

Leaders Probation

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Burt Galaway

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Adult Probation *Thomas Ellsworth*

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House Arrest *James L. Walker*

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This Issue in Brief

Community Service: Toward Program Definition.—Over the past two decades, community service work order programs have been established at various points in the adult and juvenile justice systems. On the basis of detailed study of 14 community service programs, authors Joe Hudson and Burt Galalway describe a detailed community service program model. Key elements of program structure are described, including inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, along with their linking logic. According to the authors, preparation of this type of program model is a necessary prerequisite for sound management practices, as well as for developing and implementing program evaluation research.

Identifying the Actual and Preferred Goals of Adult Probation.—The field of adult probation has undergone considerable change over the last 10 years, reflecting a perceived public sentiment which emphasizes enforcement and community protection. As a result, the goals of probation have shifted. Based on a survey of adult probation professionals in two midwestern states, author Thomas Ellsworth confirms the existence of a dual goal structure in probation, encompassing both rehabilitation and enforcement. Further, the study results reveal that probation professionals prefer a dual goal structure in administering probation services.

Sharing the Credit, Sharing the Blame: Managing Political Risks in Electronically Monitored House Arrest.—For the last several years, electronically monitored house arrest has been the topic of extensive commentary in the literature. Scant attention, however, has been paid to the political environment in which such programs must exist. Using a brief case study of one county in Ohio, author James L. Walker suggests a four-part implementation strategy aimed at reducing the risks to the political actors involved in these programs. He concludes that

only if political considerations are properly managed will efficient and legitimate use of electronic monitoring programs be likely.

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Calaboose: Small Town Lockup

BY LOIS A. GUYON AND HELEN FAY GREEN*

THE LITERATURE on jails is often lamented to be sparse and the field of jail research to be under-developed and neglected. There has been, however, a consistent interest in jails shown in the literature of jail architecture, jail management, jail inhabitants, and jail history. What has been written tends to evaluate the large city jails, but some interest has been shown in the "small jail." The "small jail" generally refers to the county jail or the jail of a small city.

The real "small jail," the calaboose or small town lockup, has been virtually overlooked. In the incorporated towns of under 2,000 population, the local policing effort until the 1960's was aided by the building and maintaining of a local jail. While these jails are not used today, they are still in existence in many rural towns.

The calaboose today is used as a storage shed, a garage, a grainery, or a museum. The sturdy construction of the buildings, as well as their small size, has resulted in their preservation. In some cases, original hardware may be attached.

This article reports the history of the calaboose and examines their architecture and the records of some of the people associated with small town criminal justice. Small town jails were visited, small town marshals interviewed, and small town records read to develop the picture of rural jails.

Providing Municipal Services

In the United States during the 1800's, rural midwestern towns were being settled. Most were small with populations of under 1,000 persons. The necessary services such as blacksmith, general store, school, church, and undertaker were established to serve the people who relied on the town to support their agricultural efforts.

As the towns grew and became populated with merchants and others serving the farmers, it became apparent that a system of government was needed to provide municipal services to the people. State statutes gave the incorporated towns authority to tax the citizens. With these taxes came the ability to establish town meeting halls, hire employees, and build jails.

Some of the first municipal activities of a small rural town in eastern Iowa, noted in the records of Grand Mound, Iowa (incorporated in 1884), were the building of sidewalks, caring for streets, and developing of fire protection. The hiring of a marshal, keeping travelers overnight, licensing saloons and restaurants, and building a small lockup for the town were services that were soon to follow.

The city fathers were authorized to collect a special tax for the purpose of purchasing a lot and constructing council chambers. The total cost of the project was not to exceed \$450. The lot cost was not to exceed \$60.

The voters voted 33 for and 3 against building the town hall which was to be 20 feet wide, 32 feet long, and 18 feet posts (high). The building was to be used as a council chamber, a place to store the hook and ladder, fire supplies, etc., and it was directed that a small lockup be built inside of same.¹ Plans were drawn by Mr. Ahlff and presented to the committee on public building and grounds. Three bids were received for \$825, \$850, and \$675. The lowest bid was accepted. The plans were drawn in June 1892. By September the council voted that the city hall be accepted and that an order be drawn to pay the contractor in full. The \$250 cost overrun amounted to a 50 percent unanticipated cost to the citizens.

The building was insured by October for \$500 for 1 year @ 1¼. The insurance on the building is still being paid today. Use of the building has not changed significantly. It now houses a storage area and continues to serve the public. The lock-up has been removed.

Origins of the Calaboose

The local lockup or jail was sometimes referred to as a "calaboose." The origin of the term has been attributed to the Negro French of Louisiana (calaboose) and the Spanish calabozo or dungeon.² The *Dictionary of American Slang* lists "calaboose" as an American slang word in 1975, but the use of the word appears to have been common in the 1800's.³ The local jail in Delmar, Iowa, which has been restored as an historic building, continued to be called "the calaboose" in 1989. While the term is usually attributed to use in the South, it was also used in the Midwest. Calaboose can refer to any prison cell but usually means a small jail. The term "jug" was also used

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to refer to the lockup in the Grand Mound, Iowa, records.

In the mid 1800's when many midwestern towns were establishing their first jails, the buildings were required by necessity rather than by legal dictate or convention. The inhabitants of the calaboose who required a secure housing arrangement were of four types. The first and most common type was the inebriate. Local oral histories are rich with stories about the night that the town drunk was locked in the jail. One such story tells of the town drunk of Grand Mound, Iowa, who was arrested by the town marshal and taken to the lockup at the city hall. The jail cell had a faulty lock and the drunk could not be held securely. The marshal went across the street to the tavern where several local young men were playing pool. The young men were enlisted to hold the door shut on the cell until the sheriff arrived from the county seat of Clinton, Iowa, 27 miles away, to pick up the prisoner.⁴ On occasion, the drunk would be placed in the jail until sober and then released without formal prosecution. This drunk inhabitant of the jail faced prosecution for beating his wife.

A second visitor to the calaboose was the tramp. A notation in the 1896 council minutes of the town of Grand Mound, Iowa, shows that the Committee of Public Buildings and Grounds reported that tramps broke the sash and light out of the jail cell. Tramps were transient males with no visible means of support who had committed no violation of the criminal codes. These men were housed in the jail due to either lack of hotel rooms or lack of funds to pay for such if they did exist. The tramps were looked upon with suspicion by local citizens and generally were closely watched by marshals who had no trouble identifying them as strangers. In small towns, the marshal knew all local inhabitants. Tramps were usually encouraged to move on to another town after being given a one-night free lodging at the jail. A part-time policeman in Grand Mound, Iowa, was paid \$.85 for transporting "paupers" in 1895.

Travelers made up a third type of resident. In towns with no temporary public rooms for rent or where locals were unwilling to rent, the jail was used as an occasional low cost bed.⁵ The fourth category of jail residents included those confined because of criminal acts. Offenders were held only until transportation could be arranged to the county jail.

Accounts of jailing in the rural calaboose do not contain references to locking up of women. The

last marshal of Calamus, Iowa, who served until the 1970's, indicated he had never locked up a woman. The idea of locking up women seemed absurd and improbable to him.⁶

The availability of transportation dictated the need for a local jail. In most rural areas of the Midwest, roads were not paved at all until after the First World War. In winter or when there were muddy roads, the prisoners could not be transported until the snow was removed or the roads dried.

Two developments made major changes in when prisoners could be transported. The first was the availability of the automobile which reduced the amount of time required to transport the prisoner. By horse, transporting to the county jail could be a 2-day event. Use of the automobile reduced the time to no more than half a day. The second development was the paving and placing of gravel on roads. Gravel roads could be traveled upon even after heavy rains.

Staffing of the calaboose was the responsibility of the town council. A marshal was hired and given authority to arrest, guard, care for, and transport prisoners. The marshal of Grand Mound, Iowa, was paid \$150 a year according to council minutes of 1895. He also was expected to light the street lamps, janitor the city hall, and watch the town at night. He was paid quarterly. In the 1930's the marshal sold marriage, hunting, and fishing licenses as well as permits for new cars. He also served as an insurance agent and was the manager of the scale where crops were brought to be weighed.⁷ Being marshal also required supervision of part-time police. Grand Mound, Iowa, council minutes of July 14, 1896, show the following entry:

1896

July 14	John Quinn, Special marshal,	July 4,	
	day & night		5.00
	John Wulf, Special marshal,	July 4,	day & night 5.00
	W.E. Betzenderfer ⁸	"	" 5.00
	Jas Cook		night only 3.00
	Thore Olsen		day & night 5.00

The marshal was expected to use his own clothing and, when transportation was needed, to supply the horses, carriage, or automobile. The town did provide a badge; in Grand Mound, Iowa, \$1.07 was paid for a badge in 1894. The last of the midwestern marshals who served until the 1970's were sometimes expected to purchase their own badges and guns.⁹

Training of the marshal consisted of on the job experience and, after the Second World War, an occasional 1-day meeting at the state capital. The

meeting was not required and was generally attended by those invited by the county sheriff.¹⁰

Marshals were used in small rural towns until the 1970's in Clinton County, Iowa. The county sheriff then began adding deputies to his staff. These deputies were given the responsibility for patrol of the rural towns.¹¹ Towns gradually signed contracts with the county for policing services. Some small towns contracted with a single private person to patrol several towns as an alternative to contracting with the county.

The policing function of the small town was accomplished by either a marshal who was appointed or by a constable who was elected. The statutes of the State of Iowa in 1888 made provision for both. In some small towns such as Toronto, Iowa, the town first used a constable and then dropped that form for the marshal system.¹²

After the disappearance of the local small town marshal, the calaboose fell to disuse. When transporting to the county jail became practical the calaboose was seldom used. With the marshal gone, they were no longer needed.

Construction of the Calaboose

The physical structure of the calaboose varied depending upon local resources. Generally, local materials were used. One common building material was the rough hewn log. An example of the log jail existed at Nashville, in Brown County, Indiana.¹³ The Nashville jail was built in 1837. It was not until September 1919, that the last inmate was housed in the old log jail.

The jail forces were 18 feet high. There were two stories, the upper cell being reached from an outside stairway. The entrance was protected by two strong iron doors. Two small windows were covered with heavy iron grating and solid iron coverings that were locked with padlocks. Each entrance had a heavy solid iron door and a grated iron door to provide additional restraint. Locks consisted of heavy padlocks; the middle door was locked by two lever locks. The key for the large lever lock measured 36 inches in length and weighed about 5 pounds.

A wood burning stove in the lower cell provided heat for both the upper and lower compartments of the jail. The walls, consisting of three tiers of logs, were 3 feet thick. The inner and outer tiers were horizontal, while the center tier was perpendicular.

A second construction method was that of the 2 x 4 laid one on top of the other so that the 4-inch dimension created a 4-inch thick wall. Examples of 2 x 4 construction may be seen in the

jails of Coal Valley, Illinois; Ransom, Illinois; and Calamus, Iowa.

The Coal Valley, Illinois, jail is a one-story 2 x 4 construction building which has been restored. The 12-foot by 16-foot structure has two cells in the rear, the rooms being created by a 2 x 4 wall extending between the cells. Iron barred doors are used to secure the cells. A small 6-inch x 8-inch opening is placed over each cell door. The floor and ceiling are both 2 x 4-inch board construction. A jailer's office is in front of the cells. It contains two windows on the front of the building. A wood burning stove faces the door and sits along the wall between the cells. This stove was used to heat both the cells and office space.

The outside door to the jail is constructed with two layers of 1-inch thick boards. The doors of some wooden jails were made of three layers of 1-inch boards. The layers alternate between vertical, horizontal, and diagonal.

Concrete block was also used in some small town jails. This third type of building material was available prior to 1900 and was used to construct the Welton, Iowa, jail. This single story 13½ foot x 15½ foot building has a metal ceiling with metal braces. The floor is of poured concrete. The one-room jail was built in 1908 and now contains a two-cell iron cell block. The iron cells were built by E.T. Barnum Iron Works of Detroit, Michigan. A small narrow window is on the right side of the building (when facing the door while inside), and a large window is to the left of the door. A brick chimney provided evidence that a wood burning stove was placed on the left wall outside the cell area.

Fourth, some jails were made of stone. A restored example is at Delmar, Iowa, where the jail has an arched roof made of stone. The door of the 10 foot x 12 foot calaboose is of solid iron with a small metal grate at eye level. Two small windows (26½ inches x 13½ inches) centered on each side of the building provide scant light and ventilation. Metal mesh covers the windows on the outside of the building. This mesh covers iron bars which are located outside glass windows. The glass windows are hinged at the top. This one room lockup once held 21 drunk and brawling railroad workers, according to local lore.¹⁴

Adobe was also used as a material for making jails. This fifth method proved less than desirable, as escapes were easily accomplished by digging through the walls.¹⁵ Adobe is mud and sometimes grass pressed into bricks which are dried in the sun. Iron bars could be sunk into the adobe to form cells. This type of construction was not lim-

ited to small jails but was also used in the construction of Utah's first penitentiary.¹⁶

A sixth method of construction is the frame building. The wooden siding over wood studs with wood shingles on the roof was the construction method used in the Grand Mound, Iowa, jail. Generally this form of construction was not secure, and iron cages were soon introduced inside the frame structure. Iron cells were also placed in concrete, brick, and stone buildings for additional security and as a means of separating inmates from each other.

Brick was used as a seventh construction mode. The jail of DeWitt, Iowa, contained six cells and was once used as a county jail. While larger than some small town calaboose (48 feet, 4 inches x 38 feet, 4 inches), the brick structure served as a rural town jail when the county seat was moved to Clinton, Iowa. This jail was built in 1856.

Flooring of the DeWitt, Iowa, jail was of 2-inch oak planking placed in two layers. The second layer was cross-wise of the first. Both layers of oak were spiked into the joists. Ten-penny fencing nails were then driven into these planks about an inch apart with seven kegs of nails used in the flooring. Newspaper accounts described the floor as "an ugly impediment in the way of even the most accomplished diggers."¹⁷

Concrete was used as a flooring surface, as was the same 2 x 4 construction as the walls and ceilings of some jails. The 2 x 4 method resulted in a 4-inch thick wooden floor.

Walls of many early small jails were covered with plaster or masonry. Plaster walls were whitewashed with calcimine paint which was made from lime. The lime coating acted as a disinfectant and deodorizer and reflected light in the often dimly lit space. The white surface was used, as in modern jails, as a giant canvas for the scribbling of obscenities, names, and sometimes art of the inmates. An example of inmate art of the 1800's may be seen in the jail of Andrew, Iowa. Whitewashing was also used on the stone of the Delmar, Iowa, calaboose.

Living Conditions

Security in the small jail consisted of a combination of physical structure and supervision by the jailer. Small town marshals reported using the jail as an overnight holding cell only when absolutely necessary. When prisoners were in the jail, the marshal was expected to sleep at the jail or at least provide continuous intermittent supervision in case of fire or escape attempt.¹⁸

Food for prisoners was generally not a consider-

ation. Prisoners were released after a few hours in jail to "sober up" or were transferred to county jails within a few hours when longer term jailing was indicated by the condition of the prisoner or the offense.

Heat was provided by burning wood or coal in small stoves which were vented through the walls. The town provided the fuel. The stove was generally outside the cell area but in the case of the Delmar, Iowa, calaboose, the stove was accessible to the prisoners.

Toilet facilities consisted of what was called a vault or a bucket that would be emptied outside the jail. The vault was a hole dug in the ground. In the Calamus, Iowa, jail, the vault was at the rear of the 2 x 4 type construction building. It was covered with an enclosed wooden bench with four holes. Inmates would use this "outhouse convenience" rather than having to empty what was called the "slop bucket." There was no running water or plumbing in the small jail.

Beds in the calaboose were cots or were metal frames with wire to sleep upon. The minutes of the Grand Mound, Iowa, town meetings report that in 1896, \$2.25 was spent to purchase a mattress for the jail. Blankets were also provided.

Clothing worn by the prisoners was the property of the inmate. No effort was made to alter clothing or other personal property with the exception of checking the prisoner for knives or other weapons.

Although sanctioned by the statutes in the 1800's, prisoners were seldom held long enough in small jails to be put to hard labor. Prisoners had little to occupy their time. No programs of rehabilitation, work, or treatment were used.

The Calaboose Today

Currently the calabouses are used as sheds for storage of town property or have been sold to private individuals to be used as garages or grain bins. Some are restored and are listed on the national register of historic buildings. Fund raising has also capitalized on the calaboose as public figures are held in "jail" until "bail" is paid to a local charity. The metal cells, window bars, and doors of some jails were sold during World War II for scrap metal. Some metal cells have been moved to the town metal pile where they rust, but the sturdy construction of the little buildings has resulted in their survival.

The calaboose can be identified today by the knowledgeable jail watcher. The size of the building, which usually is about 10 feet x 14 feet, is the first clue in finding an old jail. They were

placed on the public land usually on the original plat of the town. Elderly longtime residents of the community are a valuable source in finding a building that has been moved. The moved buildings are generally close to the original location. The Ransom, Illinois, jail was moved to a farm about 1 mile from the center of town by placing the building on telephone poles and rolling it along the ground.¹⁹ Most have not been moved as much as a mile. If original hardware does not identify a building as a former jail, a close look at windows and doors may show where metal bars or locks were once placed. A review of town council proceedings and financial records may give clues to the existence of a calaboose. Old plat books may show the location of public buildings.

Identification of these early small jails will aid in their preservation and our understanding of the criminal justice system as it developed in rural towns. The old jail in some towns has become a focal point for civic pride and continues to serve the citizens long after its original function has been retired.

NOTES

¹Descriptions of the Grand Mound, Iowa, jail construction are taken from minutes of the Grand Mound Council which are located in the same building which is used today as the town hall.

²J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd edition), Volume II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 771.

³H. Wentworth and S. Flexner, *Dictionary of American Slang* (2nd supplemental edition). New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975.

⁴R.H. Green (personal communication, August 3, 1989).

⁵*Grand Mound Messenger*. This local newspaper was an insert to the *Wheatland Gazette* published in Wheatland, Iowa, April 14, 1937.

⁶L. Weise (personal communication, August 8, 1989).

⁷R.H. Green (personal communication, January 15, 1989).

⁸This special marshal was paid \$.85 for the transporting of "paupers" in 1895.

⁹L. Weise (personal communication, August 4, 1989).

¹⁰Mina St. John (personal communication, August 4, 1989).

¹¹Roger Heilig (personal communication, December 31, 1988).

¹²Mina St. John (personal communication, August 3, 1989).

¹³"The Old Log Jail," *Corrections Today*, 50, 1989, p. 70.

¹⁴Mary Maltas (personal communication, November 29, 1988).

¹⁵F. Harrison, *Hell Holes and Hangings*. Clarendon, Texas: Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 30.

¹⁶Harrison, p. 38.

¹⁷H. Wilkinson, "Of All Things," *The DeWitt Observer*, September 30, 1974.

¹⁸Mina St. John and L. Wiese (personal communication, August 1989).

¹⁹L. Ryan (personal communication, May 13, 1989).