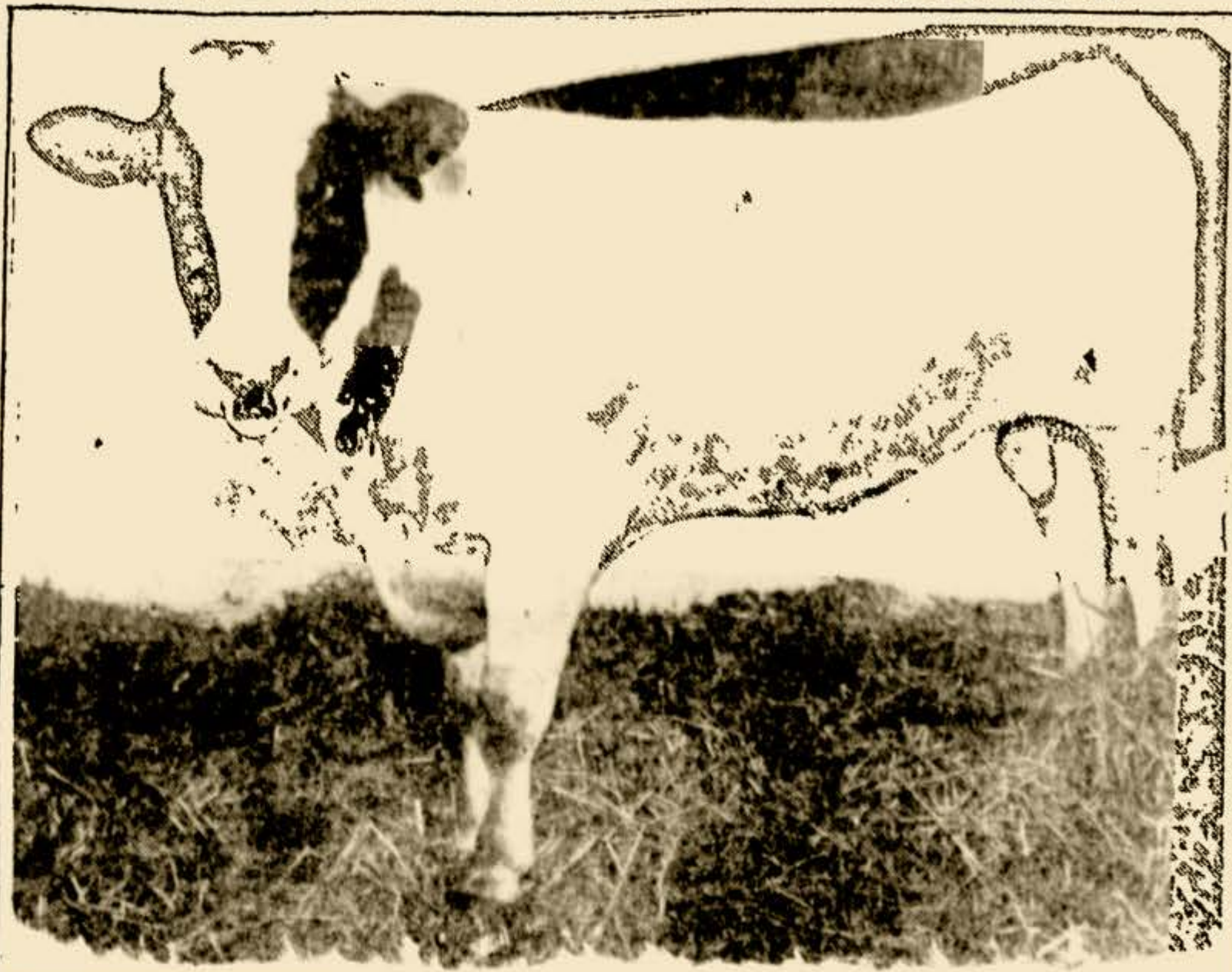
Once upon a time, big Joe was a stubborn and refractory animal. But his environment has changed him. He is now a quiet, philosophic and amiable beast. The men in the prison bull pen also were stubborn and bad-tempered when sent there. Their environment has not changed them in the least.

Such is the lesson in reformation under present crowded conditions at the model workhouse.

Only it wasn't intended that way originally. It was intended that the inmates, who, after all, are not vicious criminals or felons, should be given a chance thru proper environment and conditions. The farm animals and vegetables have improved enormously, but the human beings very little in proportion.

Superintendent Robert Byrne, one of the most humane and considerate of men, is among the first to admit the facts. He was superintendent out there eight years ago. He saw the place start under favorable and encouraging conditions, and now, having returned as head of the institution, he finds himself confronting a situation that is almost impossible

# TWO BULL PENS; ONE IS HABITABLE



### 300 IN ROOMS FOR 75.

Under state health laws governing prisons, the three dormitories at the workhouse should not house more than 25 men each. Today there are about 300 inmates in these rooms.

Many buildings went up at the farm to increase the efficiency and make things more comfortable for the stock. Not long ago a new pig house was completed. There are wide, sanitary pens for each pig. The swine have shown, under such surroundings, an excellent capacity for development.

Outside, the farm is pleasant to the eye. Acres of wheat extend over gently undulating fields. It is a scene to stir the imagination.

But there are men who cultivate these acres of wheat. There are men who curry big Joe and keep his quarters spic-and-span. There are men who mow the long stretches of green grass.

When night comes these men enter the prison building. They enter dormitories that are stuffed with humanity. They lie down among closely crowded cots, or crawl up on double-deck bunks where there is layer on layer of men.

Four men must breathe the air which, according to the state laws, one man should have. Thus they share one another's nightmares.

### NUMBER INCREASES.

Day by day the number of prisoners increases. Of the 300 inmates at present, about 100 find employment outside the prison. About 50 are assigned to duty in the city, at the Safety building, Walbridge park and the contagious disease hospital. The others are confined in the "idle ward," or they do odd jobs about the prison. For many, naturally, there is much spare time.

In the past much was said about the "contract system," under which prisoners were accepted from six or seven outside counties at \$1 a day.

Former Welfare Director S. P. Jermain paroled many men from the workhouse because of extremely crowded conditions. The contract system, which at that time was one of the causes of congestion, was criticized and deplored. Yet the contract system goes on.

At any time the former welfare director, with 30 days notice, could have cancelled the contracts.

Early in January, after the present welfare director, John B. Merrell, took office, he made a survey of conditions and found that a large percentage of the inmates were there from outside counties on contract. There were 191 prisoners, only 70 of whom were from Toledo.

Superintendent Byrne at that time said the workhouse was hopelessly overcrowded and urged the cancellation of the contracts. Merrell also said that he opposed the contract system. He has made no new contracts, but the old agreements with outside towns and counties have not been cancelled.

The pictures at the top give an excellent comparison of prevailing conditions in Toledo's workhouse, where more than 300 men are confined in quarters suitable for 100 men. There are two bull pens, and Big Joe, the Holstein, occupies one. Observe his spacious, comfortable quarters, his amiable countenance, and then study the picture at the bottom showing the other "bull pen" where human beings sleep on concrete floors in squalid and unhealthy surroundings.



# Workhouse On Way Out

**I**F THERE really is a clear danger to inmates of the Toledo House of Correction, better known as the Workhouse, because of fire-safety shortcomings, then it must be corrected. But with a new five-county regional jail, of which Toledo is a partner, in the offing, it does not make economic sense to put a lot of money into improvements.

The issue arose because the Ohio fire marshal is reported ready to order major safety-related changes at the Workhouse, based on a survey of the facility in January. Also, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality is representing six inmates who are ready to file a lawsuit against the city, challenging conditions there.

Workhouse Superintendent Larry Cardwell estimates that it could cost as much as \$1 million to make all the improvements the state fire marshal has in mind. But, as Toledo director of natural resources William Scalzo suggested, the city should not be required to spend more than absolutely necessary on a facility that is at least 60 years old and may be closed within two years.

If all goes well, a modern regional jail, designed to serve Toledo and Lucas, Fulton, Defiance, Putnam, and Henry counties, will be constructed at Wauseon. Prisoners now detained at the Workhouse near Whitehouse would be incarcerated in the new jail. At that point the Workhouse presumably will be torn down or used for some other purpose which would make any improvements superfluous.

City officials say they are ready to install a smoke-detection and alarm system to facilitate quick evacuation of the premises in the event of fire. That much might make sense, but the city understandably is reluctant to spend \$225,000 for an elaborate sprinkler system in two buildings at the Workhouse and commit itself to other costly changes such as smoke-ventilation systems.

No one wants to equivocate when it comes to the safety of human beings, particularly those held in prison facilities. But common sense dictates a certain amount of realism in making changes in a jail facility whose days are numbered.



Is there a cardiologist  
in the house?

# House of Correction vacated in 1991

Toledo Blade 4-3-14

## Toledo Metroparks seeks bids for razing workhouse

**BY JANET ROMAHER  
BLADE STAFF WRITER**



Metroparks of the Toledo Area owns the former Toledo House of Correction that from 1918 to 1991 housed inmates found guilty of misdemeanors. The building near Whitehouse is a well-known site. *THE BLADE/ANDY MORRISON*

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A building that housed prisoners at the Toledo House of Correction near Whitehouse is to be demolished in the coming months as part of the Metroparks of the Toledo Area’s plans to develop the Blue Creek Conservation Area.

Bids will be sought this month to demolish the three-story structure, with work to begin in July or August.

The Toledo House of Correction operated from 1918 until 1991 and housed people serving sentences for misdemeanor crimes. The inmates grew vegetables, raised hogs and cattle, and quarried limestone on the farm.

Commonly called the workhouse, some neighbors call it an eyesore.

### **PHOTO GALLERY: Former Toledo House of Correction near Whitehouse**

Some people might be interested in trying to save the old building, such as to transform it into an antique shop, but the daughter of a former workhouse guard

commented that that wouldn’t be appealing to many.

“Who has fond memories of that place?” asked Susan Bechtel, who lives near Whitehouse.

Her late father, Art Romaker, was a guard there for 10 to 15 years, Mrs. Bechtel recalled Wednesday afternoon when told about plans to demolish it.

The workhouse was popular with some prisoners who would, as stories go, commit crimes at times carefully chosen to match the season.

“They would commit a crime so they could winter over in the workhouse,” Mrs. Bechtel recalled. The House of Correction didn’t house killers, she said, but rather people found guilty of being drunk and disorderly, maybe those late on child-support payments — “low-level crimes” she said.

Teens have been known to spin tales of ghosts, jangling handcuffs or chains, wandering about and walking through thick cell walls. More than one area resident has scrambled to take a peek inside the place, either on a dare or on a mission to capture workhouse ghosts on video.

Several other buildings on the Workhouse property will remain. They include a large white barn and a smaller, stone hog barn. A building that once housed a gymnasium and dormitories is now the base of operations for the Metroparks native-seed nursery and other land management operations, said Scott Carpenter, spokesman for the Metroparks.

Signs and other displays on the site will inform future park visitors of the property’s past as a working prison farm. Representatives from the Toledo Police Museum are collecting items from the jail for possible display in the museum, located at



[Enlarge](#)



Toledo's Ottawa Park.

Metroparks purchased 207 acres of the property, then known as Quarry Pond Farm, from the city of Toledo in 2000 to preserve it as public open space. The park system purchased an additional 137 acres from Lucas County in 2002.

Portions of the property are leased to the village of Whitehouse, and the Anthony Wayne Youth Foundation uses part of it for recreation fields. The Metroparks district operates part of the farm in partnership with Nature's Nursery wildlife rehabilitation center and the Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District.

A portion of Blue Creek, on the south side of Schadel Road, has been open for daily public use since March, 2013, with a walking trail and a quarry pond available for fishing.

In 1990, Toledo City Council agreed to shut down most of the workhouse, but the guards, operating under the name Citizens for Adequate Jails and Justice, secured more than 20,000 signatures on petitions to place the issue on the ballot.

Just ahead of the November election, an editorial in The Blade called the 70-year-old House of Correction a "depressing dump," and urged voters to support city council's decision to close the place down as a jail.

Voters, by a slim margin, repealed council's closing ordinance, but the city maintained that, vote or no vote, it lacked funds to operate the workhouse and the vote neither mandated its operation nor provided operating funds.

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# The Columbus Dispatch

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## OHIO PARKS

# Old workhouse near Toledo will be torn down; conservation area planned there

Monday April 21, 2014 6:18 AM

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TOLEDO — A building that once housed prisoners in northwestern Ohio is to be demolished, with the site to be used for a conservation area.

The former Toledo House of Correction near the village of Whitehouse operated from 1918 until 1991 and housed people serving sentences for misdemeanor crimes. Inmates at the correction facility, commonly known as the workhouse, grew vegetables, raised hogs and cattle, and quarried limestone on the farm.



REQUEST TO BUY THIS PHOTO  
ANDY MORRISON | THE BLADE

Metroparks of the Toledo Area plans to demolish the three-story building this summer and develop the site as the Blue Creek

Conservation Area. The parks system purchased 207 acres of the property, then known as Quarry Pond Farm, from the city of Toledo in 2000 to preserve it as public open space. Metroparks purchased an additional 137 acres from Lucas County two years later.

This summer, Toledo Metroparks plans to demolish a building called the workhouse near Whitehouse and develop the site.

Whitehouse has leased some of the property, and a youth foundation uses part of it for recreation fields. The Metroparks district also operates part of the farm in partnership with a wildlife rehabilitation center and the Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District.

A portion of Blue Creek has been open for daily public use since March 2013, with a walking trail and a fishing pond.

Susan Bechtel, the daughter of a former guard at the House of Correction, said few people would be interested in trying to save the old building.

“Who has fond memories of that place?” asked Bechtel, who lives near Whitehouse.

Her late father, Art Romaker, worked as a guard there for 10 to 15 years, she said.

The House of Correction didn’t house people convicted of murder or other violent crimes, she said. It mostly housed inmates found guilty of “low-level crimes” such as being drunk and disorderly or those late on child-support payments, and some tried to match the timing of their crimes to the season, Bechtel said.

“They would commit a crime so they could winter over in the workhouse,” Bechtel recalled.

Several other buildings on the property, including two barns, will remain. A building that once housed a gymnasium and dormitories is now the base of operations for the Metroparks’ native-seed nursery and other land management operations, Metroparks spokesman Scott Carpenter said.



Plans call for signs and other displays informing park visitors of the property's past as a working prison farm. Representatives from the Toledo Police Museum are collecting items from the jail for possible display in the museum at Toledo's Ottawa Park.

The Toledo City Council agreed in 1990 to shut down most of the workhouse. But the guards secured more than 20,000 signatures on petitions to place the issue on the ballot, and voters repealed the council's closing ordinance.

The city then said it lacked money to operate the workhouse and that the vote neither mandated its operation nor provided operating funds.