

CONVICT CAMP NEAR MARSHALL

Road Force of 140 Men in Stripes and Something of What They Are Doing

A VISIT TO THE CAMP

The people of Marshall and vicinity have for nearly a year had within a short distance of the town—some three miles—what is usually known as a convict camp—a road force made up of men who have been convicted of violating the laws of the State and are serving their terms out in what is usually called the penitentiary or State prison. These men are under certain officers and guards and are made to work to interest of the State in building highways. Since this force has been in the County, our readers may be interested to know what has taken place. In the first place, the camp itself had to be built to take care of 140 convicts, twenty guards, four officers and the families of the officers. This particular camp is under the supervision of Mr. W. E. Raines, formerly of Wake County, and Mr. L. H. Champion of near Charlotte, as supervisors, Mr. J. A. Odom, Steward; and Mr. A. N. McMillon, night Corporal.

A casual visit to the camp and a look at the men at their work does not give one a proper conception of the magnitude of the task of caring for and providing for these cares of the State and the proper utilization of this other wise wasted manpower. On a special invitation from Supervisor Raines, we took a trip this week not only to the camp, but to all the departments of the camp and were really surprised to see the inside of the camp. We were first taken to the dungeon in which are four cells for those who misbehave. Had you ever thought of what provision is made for these men to bathe or to have their clothes washed? There was a concrete floor and shower baths and a window through which the washed and mended clothes are passed to those who bathe. A large furnace and a 60-gallon pressure tank provide hot water for bathing.

In the commissary a sufficient supply is kept on hand to insure its being fresh. Two thousand pounds of meat and 25 barrels of flour, canned goods and so forth was the supply on hand. Part of the meat was native and part Western fat.

In the kitchen two immense ranges are used for cooking for the convicts, while one smaller range is used for the officers and guards, the cooks being convicts who know how to cook in large quantities. For instance, 950 biscuits was one item. The menu consisted for the meal we saw consumed, coarse or whole grain hominy, bacon, bread, molasses, coffee, and biscuits. The mess hall dining room was well lighted and heated and the meals well served. Regular hours and system is the rule. At a certain hour they all file in and are seated at the tables. At a signal from the officers they all begin eating, the food having previously been placed at their places, except that as the meal began a receptacle containing about a bushel of hot biscuits was carried in by the cooks. If any man leaves the table, without sufficient food we are told that it is his own fault, as it is the purpose to give all a sufficient quantity of well prepared food. The meals are varied, beef being served twice a week, coffee twice a day and so on, and fish occasionally.

The meal finished, a word from the officers in charge and the convicts are counted as they leave the dining room for their bunk room—a place we had visited while the meal was

in progress. All these 140 men have their recreation from supper time until eight o'clock when they are ordered to bed, a guard watching them while they sleep—one guard serving from six P. M., until 12 o'clock at night, then another for the next six hours.

The management does not allow the men to gamble. The bed room is well heated with stoves and the men are provided with five blankets each. The bunks or mattresses are arranged side by side on a level, one tier some four feet above the other. At six o'clock in the morning, the men are called up, given breakfast and marched to their work.

BLASTING ROCKS

This particular force is constructing a highway along the French Broad river toward Asheville. When the work was begun in January last, the number of men was about half the present number, and a gi-

gantic task confronted them—blasting solid rocks for a great part and filling in the side of the river, on which as a foundation, one of the finest hard surfaced roads in the State is to be built, connecting the paved street of Marshall with the city of Asheville, a distance of 21 miles. The force which we have attempted to describe has the building of the foundation work of the road from Marshall to the Buncombe County line. From Asheville a force is at work meeting this force and it is hoped that the two forces will meet in about a year and a half and that the road may be complete in about two years.

The premises are kept in a most sanitary condition, running water and modern conveniences being provided in the bed or bunk room as well as in the other parts of the camp.

LATE NEXT WEEK

On account of Christmas, the Dec. 26 issue of the News-Record will hardly reach our subscribers before the first of the following week.

THE PUBLISHER.

LAY TRAIN RAILS BY ELECTRICITY

New Equipment Employed for Speed in Railroad Work

Raleigh, N. C., Dec. (Special)

An electric rail-laying train which takes up old track and replaces it with new, is a recent application of electricity to the railroad industry, says the North and South Carolina Public Utility Information Bureau.

A fifty-five horsepower electric generator, driven by steam from the locomotive boiler supplies working power for the rail-laying train. A traveling crane, which moves along rails running along the sides of the cars and between them handles the material.

When the train reaches the track to be replaced, the old track is loosened and lifted out

CONFEDERATE PENSIONS NOW IN THE OFFICE OF CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT IN MARSHALL

LET THOSE WHO CLAIM PRESENT THEIR CLAIMS

of the way by the crane. It lays a new length in place, deposits the old length on board and moving forward one track-length at a time, it repeats the performance as often as necessary.

An experimental train now in operation consists of nine cars, and lays more than one-half a mile of track in an eight-hour day. It is also equipped with special lights for night work.

Burning cotton stalks will kill few weevils but will destroy much valuable humus and organic matter. Plow under the stalks instead of burning them advise agronomy workers at State College.

The pensions for the Confederate veterans of Madison County are now in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court at the courthouse in Marshall. Mr. W. A. West, the efficient and accommodating clerk, will be glad to deliver these pensions to anybody presenting proper claims for them. They are for Confederate veteran and their widows.

In this connection, it may be interesting to our readers to know how many pensioners of each class are now in Madison. There are in Madison County at the present time 104 people entitled to pensions as follows:

- 3 First class, who draw \$15 a month.
 - 1 Second class who draw \$75 semi-annually.
 - 1 Third class who draw \$67.50 semi-annually.
 - 99 Fourth class, of whom 59 are widows, who draw \$60.00 each semi-annually.
- Quite a number of the pensions have already been delivered, but there are yet quite a number who have not yet presented their claims.

Raleigh Newspaper in Favor of State-Wide Ban on Fire Crackers

Custom Termed "Heathenish Chinese Invention" in Editorial.

(By BROCK BARKLEY)
Raleigh, Dec. 14.—A State-wide ban on the sale of fire works is being agitated in Raleigh as the towns stage a defensive against a fire works bombardment by a considerable part of its male school population.

A couple of merchants located beyond the city limits did their Christmas shopping for fire works early with the result that boys are making life miserable for their elders. The two newspapers have been broadcasting the complaints of the citizens, and The Raleigh Times has been moved to apply for State aid.

In an editorial advocating a law to prohibit the sale of fire crackers anywhere in the State, The Times opens as follows:

"With a Federal Government which advises against the use even of Christmas trees, a State which talks fire prevention at all seasons and a local management of affairs which bans the use of shingled roofs, it does look as if something might be done about the use of a heathenish Chinese invention by school children to greet the approach of Christmas.

"The city law prevents both the sale and shooting of fire crackers but it fails to reach merchants located beyond the corporate limit who have been

(Carried to Second Page)

Merry Christmas



CHRISTMAS is a day of cheer because we make it so. We bestow gifts upon those who are dear to us by ties of blood or friendship, we contribute to the happiness of children and turn kindly thoughts upon the unfortunate. Each year sees a greater tendency to assist these latter with something more substantial than thoughts. In all parts of America, and we assume that the same is true of other portions of the civilized world, there is manifested an increasing desire to help.

Few communities, towns or cities lack organized efforts for the carrying of real Christmas cheer to every destitute family, every hungry wayfarer, and especially to every child of poverty; that the latter, at least, may not regard the day, its symbols and promises as things of empty significance. This is in accordance with the teachings of Him for whom the day was named, and evidences the growth of spirituality in the world.

How little we know of how well off we are! How we magnify the trivial things of life! How prone we are to forget the securities and liberties of American citizenship! How hard it is to realize that the elements of true happiness lie within ourselves and not within what we possess. But we are beginning to know, and the spirit of Christmas is an important element in our teaching. Right sentiments soon crystallize into actions. The phrase, "Merry Christmas," upon all lips is an incentive to make it merry, hence the season becomes a time to forget strife and gloom and to spread peace and joy.

Is the old-fashioned Christmas passing? If so, a better one is taking its place. Modern arrangements may have done away with the yule log, but we still have the holly and the evergreen. They are but symbols. The tender emotions in our hearts count for much more. We can blend our voices and attune our souls to full jubilee on this festive occasion, which commemorates the most important announcement of all time, that of the religion of peace and love. Merry Christmas!

THE PUBLISHER.

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