

Pox

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Dallas Jail Calm After Rioting By 160 on the Floor Above Ruby

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DALLAS, April 24 — The Dallas County Jail does not rank with Reading Gaol or the Bastille. But the jail, where 160 prisoners rioted last night, is rapidly acquiring an international reputation of its own.

The notoriety of this old, red brick building will be short-lived. Sometime next year, a larger, more secure and modern jail and courthouse will be completed.

Few Dallas residents begrudge its cost of \$10 million.

Part of the old jail's fame is undeserved. Tourists often mistake it for the Dallas City Jail, where Lee H. Oswald was shot to death five months ago.

The county jail to which Oswald, accused assassin of President Kennedy, was being taken on the morning he was killed, has suffered its own indignities. Jack L. Ruby, who was convicted of killing Oswald, awaits appeal of his case in an isolated cell on the sixth floor.

2 Still Are Fugitives

During Ruby's trial last month in the courtroom on the second floor of the jail building, five prisoners escaped from the jail upstairs. Waving a pistol carved from soap, they ran out past the room where Ruby was being tried.

Two of the five remain at large.

That escape drew the attention of policemen to a vagary of Texas law. There is no penalty for a jailbreak.

State legislators have said that they will introduce bills next year to remedy the oversight.

Sheriff Bill Becker, a soft-spoken man who is well

regarded in and out of the jail, was attending a police awards dinner at Memorial Auditorium when notified of the rioting.

The rebellion apparently began when a 50-year-old deputy sheriff, Ray Masters, was cut with a razor when he tried to stop two Negro prisoners from fighting.

In the Dallas County Jail, white and Negro prisoners are separated. Last night's rioters were Negroes.

By the time the sheriff returned, plumbing fixtures had been ripped out, windows on the seventh floor had been broken and a burning mattress had been thrown onto Elm Street.

Near Assassination Spot

Two sides of the jail face on Dealey Plaza Park at the spot where President Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22. His motorcade was on Elm Street when the President was shot.

The prisoners' complaint was that mail service was slow, that their cases were delayed in coming to court, and that they did not have free enough access to the district attorney's staff.

On one point, the sheriff and the prisoners agreed: the jail is too small for the number of inmates. Built to accommodate 750, the jail regularly houses more than 1,000.

As chanting and destruction continued last night, Sheriff Becker ordered fire hoses and police dogs brought to the seventh floor. The three hours of rioting ended at 11:30 P.M.

Two leaders of the riot were placed in solitary confinement.

On the floor below Ruby did not seem to be disturbed by the excitement overhead.