

ONE THOUSAND CONVICTS IN FIERCE ESCAPE PLOT

Pittsburgh, July 21.—The interior of the main building of the Western Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, situated on the Ohio River in the Woods Run district, was wrecked, a dozen smaller buildings connected with the institution were destroyed by fire and fourteen persons, nine of them convicts were injured this afternoon in what is declared to have been the greatest prison riot and attempted delivery in the history of the United States.

The nine convicts injured were shot by city police, country detectives and prison guards while attempting to fight their way to liberty. Three were so seriously injured that it is declared their recovery is impossible. The others wounded include three city police officials and a district fire chief who were injured in the rioting, and a city fireman, who was seriously burned while fighting the flames.

Virtually all of the 1,135 prisoners except 50 who are women took part in the rioting both inside the main building and in the prison yard. The rioting lasted more than two hours and it was at least that long before the firemen had the flames under control.

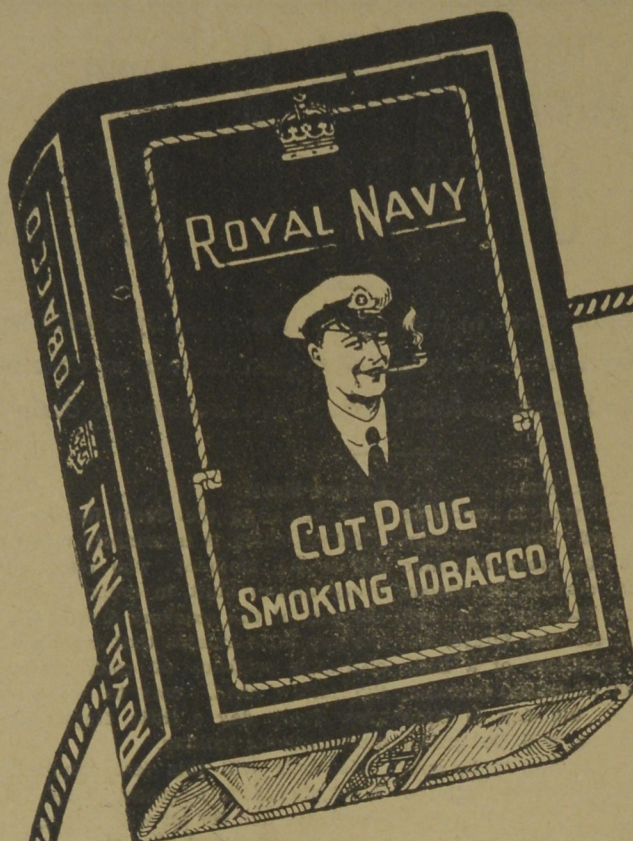
Flames Infuriate Prisoners.

While 350 city and county officials and the full corps of guards battled with the maddened convicts, all of the firemen from the North Side fought the flames to keep them from destroying the main building, where the convicts were confined after they had been driven from the yard. As the flames leaped up from the buildings and licked the window frames of the cells in which they were confined, the prisoners shrieked, cursed, prayed, shouted for help and tore at the bars. Through it all there was the desperate struggle between the hundreds of guards and police and the criminals fighting for freedom and to escape the fiery death that threatened them.

The rioting and fire began simultaneously, and according to the prison officials were a part of the plot to empty the great institution of its hordes of criminals.

The noon meal had been served to the first squad of almost 500 prisoners in the dining hall and they had been returned to their cells and the second squad of 650 was in the dining room when two of the prisoners started a fight. Soon dishes, chairs, tables and other missiles were whirling through the air. Then a rush was made for the guards. The latter, however, retreated to the prison walls and covered the men with their rifles.

Simultaneously with the rioting fires started in the weaving shop, the broom shop, the shoe shop, the chapel and the kitchen. A negro prisoner was seen applying a torch to two of the buildings. A moment later he was felled by a guard.



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The buildings, dry as tinder, were soon in flames and the prisoners broke for the open. The rioting convicts acted like stampeding cattle.

Shrieking and cursing they hurled every sort of article or weapon they could find. While reserve guards stationed themselves on the walls to prevent escape in that way, others formed lines to prevent the prisoners from rushing the gates.

Guards Use Clubbed Rifles

Practically all the shooting took place in the main building. In the rioting in the yards the guards used clubbed rifles and threats of volleys to control the frenzied prisoners. It was almost half an hour from the time that the rioting started before the 650 men had been driven inside the building.

Several times the huge gates were swung open to permit fire engines to enter and at these times all that stood between the prisoners and liberty were two lines of guards, one inside the gates and one outside. However, none succeeded in breaking through, so far as is known.

The worst phase of the rioting came after the prisoners had been cleared from the yard and had been locked inside the building. Once inside, they defied the guards when ordered to go to their cells. Taking refuge on top of the cell tiers, they rained down bricks, pieces of cement, wash stands which they tore from the walls and even large pieces of steel which they tore from the cells.

Tearing loose steel bars from the cell tiers, they pried and battered down cells, brick partitions and even was eighteen inches thick, and hurled it all down on the guards and police who were attempting to control them. Practically 40 per cent. of the cells were damaged in this manner before the prisoners were subdued and driven into cells.

The principal complaint of the prisoners has been that their food was not satisfactory and that they were not permitted to have cigarettes. The women, it was learned, were indignant because they were not permitted to use face powder and rouge, saying that the use of cosmetics was as much a necessary part of their toilet inside the prison as on the outside.

A FOND GOODBYE.

Servant (leaving)—I'm telling ye, Mrs. Croft ye'll miss me when I'm away.

Mistress—Yes I don't doubt it but then on the other hand, I won't miss so many other things!

Newcastle Leader: Rev. Alban F. Bate, of Fredericton, spent a few days of this week with his parents at the Rectory, before proceeding with Mrs. Bate and infant daughter to Charlottetown, where he will spend his vacation.

Mr. James Holmes, a well known lumberman of Doaktown, is a guest at Windsor Hall.

Neighbors don't like the woman who sends her clothes away from the house to be laundered because they have no chance to find out on wash day what kind of underwear she owns.

A snobbish woman is so serious and important that she wouldn't recall, if she could, her girlhood days, when she used to slide down the bannisters.

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