DAILY TIMES, CHICAGO, TUESDAY, JULY 16, 1935

## Reporter Takes Kankakee 'Water Cure'

The ever-increasing problem of caring for the unfortunate insane as wards of the state of Illinois is little known to the public. To ascertain conditions, Frank Smith, TIMES reporter, former college football player and life guard who tips the scale at 200 pounds, was asked to do this series of articles. In addition to interviewing officials and other persons in-terested in the problem, he undertook to spend

a week as an inmate of the state hospital at

The story of his experiences and the statistics and other data he has secured should prove of interest to every citizen in the state as it is unfolded day by day during the next few weeks in the DAILY TIMES.

-THE-EDITORS.

## By Frank Smith

r in pact prohibited. Fifteen hours in a tub of dirty flowing river water. Fifteen hours soaking in the turbid, unfiltened, unsterilized mud wash of the Kankakee river, while pleas for anti-

septic to protect open wounds on my hands and arms, sustained in my struggle with attendants, went unheeded.

Fifteen hours watching violent patients wander about the hydrotherapy ward, until, captured, they were wrapped mummy-fashion in wet sheets and blankets, or tied in tubs like myself. Worst of all, a stomach-retching spectacle of sadistic brutality.

Awakens in 'Prison Tub' as If from Bad Dream

Consciousness, the dull half-light of understanding, returned to me dimly, as though I were awakening from a dream. Voices beat against my ears, music lulled me, before I opened my eyes. My throat throbbed painfully, I had the sensation of floating in warm water.

Eyes opened, I looked about in wonder.



### What was this place?

I tried to turn my head to take in the complete scene. No good. My neck was trapped in a canvas covering that stretched before me, tautly blanketing a bath tub.

So! I was in a bath tub. And tied in. I wriggled my body. It wouldn't wriggle much. My arms weren't free, but I could churn my feet in the water.

I was resting in a sort of hammock that held me up from the bottom of the tub. The water was warm. By stretching my neck I could look down the ward in front of me. take in the complete scene. No

#### 'Mummy' Treatment for Recalcitrants

for Recalcitrants

My tub was partitioned off from other tubs. Beyond my alcover white-coated attendants were carrying a naked patient to a table. It looked like an operating table. Water-soaked sheets dangled over its sides. The struggling patient was tossed onto the table. His arms were slapped down by one attendant, while another straightened out his doubled-up-legs. A narrow strip of sheeting was wrapped tightly around the right arm of the recalcitrant madman, by a third "white coat" then pulled across his back and wound about his left arm. That guy was entirely "unarmed" as far sfurther resistance went. Larger strips were bound around his body, from neck to toes. Blankets made the outer covering and they were from neck to toes. Blankets made the outer covering and they were primed the base of the outer than the were been always to be theired on a bed, looking for all the world like an Egyptian mummy with the wrapping pulled from its head.

Memory returned while I watched these weird operations. I recalled my efforts to act the part of a violent alcoholic when I had entered Kankakee state hospital. But when had I entered? What time was it now? Davight still showed above

?? Daylight still showed above screened portion of a barred

Evidently my act had gone over with a bang. The last memory I had was my gasping ery for mercy as one of the attendants who had hauled me over to the hydro decontinued on page 1, col. 1

# THE MADHOUSE I DAYS

# Kankakee 'Water Cure' Given to Reporter

(Continued from page 3) ment choked me into insensi-

Throat Aches;

Swallowing Agony

Swallowing Agony
Music! I had heard music, song, as I "came to" a few minutes ago.
Now I became more fully conscious of it. Badio music and an announcement. It was 5:30 p. m., Kankakee time. I had come to the hospital shortly-before 3 p. m., and after pushing around a couple of attendants had been rushed to the hydro.
I must have been unconscious at least two hours. Good job those attendants had done. And I had no kick coming. I had asked for it. But my throat ached. Swallowing was agony.

A short-mustached, battle-scarred face popped around the partition to

A short-mustached, battle-scarred face popped around the partition to my right, It topped a little man in khaki shirt, white thousers a cignered justing from his lips, a tin cup in either hand. One of the cups was steaming.

"Hello, tough guy," he greeted me, the cigaret jiggling with each movement of his lips. "How you feelin? Supper time, but you don't want no supper. Better have some coffee."

Coffee sounded good, until I saw the other cup. Milk! My throat burned and pained. Milk was what

#### Smart Advice from a Patient

I gulped at the extended cup. My throat refused to function. Milk streamed down my chin. I tried again. The cool, soothing fluid was nectar. I gulped it down. "That's enough," said the milk-man. "Maybe somebody else wants a drink."

T apologized. My throat was throbbing I explained, and the milk soothed it.

what happened to your throat?"
"They choked me. I guess I was fighting with the guards."
"Listen, guy, nobody gets choked yound here." He winked at me. "You were pretty stiff. You musta dreamed you was choked. Forget it." He winked again. I understood.
"Thear you're from Chicago. So am I. I'm Louie L. I'm just a patient, too. My brother is a big sho in the west side. Ever heard of Izzy L.—? Bootlegger in the old days, gambler? That's my brothdays, gambler? That's my broth-

er."

"Get me a cigaret, Louie," I
pleaded. "I'll give you a pack when
I get out of this damned thing.
How long will they keep me in

here?"
Setting one of the cups on the tub
covering, Louie transferred the cigaret from his lips to mine.

# Keep Quiet

and Say Nothing'

I sucked in a glorious lung full
"You won't be in long," he assured me. "You're smart. You're sured me. "You're smart. You're gonna keep quiet and say nothin'. You're gonna forget you dreamed you was choked. You won't be in long. You came out of the alky pretty quick. So long! I gotta gosee you later."

Louie departed around the left-hand partition with a backward wink.

harid partition.

wink.

Here was a new danger. I hadcome out of the alky "pretty quick."

Would my swift recovery arouse
suspicion. Would I give my act
away? Surely, I reasoned, no matter how quickly I revived, they
couldn't discount my "tiolence" on
cataring. Yelecthin my "tiolence" on

New aches began to crowd upon

# DAILY & TIMES

SUNDAY B TIMES

my consciousness. My shoulders and upper arms hurt. The cut on my left hand stung and throbbed. I decided to try out my voice.

"Hey." I called to an attendant.

"how about getting out of this

damned turn"
The attendant came closer.
"Feel like getting up, Ford? You'd better stay there for a while. It'll do you, all the good in the world."
T've got a bad hand here, 'I pleaded. 'It's cut, and this water won't de

#### Naked Bodies Glide from Room to Room

The haliway across the room took my attention. Apparently there were rooms "opening on it from either side. Like gaunt specters, naked bodies glided from room to room. Clutching and rubbing their bodies, \*attenuated forms would slink along the hallway. A shout from an attendant, and the ghostly shapes sourried to their bods. Now and again "love taps" emphasized the commands. Punches to the chest or between the shoulder chest or between the shoulder

Maybe, I thought, that is the only way to make them understand. Maybe they are little more than animals, obedient only to the lash. The blows probably didn't hurt. And yet the picture wasn't very appealing. Patients who persisted in exploring the corridor were captured and mummified! in wet packs. The capture, at times, took on the aspect of a game of hare and hounds, with the fugitive showing remark, able cunning. But the cards were stacked against him, and it was only a matter of minutes until he was a matter of minutes until he was dragged, squirming and kicking, to the wrapping table. Someone was being wrapped all the time.

The radio died off suddenly. An

attendant tried to repair it, but he was unsuccessful. Shorted or some was unsuccessful. Shorted or some-thing. With the music gone, a con-tinual babble flowed from the rooms opening on the hallway. No matter how many "mummles" were shelved, the babbling contin-ued.

### Hand Throbbing from Ugly Wound

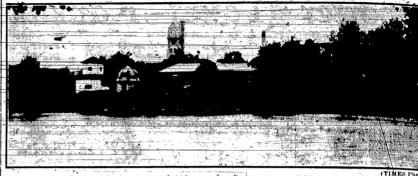
Hours later, it seemed, another of the attendants approached my tub. "What's this holler about your

hand, Ford?" "It's cut, and it's throbbing. I want some fodine or something on

ALL FOR ONLY

it."
The attendant studied me.
"Listen, Ford," he said. "I'm going to take a chance with you and
look at that hand. Don't try anything funny now."

## ACROSS THE RIVER—A HOUSE OF MADMEN



TIMES Reporter Frank Smith reveals what goes on at state hospital for insane at Kankakee, Abow the administration building and the tower clock as seen from bank of Kankakee rivers dirty, unfi tered source of hospital's water for bathing purposes.

it behind my back. Now, I could raise myself higher in the tub. My left arm and shoulder were ftge. I pulled my hand out of the water. The skin was shriveled and puckered from its long immersion. An include the should be feel to the flesh part. ugly cut showed on the fleshy part of my hand, below the little finger. The edges of the wound were white;

spongy.

"Humph," humphed the attendant. "You've got a cut, all right. How'd you get that?" Thushed into some-

thing in the shower room, plied. "I think it should ha "I think it should have some pited. "I think it should have some iodine or something."
"That'll be all right," he answered.
"Nothing, to worry about."
"How the hell long am I going to be in this dammed tub." I de-

### River Water Filthy and Untreated

"You won't be in long." came the reassuring reply. "You were in pretty bad shape when you came in here. Don't think I ever saw one come out of it so fast before. You're lucky you got your senses right now."

lucky you got you.

now."

I got no lodine nor any further attention. Later, when I saw the source of the water in which I had immersed with my open

source of the water in which I hadbeen immersed with my open wounds, I felt panicky.

All water for bathing and toilet purposes, as well as that used for laundering in Kankakee State hospital for the insane, comes raw and untreated from the dirty Kankakee river. A recent report on the water supply at the institution states that this river water is "of a character of the result of the recent reports of the result of the

The night dragged on. When it ing to take a chance with you and look at that hand. Don't try anything funny now."

"I won't," I promised.
"Unstrapping the harness that held my neck above the tub covering, he loosened the fastening and twisted the control of the

Including

BRAND NEW Piano Accordion

and Private Lessons

in a slow motion tortolse race. Min-utes lagged in weary chain gangs. Sleep was impossible. My throat throbbed. My whole body ached.

### Game of Chasing Patients Continues

The same old game of chasing patients continued with the night. shift. The same routine of capturing and "mummifying," of holding "untidy" patients under the shower, while a trusty changed bed linen. For some reason, though, the night gang didn't use any "love taps" to enforce orders. I didn't see a blow struck during the eight hours they were on duty. ere on duty. As all things end, so ended that

As all things end, so ended that night\_and dawn outlined the bars on the hall window.

Breakfast, about 6:30 a. m. My restraining cover was removed, this time releasing both arms. Louie appeared, another cigaret dangling. He set a tin plate, containing a sickly mess of crushed wheat and corn sirup, on the cover before me. I dabbed a spoon into it, tested it. I dabbed a spoon into it, tasted it. Bread and a butter substitute, along Bread and a butter substitute, along with a beverage that libeled the name of coffee, made up the meal. I found I wasn't very hungry, but swallowed a few spoonfuls of the cereal and tried to swallow some of the "coffee"

shift, fresh and lively, appeared to relieve the dozing night men. I got a speedy inspection and an attendant barked:

"You can let this guy out, when you get around to it."

you get around to it."

My hands, while I was pecking at my breakfast, worried me. Shriveled, shrunken, they were, and yet they appeared swollen. Deep puckers sank into the water softened blue skin, like a miniature relief map of a lava field. My body felt limp, enervated. Every swallow of the fine-ground cereal went down my aching throat like a sheet of sandpaper.

But I was to get out of the soon. I didn't complain, Freed at least from that watery pri

at least from that watery pri was within grasp.
Then it was that a witness spectacle that made me wond it were not better to continue sing in my tub than to be tu over to the men of the day ship the chase of naked spectal indicates.

The chase of naked spectal indicates still being enveloped in wet ship pinned in blanket shrouds. On them, a diminutive, middle-them. man with a mustache, beat a h retreat when an attendant proached him. His flight was sh lived. The guard captured him dragged him to the wrapping t

dragged him to the wrapping to Here the patient fought.

With a cold, thin lipped smile attendant let go the patient's w drove a right and left shou punch to the body, and as his tim dropped, the guard loose kick at the stomach with the sid his foot. Just a glancing kick in clean fun, maybe. I shudde Was that a promise of whe had to face? I, who had pusome of the attendants around day before?

So they let Frank Smith o of the hydrotherapy ward at he began the routine of a p tient at Kankakee. Tomorro he tells about day-by-day if in the institution, with its cormon drinking cup, it vile foo its 4,000 wards of the sta jammed into inadequate builtings, given inadequate car Read this story every day in il TIMES.



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