

DESPITE VIOLENCE WITHIN WALLS,  
TOWN OF ATTICA MAINTAINS  
AN AIR OF SERENITY

28

# Despite Violence Within Cars Entering the Village Halted at Checkpoints

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ATTICA, N. Y., Sept. 13—  
This was a day of blood in this  
village of 2,875 inhabitants, a  
day that will be remembered  
here for decades. Yet there was  
much that belied it, much that  
spoke of rural tranquillity, too.

A strand of black crepe was  
hung over the big doors of the  
firehouse, and flags here were  
at half-staff. The state police  
and military convoys rolled  
through the village streets in-  
termittently, with headlights on.  
A man walked out of the prison  
grounds, wearing a green smock  
splattered with blood.

Cars coming into the village  
were halted at several check-  
points, first by the local auxil-  
iary police and, near the state  
correctional facility, by state  
policemen with shotguns rest-  
ing on their waists and pointing  
skyward, who checked the iden-  
tities of occupants and drivers.

Schools were declared closed  
here tomorrow and the four-  
day-old curfew went back into  
effect at 6 P.M.

### Town Scene Serene

Rumors of resignations by  
prison guards rippled through  
the village. But, apart from  
these obvious evidences, and  
apart from the grief of the  
survivors, this village, whose  
principal industry is penal cor-  
rection, was quiet, friendly and  
remarkably serene in its out-  
ward aspect.

Richard W. Miller, the Demo-  
cratic Mayor, was not at his  
office in the tiny municipal  
building attached to the fire-  
house on Water Street. As his  
secretary explained, "He's a  
correction officer, so I haven't  
seen him in some time." She  
said she hoped the Mayor was  
safe but did not know for  
certain.

"Most of the work here is  
up to the correctional insti-  
tute," she remarked.

Around the corner, on Main  
Street, a lanky lad in a green  
tee-shirt, paused to talk to a  
girl.

"How's your father?" the  
girl asked him.

"He's O.K.," the boy said  
with a wide smile. "The guy  
who was supposed to kill him  
had his arm shot off."

### A Casual Exchange

The exchange seemed almost  
casual. "No one gets too up-  
tight about it," the girl, 16-  
year-old Cindy Elmore, said.  
"My father's a correction offi-  
cer. I got three cousins in there  
and two aunts who work in the  
office, and a lot of friends."

Miss Elmore voiced an opin-  
ion held by others here that  
an unwise leniency had been  
established in procedures at  
the prison, and that today's  
events could not have happened  
under the former, tighter con-  
trols.

"I never thought I'd live to  
see the day when Attica be-  
came a national issue," said  
Mark Caffery, 17, who remark-  
ed that most places where  
Attica villagers go, people  
don't even recognize the name.

"I just say I'm from a place  
between Buffalo and Roches-  
ter," he said, but he guessed  
it would be different now.

"Welcome to Attica," a bill-  
board at the border says, and  
below it are 27 white slats,  
identifying nine churches, the  
Attica garden club, the His-  
torical Society, Attica Grange  
1058, the Rod and Gun Club,  
and the Rodeo and Show As-  
sociation, among others.

### Reality Screened Out

"Watch for deer" signs are  
posted along the roads leading  
in, and signs in front of frame  
houses offer "hale baby chicks,"  
Irish setter pups and "aprons"  
for sale.

There are many farms here,  
a large Westinghouse plant,  
two banks, a crate and box fac-  
tory, two lumber mills and two  
weekly newspapers, The Attica  
News and The Attica Penny-  
saver.

The high, turreted walls of  
the Correctional Facility wrap

a somber barrier of gray granite  
around its interior structures,  
and those walls screened out  
much of the reality and the hor-  
ror of the events inside.

A red Salvation Army can-  
teen, with a faded canvas awn-  
ing stretched behind it as a rain  
shelter, was pulled up tight  
against the wall, dispensing  
coffee 20 feet from the exit  
through which streams of  
weary, sometimes bloody men  
emerged.

The prison is set on a broad,  
pine-tree-studded campus, and  
several hundred cars were  
parked outside of it this after-  
noon.

### Tavern Is Closed

As various individuals came  
out of the iron gates of the  
small central entrance, news-  
men swarmed to them—first  
two, then five, then ten, finally  
30 or more, and even those  
tried to step briskly away from  
questioners.

The one small tavern in a  
white frame house near the  
prison that might have offered  
refreshments was closed.

1.675 ÷ 9 = 319