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Seven Sufferers Quietly Removed from the Local Hospital  
at the Close of the City's Insufficient Keeping  
and Taken to a Lovely Home in Iberville Parish  
Where Comforts Will be Provided  
and Doctors and Nurses Placed in Charge

Indian Camp, Iberville Parish, is the new home of the Lepers.

In comfortable cabins, surrounded by massive oaks, the unfortunates are quartered; and there is not one among the seven patients who left the Hagen Avenue pesthole who regrets going to the new place where every comfort is at hand and a kindly voice soothes them when suffering impels them to complain.

The camp fronts on the Mississippi River for ten acres, and has a depth of 700 yards. A typical old time plantation homestead stands on the center of the farm, and although somewhat dilapidated, it can be repaired, and a model hospital made of it.

This house was inhabited by General Camp, a veteran of the war of 1812, who expended many thousands of dollars in furnishing it in style.

Captain Jumel, in the 60's, as sheriff, sold the property, which was supposed to be worth about \$80,000.

Besides the homestead, there are seven big, airy cabins, which will be utilized by the lepers until such time as the main building is put in shape to receive them.

At present, the largest cabin is used by the seven lepers. The two women who accompany the party have two room on one side of the house. There is a nice kitchen, a dining room and a storehouse.

The departure of the seven lepers from Beard's foul hospital was not generally known. The poor unfortunates were notified to get ready to move, if they so desired, as Dr. Beard had announced that he would not care for them after December 1.

Dr. Dyer, as President of the State Leper Board., last Thursday sent word to one of the male lepers, saying that the board was ready to take them to their new home on Friday. That evening, the good-hearted physician was visited by a leper. It was explained by Dr. Dyer what would be done in the future. The inmate of the pesthouse was told to ask all to leave the Hagan Avenue place for the new home, where their wants would not be neglected.

There were ten inmates and seven of them at once determined to leave. The balance, who preferred to remain behind and suffer from lack of treatment, were Jackson, the former cook; Whipsel, and another male leper.

The spokesman of the unfortunates told those who were going to leave the hospital Thursday night, and asked them to pack their belongings and be ready for the following day, when they would leave for their new home. None of them were told their destination, but there was no uneasiness felt by the sufferers, who realized that any place would be more pleasant than their shelter, where they were forced by circumstances to reside.

Friday was a busy day for the seven lepers and anxiously they waited the arrival of the spring wagon which was to carry them to the wharf.

Before leaving the pesthole forever, the spokesman offered up a prayer of thanks and the other six said 'amen.' The only drawback they found in leaving was that three fellow-sufferers, too ignorant to comprehend that a new life was in store for them, were for the present deserted.

In the meantime Drs. Scherck and Dyer and Captain A. A. Woods and A. C. Phelps were kept busy arranging things so there would be no delay in starting.

It took considerable trouble to secure a wagon, as a great many drivers refused to do the work on learning that their services were required to transfer lepers. One kind fellow who is too modest to allow his name to be used, on being approached, at once undertook the contract.

A big, comfortable barge was put in order to receive the unfortunates, and the speedy tug Ellen Andrews chartered to tow the barge to Indian Camp, on the east bank of the river, a short distance below White Castle. The tug was commanded by Captain Jack Pullon, and Captain Jim Mead piloted the vessel.

The action of the board was kept very secret until it was almost time for departure. Then the several newspapers were invited and in a short time a Picayune artist and reporter were detailed to accompany the tug, which was lying at the bend of Lafayette Street.

Provisions had been purchased by the board and an abundant supply was piled on the wharf, consigned to the barge. Beside the great quantity of food there were eighty beds, which were the gift of the Charity Hospital. A sufficient quantity of bedding was also secured and there is little doubt that the lepers will have enough provisions for several months.

Mr. James P. Lillis, of Wood, Schniedau & Co., very kindly received the goods on the firm's wharf and stood guard over them until the arrival of the seven directors of the Board.

Several men were hired to lead the barge, and it was not long before every package was safely stowed away.

About twenty minutes after 4 o'clock Friday evening, the spring wagon containing the seven lepers, two of whom were women, and their trunks, drew up a short distance from the tug. Clara Mertz, the girl patient, who created much sympathy by her condition and surroundings, was the first to be helped out of the wagon. At present she is suffering from a complication of diseases and her general appearance denotes the fact that she will not live long enough to derive the full benefits of the new home.

Another woman was assisted out of the vehicle. Then four male patients jumped out of the conveyance and were slowly followed by a fifth who was suffering intense pain.

While their poor stock of clothing was being loaded on the barge, the two women sat on a trunk and cast wistful glances at the old city, which was then becoming shrouded by the evening dimness. There was some sorrow in their parting, but their reflections were cut short by the shrill whistle of the tug, the signal for all to get ready. The former inmates of the pesthouse were gently led to the barge, which was protected by several tarpaulins, which work was superintended by Captain Woods and Mr. Phelps. Dr. Scherck worked very hard attending to various matters before the tug pulled out from shore.

Another short whistle and the Andrews, with her tow, slowly steamed away from the wharf.

Dr. Isidore Dyer, the efficient president of the State Leper Board, and the several newspaper men and the others on board waved adieu to Dr. Scherck and Directors Woods and Phelps, who returned a hearty 'God speed.'

This was about 7:15 o'clock Friday night.

The tarpaulins made the barges gloomy. It reminded one of the olden stories of floating funerals, sorrow laden vessels gliding down the Nile to the cities of the dead.

The lepers were made as comfortable as possible. Many mattresses were placed on the deck, and pillows and bed clothing given the patients.

Before retiring for the night some of the lepers amused themselves playing checkers, a game of which they are extremely fond.

In speaking to a reporter, Dr. Dyer said that Indian Camp Place was subleased for a term of five years from a party who had formerly cultivated the acreage with rice, but of late has found that it could not be properly irrigated. The deal was closed through the efforts of Captain Jumel, and the terms are \$750 a year. The board was after several sites, but as soon as the property owners knew that the land was wanted for a leper hospital, they trebled the price. It was Captain Jumel who came to the board's aid, and in short time bargained for Indian Camp. No one except the members of the board and those interested in the transaction knew of the proposed deal. When the board was ready, Dyer said, to take the lepers, the quarters were put in as nice a shape as possible.

Next Tuesday night there will be a meeting of the board, and very probably a resident physician will be appointed. The board has in sight a male and a female nurse, and it is thought that they will be ready to go to Indian Camp next week. Dr. Dyer remarked that after allowing for the salaries of the nurses, resident physician, rental provisions, etc., he thinks the \$10,000 appropriation will be sufficient, provided the inmates do not increase in number. It is the intention of the board, said the president, to make the old homestead later on into a hospital for the whites, and it is thought 100 patients can be placed in there. The colored lepers will be placed in the cabins.

It will be some time before the building can be repaired, and it will probably cost about \$2,500.

Relative to this apparently sudden move of the board, Dr. Dyer said that the board had perfect right to take the inmates any time they cared to, and with a slight chuckle, added that neither Dr. Beard or the city council was consulted in the matter, and if they had any knowledge of the board's intention before the departure it was not his fault. Dr. Dyer said that he anticipated an objection by some in the vicinity of Indian Camp. He said that later the place will be fenced in and those in the vicinity will run no risk. Should there be any demonstration the Governor will at once be wired, and,

as it is state property until the lease expires, it undoubtedly will receive the proper protection. The lease was ordered recorded in Plaquemine, the Parish seat of Iberville, several days ago, and it has been very probably entered as directed.

Dr. Dyer said that he was glad that the lepers had at last secured a good home, and their every want will be attended to. When a resident physician is appointed and is sent to Indian Camp all the required medicines will be shipped to the place.

The board some time ago secured considerable lumber at White Castle to fix some of the cabins.

Toward 10 o'clock all on board retired for the night. That sleep was rudely disturbed by a hearty bump on a snag.

The tug reached Point Clear (sic) at 5 o'clock yesterday morning and slowly backed down to Indian Camp.

There were no houses visible and it was thought by some that the place was as desolate as a desert.

Dr. Dyer and one of the crew climbed up the levee and noted the surroundings.

Just then Captain Allen Jumel rode up on his horse to welcome the lepers, and Dr. Dyer. Captain Jumel made an impressive picture as he sat on his pretty mare. He has gray hair and a silver-gray beard, and looked a typical Louisiana lord of the land.

'Darn it boys, I am glad you came' and there was such a welcome ring in the strong voice that all were happy to go up and shake hands with the captain, whose deeds proved he meant the welcome.

Captain Jumel soon procured workmen, and it was not many hours before everything was off the barge, and in double-quick time the goods carted away in plantation wagons.

Before breakfast was ready, Captain Jumel made a pretty little toast, which he closed by saying that his heart bled for the poor unfortunates, who for years had to live the lives of the damned.

Captain Jumel, although a man of years, showed that he was still active and young in spirit. He pointed out the old homestead, which was erected in the early 50's by General Robert Camp. He said that he attended the first housewarming there, and about 1868 sold the place for \$120, 000 for the Buddington heirs.

Captain Jumel said that there is a romance connected with the property. One of the former owners became infatuated with a woman, who was said to have Negro blood in her veins, and the young planter determined to marry her. In order to do so, some claim that he allowed himself to be injected with a portion of her blood, and when he was asked by the magistrate if he had Negro blood in his veins, much to the surprise of all, he answered "Yes".

The old homestead is a grand sight, even though out of repair. The building is a two-story structure of the regular plantation style, yet containing many features of the more modern French renaissance. The whole building is in the shape of a cross, the shorter arm to the front. This arm measures about 100 feet, including the portions supported by six massive pillars, which are continued in the second story by graceful, slender columns, crowned with Corinthian capitals of great beauty, thus giving ample space to four French windows, and one broad middle entrance on each floor.

The whole is surmounted by a very finely proportioned architrave, the middle part of which ends in broad acroteria.

The middle portion is flanked on either side by two-story wings. The interior, as well as the exterior leaves, in its now sadly dilapidated condition, a most satisfied feeling in the mind of the surprised visitor. All the rooms connect towards the center, which is taken up by a high and splendidly lit hallway, from which the dining room extends backwards. The mantel pieces in almost every room are gone and are probably being used in some cheerless log cabin. Those remaining are chiseled (sic) in marble, and although simple, are beautiful. The cabins are comfortable and need no other description.

Beds were erected in the last double cabin and stoves placed in the building. While Dr. Dyer was engaged in arranging the cabin for the lepers to inhabit, Dr. Drown, accompanied by a friend, drove up to the cabin and in a casual way said that he thought the people would object seriously to the lepers being in their present place.

Captain Jumel heard of this and said that he would stand by the almost friendless lepers if it cost him his life.

Toward evening, the seven patients were transferred from the barge to the new home, where their remaining days may be passed in peace, watched and cared for by people with human instincts.

The establishment of the lepers in their new home may, without undue egotism, be attributed to the efforts which the Picayune in four years has made in their behalf. Four years ago the leper question, although it had been given some consideration, was still unsolved. In the early part of 1891, a reporter of the Picayune in four years has made an investigation, which revealed the presence in the city of about thirty lepers', several of whom were cited by name. The Picayune then took the matter up editorially and urged the establishment of a hospital where these people could be cared for. In its local columns the Picayune continued to chronicle the development of the disease, t[U the matter became so apparent that the city concluded a contract with Dr. Beard to care for the unfortunates. Up to within fourteen months this was the only arrangement made for the comfort of the lepers. In the beginning of 1893, a reporter of the Picayune visited the pesthouse, on Hagan Avenue, and informed the public for the first time of the painful inadequacy of the management. Both locally and editorially this paper urged this matter, until the other papers of the city joined with it in the crusade. Nothing was done at the time and the matter lay dormant until about the beginning of this year, when this paper again sent a representative to the hospital and revealed its horrors. So deplorable was the state of affairs that the city council investigated and the legislature at its last session passed an act creating the present leper board, which is composed of Drs. Dyer, Scherick, Edwards, Hooper, and Messrs. Allen Jumel, A. A. Woods, and A. G. Phelps, which has actively and unselfishly assumed the work of humanity.