

"Nonsuch Training School"

This institution officially started on January 1st. 1934 with five boys, but it really goes back to 1927 when I was in the Health Dept. A boy was sent to me on probation for four years, he was a tough little customer, but he got very lonely on the island, with no playmates (In those days Mrs. Tucker and I lived alone on the Island without electric lights or telephone).

Sammy is a man now and we see him once in a while - he tells the boys (and rightly too that he started "Nonsuch").

When Dr. Henry Wilkinson took over the Department; we often discussed the idea of getting more boys and starting a reformatory, many times we talked about it but little did we think it would eventually materialize.

We always think of Dr. Wilkinson as the God-father of "Nonsuch" because without his help we would not have got away to such a good start in 1934 as the Health Department provided the site, our salaries and telephone during that year.

Routine and Form of Discipline

Our routine is a modified naval one, three boys, usually leading hands, are quartermasters who strike the time from early morning until 8.30 p.m. when they standby hammocks.

They take to it naturally and live and act in a nautical manner which appeals to the, all routine orders are given to the Q.M. of the Watch who pipes them, then the boy Petty Officer sees them carried out.

They crew is divided into three Divisions 1st. 2nd. and 3rd or Fore-top, Main-top and Quarter-deck, one division being on duty for twenty-four hours, in charge of a leading hand who is responsible to the P.O, who in turn is answerable to the Officer of the Day.

Daily Routine (Summer).

Defaulters 5.30

Hands fall-in 6.00

Cooks, sweepers, Capt. of heads, store keeper, and other duty boys clean out their places, the remainder are told off for various jobs about the island.

7.00 Bathing Parade (Winter P.T.)

7.30 Cooks to the galley.

7.45 Breakfast.

8.30 Hands fall-in and are told off to cleaning stations, each boy has a section of the island, in the vicinity of the buildings to keep clean; stations and special duties are changed monthly.

9.00 Divisions - Inspection of clothing, lockers, and stations.

- 9.10 Prayers.
- 9.15 Boys to school - older boys to training classes - seamanship - knots and splices - boats work - etc.
- 11.40 Return tools.
- 11.45 Cooks to the galley.
- 12.00 Hands to dinner.
- 1.00 Defaulters fall-in.
- 1.15 Hands fall-in told off to jobs. Training classes for small boys.
- 3.40 Return tools
- 3.45 Cleaning stations
- 4.00 Evening Quarters - Inspection - Recreation.
- 5.30 Tea.
- 6.30 Defaulters and duty division to any chores that are necessary.
- 8.00 Standby hammocks - unlast and sling, wash.
- 8.45 Evening Prayers and pipe down. (No talking after lights out).

Defaulters

These are generally boys who get one or more days, for any breach of discipline or any other offence. The principal punishment, is to, shoulder ones hammock, and double around the building for fifteen minutes - which seems to produce desired results. A new recruit on seeing this drill, was heard to say "Man where's you going to?".

We seldom have any real trouble, and then mostly by a boy who has been sent down late - say about fourteen to sixteen years, but they knuckle down after awhile.

If a crime is committed, lets say - stealing, wilfull damage to property, or anything likely to upset the ordinary tranquility, of the ship - we have an enquiry on the Quarter-Deck, and if found out, which is generally the case the guilty party lands in the Captains report.

Defaulters, requests and complaints, are heard on Monday after Divisions, but a boy can see an officer, at any time by merely falling in on the Q.D. then the Q.M. is bound to fetch one.

Special Duties

Two boys are on duty for a month at the main kitchen to learn cooking, and when passed out as plain cooks, they go on to the bakery, when they can turn out, consistant batches of good bread they obtain a cooks badge.

At present there is one Petty Officer cook, three ordinary cooks, two bakers and two bakers helpers.

Boats and Boats crews

The coxswain has complete charge of all craft. The "Sea Horse" - whaler type 25 foot Aux, motor, sails and oars, was built at St. Davids by Jimmy Minors, from specifications of my own, to operate in Castle Harbour. Some people think the boys ought to row, but that stretch of water is not a mill pond, I dread to think what would have happened to a boy I took over, one rough night with tetanus, he lived because we were able to get him in the ambulance, in less than half an hour and there have been other cases.

A dinghy which the boys row into St. George's very often to get mail and incidentally saves fuel.

A punt 13' long fitted with 2 pairs of oars, is a handy craft for training and recreation.

Repairs to boats are done on the island, last year the dinghy was almost rebuilt, and new shoeing put on the "Sea Horse".

To pass for Coxswain and to get his badge a boy must know knots, and splices, put a thimble in a 3/8" wire-serve, and parcel - Rule of the Road, a knowledge of sewing, and mending sails, manage a boat under sail, and oars and operate and make minor repairs to motor engine. Manage his crew.

Conduct

A Good Conduct badge can be earned in eighteen months. There is no fund or vote to provide gratuities, but I think one should be. A penny a day for the first badge, and so on up a third - then it would be a great incentive to G.C. and then too a boy could be deprived (for misbehaviour) of a badge thereby losing several days pay.

Another reason why:-

If anyone has no money for five or six years, he may make a grab at the first, he sees.

Thirty-one boys have been discharged, four of which have to my knowledge been in trouble since.

Two are doing well on a tug-boat. One on a patrol boat. Four are in the Army. The others are at jobs in various parts of the Colony.

The most gratifying thing is that nearly all of them come back to see us, bringing news of the others and sometimes for advice, and help.

Conduct (cont)

One of the drawbacks to "Nonsuch" in the past was the danger of losing boats, which frequently happened, so in 1935, we started to make a slipway, 50 feet x 12 x 14 deep.

It took us two years, but during that time, the stone and rouble was used to make roads, and build walls around the gardens. The slip is fitted with 12 x 12" beams over head, on which the boat is hoisted during storms or for painting.

Two years ago the Public Works Dept. built on two rooms, under which we excavated a tank holding about 8,000 gallons this by the way saved the Government from supplying us with water this summer.

We also transported all the stone and material for this building - stone - from Ferry Reach and the rest from the Government Quarry.

The same will apply to the additions we hope-fully put in for, for 1942.

We take care of the white-washing, painting, repairs to the buildings - I mention this because it is a saving, and should be shewn to the credit side of the institution.

The Matron's job is a very varied job at "Nonsuch", cooking for so large a family, and at the same time training a different boy each month, is no easy matter. Hers is the job of barber, as well as nurse, usually after breakfast there is a row of boys on the verandah awaiting treatment for minor injuries. Owing to the war, we have been making our own shirts, seventy this summer, and we have about as many more flannel ones to make for this winter, add to this all mending, house work etc. she is a very busy person.

The Assistant Officer

We are indeed fortunate in having Mr. Roderick Doering, who has had a lot of experience amongst under-privileged boys in Canada, and in labour camps, also teaching in Cape Breton. A lay-reader (licensed by His Lordship The Bishop of Bermuda) and conducts, prayers and Sunday services in our Chapel. Keeps school daily this is quite an achievement because the boys ages are so varied, and their earlier education neglected. (the latter of course is the principal reason for their being sent down). These are only a few of his duties. We have to be on the job, all times, to carry out the routine, and discipline effectually, so we have no set time off.

The Hon. Chaplain.

Canon Tucker has from the beginning been a source of inspiration to us, and the boys, who look forward eagerly to his frequent visits, and the early service the next morning, he is very much a part of "Nonsuch".

"Old" boys are often, at the Rectory to see him and they are welcome.

Anecdotes

When the "Sea Horse" was launched at St. Davids by the late General Cubitt, and Blessed by the Chaplain, who used a fountain pen with Holy water. A few days afterwards I told the boys to, write home giving a description of the launching - one wrote "The Governor broke champagne on her, and the Chaplain threw ink at her".

I gave the boys three-penny pieces for the offertory at a service, afterwards one lad was given a tip by the Chaplain, he was heard to say "Look I got it back".

Now to Pipe down.

I will quote an entry in our visitors book by Mr. Alexander Patterson, His Majesty's Commissioner of Prisons for England and Wales.

"Nonsuch must surely be one of the most remarkable schools in the Empire, it has courage, and resource associated with the real spirit of the pioneer I trust it may receive the whole hearted support of the Courts, and the Community.