PRISON GUARDS AND CONTRACTORS PAID TRIBUTE WHEN BECKHAM WAS GOVERNOR

Deaths Followed Cruel Whippings Under Warden Lillard—Stones and Bugs in Food—Sworn Testimony on File at Frankfort Reveals Sordid Details

When J. C. W. Beckham was Governor of Kentucky, the guards at the State Penitentiary at Frankfort could regular tribute to the Beckham machine, captained by Percy Hiatt. The same thing was done by the attendants and other employees of the State Asylums. The contractors paid regular tribute. Every guard at the prison was assessed from $25 to $50, sometimes more, for the Beckham political machine.

Continued at the prison under Governor Beckham as Governor were an army of guards from the prison to the polls in Frankfort to the effect that the bugs, worms and rocks in the beans, rats and mice were found in the food and cockroaches in the bread.

Prisoners were whipped on the naked backs until the boards of which they were put around their heads flattened them from making sounds, and there are at least two incidents recorded in the testimony of prisoners who died soon after such beatings.

How Funds Were Gleaned

H. H. Brown, Jr., a former law partner of Governor Beckham, was named by the legislature ever which Beckham had full control, as chairman of the commission. Percy Haly, who is appointed by Governor Beckham to succeed Brown, had control of certain contributions.

General Haly and Mr. Brown were both friends and the boards of which they were members occupied adjoining offices. They also served as Mr. Beckham's political cabinet, managed the political details of his campaigns and financed the Beckham machine with tribute exacted from all employees of the prisons and asylums and all who had contracts with the said institutions.

Following the term of Governor Beckham the state inspector and examiner conducted an investigation of the prison commission. The report of this investigation was made public March 4, 1910, and is now on file in Frankfort. E. T. Lillard was the warden in Governor Beckham's term until November, 1908.

This tells the real story of how affairs were handled under Mr. Beckham, whose backers now say he was the "Greatest Governor Kentucky Ever Had."

The state examiner said that the auditor's record showed an actual deficiency of $51,962.20, greater than the commissioners' record showed and that "after much labor I am unable to account for part of the large discrepancy between the totals and mine."

More Guards than Necessary

It was pointed out in the examiner's report that more guards and assistant deputy wardens than were necessary were employed at the prisons.

D. H. HUDDROCK, of Elliott County, (Test. pp. 228-30) testified that he was employed six years as a guard at the Frankfort Penitentiary. He testified that guards who did not pay up receipt, from $25 to $50, for political campaign were dismissed. He was suspended at one time, but was reinstated when his political sponsor was nominated for the legislature.

CHARLES W. BROWER, of Frankfort, (Test. pp. 231-37) for five years a guard at the penitentiary, testified "I contributed every time they asked me to. I paid $50 when I could; was usually contributed."

T. D. on $25 to $50.

C. M. NOBLES, of Franklin, guard at the penitentiary, (Test. pp. 237-39) testified that he thought Mr. Brown "got about $1,000 from me." A part of his testimony is:

"We paid whatever they called for. Sometimes as high as $50. I don't remember how much I paid. I was not here often I paid that time."

EDWARD A. BROWN, of Franklin County, (Test. pp. 247-250) for about five years a guard, testified that he regularly contributed to the campaign funds. Asked if he was not contributed, said: "I was kept very busy. I was not contributed when they called on me."

LEWIS F. THOMPSON (pp. 253-58), of Wayne County, for about three years a guard, testified that he contributed regularly, usually about $50.

CHARLES E. HOGE (pp. 259-263), of Franklin County, president of the Hoge Manufacturing Company, testified that he was a contractor for prison labor, testified as to his assistance. "We contributed at each general election when it was organized and for several years before we always contributed."

W. S. HAWKINS, of Carroll County, a guard for two years, was asked if he always paid campaign contributions while connected with the prison. His answer was:

"I paid $50. Men receiving $100 pay $50."

G. W. THOMAS, of Nelson County, for three years employed in various capacities, testified he paid $50 to the political machines.

PATENT BELL (pp. 242-3), of Franklin, for two years a guard, testified:

"The best of my recollection the first year I was there I was assessed $30, and the second year $50. One assessment was for the Democratic congressional primary in the Fourth District, I think it was, and most of the other assessments was also for primaries and part of it for general elections. I do not recall the details."

BRAGG RARDIN, of Henry County, (Test. pp. 210-14) testified he contributed each year about $50.

COL. H. T. ESTES, of Frankfort, part of the time assistant deputy warden, testified he always paid the assessments giving as much as $50 a year.

JOHN SCHROADER, of Covington, (Test. pp. 223-24) testified he contributed.

O. T. IRELAND, of Frankfort, a guard for two years, declared he collected from $2,700 to $2,800 at one time from guards paid $50 each, the deputy and assistant deputy wardens $50 each and the warden $110.

CHARLES ANDREWS, employed as a guard six years, said he "was assessed every year for campaign purposes. Once I said he paid $50, as the other guards paid at that time.

T. M. PEYTHIAN, for about sixteen years at the penitentiary, said he contributed each year about $50.

Testimony that was given revealed that the money was not collected only in the interest of the Democratic party, but that when needed it was collected for use of the Beckham machine in primaries and that such collections were made in the Beckham-Gregory primary and that guards were discharged because they supported McCreary.

The report of the state examiner contains the testimony of some of the witnesses whose verbatim testimony of years in the form of questions in the record now on file in Frankfort. The testimony is contained in the official report follows:

H. J. HARRIS, (Test. pp. 110-122) of Lexington, Kentucky, who was a guard at the prison at Frankfort Penitentiary for two years and until 1906, states that he saw cockroaches in the soup, that the bread was bad, rats and mice were found in the food during Warden Lillard's incumbency.

S. L. HARNEY, of Lexington, Kentucky, (Test. pp. 122-131), ex-guard, who left the prison service in April, 1906, after a service of two years and seven months, and who served until 1906, states that he saw cockroaches in the soup, that the bread was bad, rats and mice were found in the food during Warden Lillard's incumbency.

NICHOLAS P. CRAWLEY, of Lexington, Kentucky, (Test. pp. 132-137), ex-guard, who served from 1901 to 1904, under Warden Lillard, states that he did not see whipping for ten or eleven months; that the prisoners were whipped on the naked back with a seven strand leather strap; were put around their heads to prevent them from making outcry; remembers the whipping of Jack Lewis and that he saw the prisoner in the hospital three or four days after; being whipped the last time, but says he does not know the cause.

GEORGE T. PETTIGREW, ex-guard, of Lexington, Kentucky, (Test. pp. 109-110), testified that under Warden Lillard's administration he saw food was very poor; that he saw cockroaches in the food; that he whipped prisoners, whipping usually on an average of about four whippers per day, rarely more than two; that Lillard or Lieutenant Warden Rauch was present at the whippings, and counted him so whipped; such severity that he frequently whipped prisoners until the blood flowed while being whipped; that he was present when Lillard cut up to make room for the prisoners who were whipped; that the prisoners were so severely whipped that they would be bloody and raw; that he was called to the hospital to remove one time, and when he went there he found one out of a window and broke her leg. He states that he received $10 a month salary from the Frankfort Chair Co. for reporting names of prisoners who were whipped and the number of lashes they received; that not more usually whipped for the offense; that guard Alexander drew $10.00 a month from the Chair Company; that guard Wentworth also received $10.00 from the Chair Company; that he boarded with Warden Lillard, and that treaties heard many stories from the prisoners in Lillard's home; that when the second whipping process the Chair Company stopped paying him.

I am ready to testify to above statements specifically, but do not desire to appear before the committee unless it is absolutely necessary.

Crowe Myers, former prisoner, colored, Louisville, Kentucky, (Test. pp. 163-171), who was pardoned in June, 1908, states that under Warden Lillard the beans were full of bugs and rocks; that he saw rats in the milk and mice in the beans; that he was whipped with a leash, bread and meat; that long ranger, a prisoner, was whipped by guard Alexander until his hips were bloody; that Sam Smith, another prisoner, was whipped by Mike Crawley and was then whipped and died shortly afterward. (See reference to Crawley's statement heretofore.)

CORA LEE PORTER, colored, former prisoner, of Lexington, Kentucky, (Test. pp. 138-151), states that a prisoner named Sarah Blanton, was whipped, receiving twenty-four lashes, and died; that a prisoner physician, told the witness that the prisoner would never recover from the whipping, and shortly after the prisoner died; he also states that she was whipped by guard Madgen while she was washing.

WILLIAM HARRY MONTGOMERY, colored, former prisoner, of Louisville, (Test. pp. 172-6), who was pardoned in 1907, states that he did the painting in the prison while he was prisoner, and was never punished; states that he saw prisoners whipped until they were blistered; that a woman jumped out a window to keep from being whipped, but does not know her name; that he saw rats, mice and cockroaches in the hash and vegetable; and rocks in the beans; that Sam Smith was frequent sufferer under Warden Lillard; that Warden Lillard got good supplies for his home in the prison warehouse; but does not know that Lillard paid for these supplies.

W. L. VAN ARSDALL, of Fleming County, (Test. pp. 151-157), guard from July, 1906, to January, 1907, states that Sam Long, young, under Warden Lillard, cut the blood from a prisoner.

JAMES E. KINNARD, white, (Test. pp. 158-162), former prisoner, of Louisville, who was in the Frankfort Penitentiary from November, 1904, to September, 1908, states that he worked in the engine room and cooked for Warden Olson and Warden Hawkins; that under Lillard the meat was very bad; that a carload of bacon bones from Armour & Co. had maggots in them; that bones were thrown on butts and they were afterwards served to prisoners; that there were rocks, gravel, and bugs in the beans; that Prisoner John Hunter would take apples, vegetables, and meats to Warden Lillard's residence. He also testifies that the meat and flour were very bad; that the prisoner cut off his fingers because of punishment for about two years; that he saw a prisoner whipped until his bowels were bare; that he saw mice in the cooked cabbage and cockroaches in the bread.

E. D. COOLEY, ex-guard, (Test. pp. 206-8), of Garrard County, states that he served from 1901 to 1907, that he saw the whipping for five or six months under Warden Lillard; that he was informed by Deputy Warden Alexander and Nelson to whip hard; that he never saw the blood would come out; that the man whom he whipped, the first time he whipped on the bottom and the whole; with their underclothing and that in a number of instances prisoners were held four hours; that Lillard would hold him by; Winford, and Nelson would whip; that he saw Lillard cut the prisoners' clothes off; that he jumped out of the window to escape being beaten; that Lillard; to avoid whipping him, would put him in the hospital; that he was whipped by Deputy Warden Alexander and Nelson with strap; that he was whipped on the naked back