

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian

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Vol. VIII Jail Menu No. 2

Recently I ran across the following jail menu which can be found in the Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors for Orleans County. This resolution, which is printed herein, was made on December 23, 1904.

By Supervisor Bliss:

"Resolved, That the Sheriff-elect of the County of Orleans for the year commencing January 1st, 1905, and ending December 31st, 1905, be directed to furnish but two meals a day to the prisoners confined in the Orleans County Jail. Then the first meal shall be served between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and the second meal shall be served between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.; be it further

"Resolved, That the said meals shall consist of the following: For the morning meal, 2 slices of bread, 1 fair-sized slice of fried pork and 2 medium-sized boiled potatoes, with a gravy made of pork grease and the water thickened with flour, and all the cold water they care to drink.

"For the evening meal, 2 slices of bread, 2 tablespoons full of warmed over potatoes, and all the cold water they care to drink, except on Tuesdays and Fridays, the evening meal shall consist of one cup of bean soup and two slices of bread, and on Sundays the evening meal shall consist of one plate of cold beans and two slices of bread. No butter shall be served to the prisoners, nor shall either tea or coffee be served to them at any meal; be it further

"Resolved, That no claim of the said Sheriff to be reimbursed for food supplies bought by him shall be allowed by this Board, or allowed or certified by the committee heretofore appointed by this Board to audit and certify the expenses of said Sheriff, except for the necessary amount of salt pork, potatoes, flour and beans necessary to furnish the prisoners, actually confined in the jail, with the above meals.

"Adopted."

At the time a local newspaper reported this particular



resolution and made the following editorial comment: "Such a bill of fare ought to clear the jail of its crowd of rounders." Indeed, such a bill of fare would not tickle the pallet of any gourmet.

The Sheriff-elect was Weston Weatherbee who served one term for the years 1905-1906. A post card view is shown here of the old jail, afore mentioned, when Weatherbee was Sheriff.

By comparison, I thought it would be of interest to see what the jail menu is like today. Sheriff Dave Green has kindly

given me a sample. He points out however, that today's menu is regulated and mandated by the Commission of Corrections. He also notes that the Department of Education has a voice in it as well, because the jail receives government commodities based on the school lunch program. In fact, juveniles are required to have milk with their meals. Each day the three jail meals are different for dietary and nutritional reasons. "These menus are to be followed without exception" as I noted on a printout.

Space does not allow the printing of the entire week's menus but as a sample, here is what prisoners in the Orleans County Jail now get every Wednesday. Breakfast consists of tomato juice, 3 French toast and syrup, sausage, milk/coffee. For lunch there is tuna fish sandwich, pea soup, crackers, potato chips, pears, milk and a cheese wedge. The evening meal consists of meat loaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, peas and carrots, bread/butter, cookie and coffee.

One wouldn't necessarily rate this menu as gourmet but it doesn't sound half bad. And compared to the jail menu of eighty years ago, the one of today sounds pretty tempting. Just imagine fried pork, pork grease gravy, warmed over potatoes, cold beans and water...ugh!