

Robertina Freeman, being duly sworn deposes and says:

I am 13 years old and was in Leesburg stockade from August 21 to August 31. All the windows were broken out and there were no screens. The flies and gnats bothered us terribly because they used our room as a nesting place. At nights the mosquitoes bothered us and some children were eaten so badly they were all broken out. The flies and gnats were attracted to the toilets, which were overflowing with waste materials, and then they flew on us. At first, when I got there, there were iron beds with mattresses which were very thin. There were about 20 beds for more than 30 girls, so in many beds there were two girls sleeping. The mattresses were sandy and gritty and so dirty you could see it just by looking at it. And some were so ripped the cotton was coming out of them. There were no sheets and we didn't find the blankets which were tucked under the springs of the bed, until after a week. And there were only a few of them for all the children, about ten blankets. And one of the children were allergic to wool and couldn't use them anyway.

There were two toilets and they were stopped up when I got there. They wouldn't work. At first they had to use them because they had nothing else. Soon they were overflowing and couldn't be used anymore. Then the girls started urinating in the drain near the shower. Some of the mattresses were so bad some of the girls were afraid to sleep on them. So we picked out the ones we thought we could sleep on and pushed them to the front. We put the bad ones, which had bugs crawling over them, to the back. So we sometimes had as many as three in a bed. At this time, because the toilets were stopped up to the top we used the mattresses dragged to the back upon which to move our bowels. Then one day there was a rattlesnake, a diamondback, which was crawling into the cell, and after it was killed by the jailer, we were so mad because he refused to come when we started yelling about the snake for half an hour, we burned the mattresses used for bowel movements. We burned them to get rid of the feces and the awful odor. We felt this was the only way to get rid of them. The smoke also helped to get rid of the mosquitoes. That night the girls were afraid to sleep too far up front and so in some beds there were as many as six of us.

The very next day the guards took away our remaining beds because we were singing and praying. So then we started sleeping on the floor with no mattresses, no beds, no blankets, no sheets, no nothing. The floor was wet with the waste material from when they had been dragging the mattresses out of the cell. The floor was cold and hard to sleep on because it was concrete and we hadn't been used to sleeping on it. We had to wrap in our clothes the best way we could. Before they dragged out the beds we had lights, but after that we had them no more. You had to stay put all night because it was too dark to walk and one girl had cut her head when lights were out earlier in my stay there. The four hamburgers a day were greasy and they tasted like something else was mixed into it. And the mayonaisse tasted like something was wrong with it.

Sworn before me this 13th day of September, 1963,

John L. Barnum, Jr.

Robertina Freeman

My comm. exp. 9-9-67

Robertina Freeman

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