

## FAILURE TO 'MAKE TASK' IN PENAL FARM SHIRT PLANT SENDS LAD TO 'THE HOLE'

Youth of 19, First Offender, Tells Harrowing  
Story of Blows and Cruelty;  
Handcuffed to Bars.

This is the eighth of a series on conditions at the Indiana penal farm.

BY ARCH STEINEL  
Times Staff Writer

Fuzz is on his face. Just 19 years old and serving his first "jolt" in the Indiana state farm, but they put him in the "hole" for failing to turn out the required number of shirt-cuffs in the farm's factory, he declares.

He's out now. He can talk. And so Otis Little of 633 Collier street, told in an affidavit to The Indianapolis Times of the horrors of that "hole."

He tells of "rats"—the bips and quadrupeds. He tells how it feels to stand up all day with your hands cuffed to bars and living on bread and water.

"I... was sentenced around June 1, 1932, in the court of Municipal Judge William H. Sheaffer, on a vehicle taking charge," begins the story of Little in affidavit.

### Sent to Shirt Factory

"They put me to work in the shirt factory when I first went there."

"I had a fight with the manager of the factory... for not making task. I was supposed to put out forty-five double dozen. That is what is called putting cuffs on shirts and forty-five double-dozen, a day's task, means you turn shirts with cuffs on them to the extent of forty-five dozen," says the youth's sworn statement.

"I was putting out about thirty dozen a day. — is a civilian. They had rung the bell to quit. — called me into his office and said, 'Say, how many shirts did you get out, Little?'"

### Hit With Fist, He Claims

"I told him," continues the youth's affidavit, "thirty double dozen. He took a pop at me with his fist. I stood there and waited off the blows as he struck. If I had fought back, the screws (guards) would have blackjacked me. He gave me a shove out the door and told me to make task the next day." (Make task is doing your allotted amount of work.)

But the youth with the fuzz on his face didn't "make task." "I got put in the 'hole.' I was in there four days, handcuffed to the bars. Bread and water three times a day. I was all alone in the hole until the fourth day, when they brought a fellow who was on the next machine to me for not making task. I think he stayed three or four days," says Little's sworn statement.

### Rats His Cellmates

The loneliness of that "hole" for Little during three of those four days graphically printed an impression upon him.

Rats and roaches scurried around him, past his cell, into other cells, always hide-and-seek, his affidavit relates.

"The smell in the 'hole' is bad. They let you down at nighttime to drink water. Captain Arment comes in and lets you down. He stays there while you're drinking water. Then he handcuffs you back to the bars," declares the youth's notarized statement.

"The head doctor comes in with Arment and asks you if you're all right."

"You tell them you're all right," adds his statement, "if you don't, I've heard they blackjack you."

### Must Keep Shifting

"Standing in the hole all day, I'd get my feet up on a cross bar and kind of squat down to rest myself. You get tired and rest yourself against the door and it pulls against your wrists and the handcuffs and hurts. You got to keep shifting around, for it gets tiresome," charges Little's affidavit.

"The last day I was just about hanging there. I was tired and hungry. Rats ran all around," says the youth's sworn statement.

"There's a storeroom above the

'hole.' There's a transom above a door into the hole and it's the only visible means of getting air in the 'hole.' It's pretty stuffy," avers his affidavit.

"It's kind of chilly at nights, so I'd leave my clothes on. I'd use my shoes for a pillow. You couldn't sleep on the board very well; it was hardly wide enough," are the simple schoolboy words of Little in his statement.

### "Storeroom" as Blind

Visitors to the state farm escorted for tours of inspection pass the "hole" by thinking it is another storeroom, relates Little in his affidavit.

"It says 'Storeroom' on the door next to the 'hole.' This door leads to the storeroom. The 'hole' door had nothing on it, but visitors go right past it and don't ask what that door leads to, for they think it is part of the storeroom," he says under oath.

"It is another 'storeroom.' Censoring of letters at the state farm prevents inmates from discussing any incidents surrounding their lives as inmates."

### Can't Tell Relatives

"They can not tell what they have been doing, the time they spent in the 'hole.'"

"One Negro wrote to his sister. He didn't have anything to say, because he couldn't say anything about the farm, so on a big piece of paper he wrote, 'Dear Sis: Getting along okay. Please send me five cans of tobacco,' and then signed his name," says Little's affidavit.

Another former inmate relates of a husband who wrote to his wife thus:

"Dear Wife: If you can't send me any tobacco, don't answer this letter," and the cramped missive ended with the signing of the husband's name.

### Inmates Near Riot

Machines in the shirt factory clicked industriously on one of Little's days at the farm.

Collars of shirts were being sewn on. Cuffs were stitched to sleeves. "Task! Make Task!" hummed in the minds of the inmates, as they turned out their double-dozen.

Then red riot, unreasoning rage, arose in this state factory of contract labor, manned by petty offenders.

An inmate held up two fingers. It was the signal to go to a restroom. The guard shook his head. "No." "I saw a screw — of the shirt factory hit a man in the ear when the map wanted to go. He wouldn't let him go. Then some of the boys started toward — and the runner made them get back. It just about started a riot," relates Little in telling of the incident in his affidavit.

### Knick-Knacks Are Traded

One of the state farm inmates' pastimes is making knick-knacks to trade for tobacco and alleged favors from guards, according to Little.

As he made the affidavit he, boyishly proud, told of a sailor's knot he had obtained in a tobacco trade from a former navy man incarcerated at the farm and how it could be used for a watch chain.

And he told, too, of the Mexican who made horsehair watch chains,

## DANCER WEDS SOCIETY DIVORCEE



Fred Astaire, famous dancer and musical comedy star, has taken a partner for life. For here you see him with Mrs. Phyllis Livingston Potter, 25-year-old society divorcee, following their marriage in New York. Astaire, 34, is brother and former dancing teammate of Adele Astaire, who a year ago wed Lord Cavendish of England.

## DIGS UP LOST WATCH

Timepiece Swept Away in Flood Found 3 Feet Under Ground.

DUXBURY, Vt., July 20.—The 1927 Vermont flood washed away the home of John Arkley.

Arkley lost practically all his personal belongings, including a gold watch.

Recently, workmen excavating near the former site of the Arkley home recovered the timepiece from 3½ feet below ground.

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## SIXTH BANDIT SUSPECT UNDER POLICE GRILLING

Alleged Member of Gang to  
Be Quizzed About London Holdup.

Detectives responsible for the capture of five members of an alleged gang, charged with fourteen robberies in Indianapolis, announced today that Ted West, 19, of 2037 Ludlow avenue, now in jail charged with vagrancy, will be questioned about an attempted payroll robbery on the Hugh McK. Landon estate on July 7.

In alleged confessions, said by police to have been made today by James Turner, 51, of the 200 block Ludlow avenue, and his son Richard, 21, who with Paul Parker, 21, of the 1200 block East Sixteenth street, were bound over to the grand jury on \$5,000 bonds. West is alleged to have discussed the proposed holdup with them two weeks before it was attempted.

According to police, both Turners, in their purported confessions, stated that West, a former employee of the Leslie Colvin Construction Company, is alleged to have given them details concerning the payroll which arrived weekly at the Landon estate on Spring Mill road.

When the bandits missed the payroll there July 7, they robbed Ray McK. Landon, banker, because he had only some change on his person.

Two other Indianapolis youths, arrested as members of the alleged gang, are held at Muncie. William Allen Shaw, 19, was sentenced to serve ten years in the Indiana state prison after being convicted Tuesday in Muncie, and Noble Claxcomb, 30, who with Shaw lived in the 1200 block North State avenue, is awaiting trial there charged with robbery.

## LIBRARY CONTRACT LET

Bowman Elder's Firm Is Awarded  
Contract by State.

Indianapolis Office Furniture Company, of which Bowman Elder, McNutt adviser, is treasurer, was awarded a \$39,748.50 contract for

furnishing the new state library, it was announced today. The furniture will be made at Shelbyville.

## Frankfort Painter Is Killed

FRANKFORT, Ind., July 20.—John E. Martin, 44, painter, was fatally injured when he fell from a truck in a collision here.

## Bank Conservator Named

By United Press  
NOBLESVILLE, Ind., July 20.—A. H. Baker, Democratic chairman of the Sixth Indiana district, today was named conservator for the Citizens State bank of Noblesville. The institution was closed last week by the state banking department.

## Friday Will Be COUPON DAY

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