

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