

Burial Without Benefit Of Clergy:

Out Of The Night Of Morganton

Little Attention To Religion

By TOM P. JIMISON (This is the eleventh of a series by Mr. Jimison describing his experience while a patient in the hospital for the insane at Morganton. Mr. Jimison is a former well-known North Carolina minister, lawyer and newspaper columnist.)

During the Winter of 1941 the amusement hall, a large building on the women's side of the institution, was equipped with movie apparatus, purchased from the profits of the commissary, and we had pictures once each week. The films were contributed by the various film corporations. The hall was poorly equipped for pictures. It could not be darkened and the show was begun before good dark, but they were enjoyed notwithstanding.

Also in the hall a brief dance was held each week for very few. One night of each week the attendants and nurses danced and it usually ended in a row. But the main dance was a weekly affair for the public in the same building. To it no patients could go, and just each time the nurses were willing to pay an admission price of 50 cents. An alleged or unproved rumor was that the dancers made merry far from liquor bottles about which could get in if he had the price.

Tap Jackson and I used to sell drinks for the commissary at these shindigs. Our stand was in the vestibule near the main library. Every morning would come for a cold drink, dart into the toilet to wash down a swig of spirit, and come back to their feminine partners. It was not unusual for some of the attendants to get soured on these occasions and the morning after Tap and I would pick up half a dozen empty liquor bottles about our hall. One morning we found one nearly full of booze and Tap carried it to Dr. Watkins, the superintendent was shocked. He came to the library to talk with us about it. We told him that a crowd of hoodlums who had come to the dance had stood out under the trees near the female ward and gazed through open windows while women patients undressed for bed. He asked: "Men are not allowed on this side of the hospital," said he, "and I am opposed to these dances."

MAIN SERMONS Religion plays practically no part in the life of the asylum. Four Morganton pastors take turns in holding brief services at an amusement hall on Sunday afternoons. These services are attended by some 100 patients, but doubtless get some help from them. But the ministers, who are paid for their services, are not interested in the atmosphere of secrecy about the institution, suffer from a sort of serology, and are not to know that their own congregations would get very little of the general attitude of doctors, attendants and nurses. "Men are not allowed on this side of the hospital," said he, "and I am opposed to these dances."

The doctors did not attend these services, and only such attendants and nurses as were required to escort the patients. They tried to see to it that no patients peered the preachers by shaking heads with them or asking their questions.

"By doggies, a patient haunt got no business coming with the preacher, an a-botherin' him," John Keem, a good Baptist layman, would say. And the others took their cue from him. I used to visit the Methodist pastor, Rev. Fletcher Nelson, and eat with him. I had known him since he was a sapling and held him in high regard. He told me that he wanted to be of service to the patients but he had no idea how. The atmosphere of the institution sort of stifled him so that he had no liberty of spirit when he preached. The hospital was a sort of a prison.

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The graveyard at Morganton where the dust of those who die in the State Hospital is committed back to the dust. "I'll be damned," said a patient, "they keep us locked up as long as we live and then chain us down when we die."

ROUTINE BURIAL SERVICE

When patients are buried in the hospital cemetery there is seldom any religious service. If the family comes and is able to secure the services of a minister, all is well; otherwise the ward major stands at the grave and reads half a dozen lines from a typewritten sheet, and the grave diggers cover up the corpse. There are none others there.

When a patient dies the hospital notifies his family. If they are sufficiently interested and sufficiently able they send for the body. If not the deceased is placed in a cheap, rough coffin, made in the hospital carpenter shop and lined with black fabric from the sewing-room, and buried beneath a heavy chain which is supported

by concrete posts. Over each grave along these strands of chain is placed a brass tag of identification. "Jest a patient. One was gated at the heavy chains along the rows of graves and exclaimed, "I'll be damned," they kept us locked up as long as we live and then chain us down when we die."

None of this is any fault of the doctors. Drs. Gerard McKee and McLean used to get me to hold services over their dead. At such times I read the burial service of the Methodist Church, but the occasion always depressed me. In fact, the hospital attitude toward the death of a patient both depressed and infuriated me.

PERFUNCTORY INQUEST One night Carl Phlips, a man in his late thirties, a quiet sort of chap, slipped through an unlocked door which led from D ward

to the attic. He climbed up there, got out on the roof and either jumped or fell to the ground below, a distance of nearly a hundred feet. Next morning I stood at the window and watched the crowd gather when they had discovered his broken body. The coroner was sent for while a group of attendants looked him over with hungry curiosity. The coroner looked at the body a moment, said it was suicide, and hurried home. But was it suicide? The door through which he had gone was supposed to be kept locked. Perhaps the poor man was homicidal for his wife and babies, and maybe his attendant and tortured mind thought the open door led to them. But was it suicide? The attendant was wanted to break his damned neck and that's what he done! He was just another patient.

(To be continued)

Capital Parade:

Jimison's Story Makes Mrs. Bost Sit Up And Take Note

By HENRY AVERLEIGH (No article or series of articles carried in North Carolina press in years has received so much editorial attention as that over the state as has the Tom Jimison expose of conditions at the Morganton State Hospital for the Insane.)

Written in the intimate Jimison style, particularly stress is laid on the happenings at the hospital and the general attitude of doctors, attendants and nurses. There seems no hurry on the part of the writer to get any more toward answering or

commenting, but both Governor J. M. Broughton and Mrs. W. T. Bost, Welfare Department head, are keeping in close touch with the entire situation and it is a certainty that both will have something to say after the series has been completed.

Of course, Capital Parade is in no position to express an opinion as to the truth of all the Jimison statements, but it is not necessary to go further than the budget (North Carolina's financial Bible) to get a very bleak picture of conditions that must exist there.

Mr. Jimison has said, for instance, that the food is bad, and without ever having seen the inside of the hospital it is easy to confirm the charge by the fact that appropriations for food for an estimated average of 2,650 inmates, plus

220 convalescents, are \$148,000 for the fiscal year 1941-42. Figure that out. It means that the State is feeding the inmates and attendants on just over 14 cents per day, about one-half what the State figures it costs to feed its prisoners and about one-third of what the U. S. Army pays to feed its soldiers.

In order to give the best possible picture, there should be added the value of produce raised on the hospital farms, which products are used in part, at least, to feed the inmates. Value of these products for last year was approximately \$68,000. Even with credit for all this, the cost of feeding the unfortunate inmates rises to less than 20 cents per day.

GAVE WHAT WAS ASKED It is customary to blame the Legislature for skimping on appropriations, but in the case of food for the Morganton Hospital, the 1941 General Assembly appropriated for 1941-42 exactly what the hospital authorities asked. This was not true of a number of other items, many of which were slashed sharply, not by the Assembly itself, but by the Advisory Budget Commission.

As a matter of record the Legislature appropriated for Morganton a grand total of \$477,374, which was \$1,800 more than the budget recommendations. The hospital authorities asked for \$475,574 in all.

Here are the purposes for which the \$477,374 was voted: Administration \$19,204; professional care \$128,990; custodial care \$223,074; operation of plant \$46,283; maintenance of plant \$25,697; agricultural levels \$10,010; additions and betterments \$3,900.

BY OBJECTS Here's how the same \$477,374 was divided: salaries and wages \$184,520; maintenance of plant \$25,697; postage, telephone and telegrams \$1,700; travel expense \$200; printing and binding \$500; motor vehicle operation \$3,500; repairs \$14,300; general expense \$1,225; insurance and contracts \$2,070; equipment \$12,200; additions and betterments \$3,900.

Divide the grand total appropriation for the hospital (\$477,374) by the average number of inmates, and it is found that there is \$169.44 available in spending the munificent sum of \$169.44 a year per inmate for all purposes down to and including postage. That's less than 30 cents a day.

Gold Mining Booming Again In Rutherford

One Engineer Runs Across Vein in South Mountain Range Assaying Over \$500 Per Ton

By MRS. J. H. HARRELL Charlotte News Staff Writer SPINDALE—Gold mining which has been carried on from time to time in Rutherford County, has been revived again. Experienced miners have recently discovered enormous deposits of rich vein of gold ore assaying about \$500 a ton was uncovered.

A Shrum Wortham, native of Henderson and a retired tobacco buyer in Turkey and Greece, is president and director of the Rutherford Star Mining Corp. J. Wilmer Miller, a former vice president and a director. He is a native of Pennsylvania. Martin L. Carr Jr. of Asheville is secretary and a director. The Gold Star Mining Co. has an office in Union Mills.

The placer miners of earlier days panned from the streams and the gravel beds in the valleys of the South Mountain Range great quantities of free gold. This important gold producing belt runs as far as Morganton in a strip of land 25 miles long and ten miles wide. Later as many places the auriferous quartz veins were found to shallow depths for the free gold that was to be worked in the oxidized ores above water level of the mines. It is estimated here it has at least \$50,000,000 in gold had been taken from this district in the Civil War.

Mr. Miller had studied of this gold zone. He had learned of the great quantities of gold once mined in this section and how the mines had never been worked to depths.

That information was of real interest. He decided to come to Rutherford County and investigate the gold mining possibilities. He has not been disappointed. The indications are that the gold deposits are rich, as he goes deeper into the earth.

Mr. Miller studied the property made extensive explorations, sank shafts, and drilled on the vein-cross-cutting them at many places and levels. A series of five parallel auriferous quartz veins 100 feet and more apart are indicated. The major part of the gold is associated with the pyrites mineral. Prior to present operations at no point on this 203-acre tract had the veins been mined to water level.

Since there was a water flow of 6,000 gallons per hour, it was deemed wise to dig a tunnel to drain the water from the main source of the precious deposits into a nearby branch as this is less expensive than to install expensive machinery to pump the water out. A tunnel, 800 feet long, with 700 feet completed had been dug. Some of the great quantities of free taken at water level when assayed showed values up to \$500 per ton.

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