



THE BRIDEWELL FARM

Mr. Redmond J. Lyons opened up the House of Correction Honor Farm Colony in about February 1918 and was superintendent of same. His wife and four children came to the farm to live the next month.

The Farm covered 371 acres from Joliet Road to German Church Road. There were three houses on the property: one occupied by the prisoners, one by the Lyon family, and one by the farmer, Mr. Zick. Mr. Zick did not stay too long and the Cermaks came there to live. Cooking and eating was done on the first floor and the second floor was the dormitory for the inmates. There were no bars, no cells and very few escapes. One guard was in the house at night and one guarded the men in the daytime.

Mr. Lyons was not a farmer but he soon learned. He secured his information from the U.S. Agricultural Department and made a success of the farm. He grew all the vegetables for the men on the farm besides supplying the House of Correction. The horses used on the farm were old police and fire horses retired from the city of

Chicago. Most of the milk was sold to a dairy, however, the skim milk was given to the men (prisoners) on the farm. The men tended the cows, hogs, ducks and chickens. The profit from the sale of milk which was a goodly sum was sent to the House of Correction. The vegetables were stored in pits in the ground for use in the winter and eggs were put in water glass. The men cut the wood to heat the house and to cook. The house was heated with a hot blast stove and the cooking was done on a wood range. To keep the men warm in the dormitory, Mr. Lyons cut a hole in the upstairs floor and put a register up there over the stove downstairs.

Mr. Lyons was on the farm from 1918 to 1928, 1931 to 1937 and 1945 to 1950, with fifty-one years of service with the House of Correction. In those 51 years he never carried a gun.

The farm was and is owned by the City of Chicago. The farm is no longer used by the House of Correction and hasn't been for many years.

The National Guard uses the land on week ends. All of the buildings have been torn down. It seems a shame that after years of hard work that this property couldn't be used for a better source.