

# Woman Tries Suicide for 6th Time To Escape Stockade 'Sweat Box'

Sensational charges of cruel and inhuman treatment received by women prisoners at the city dairy farm were made Sunday by 28-year-old Margaret Brooks, who Sunday afternoon and Monday morning attempted suicide for the fifth and sixth times since Friday because she is faced with a sentence of 51 more days at the dairy farm.

The dairy farm authorities put the women prisoners in sweat boxes for as much as 12 hours at a time, with only a little food and water during the period, it was admitted to a Constitution reporter Sunday night by J. W. Ellis, city employe, who is on night guard duty at the farm, but Councilman George Lyle and Prison Farm Superintendent Jim Ellis denied the charges emphatically.

Margaret Brooks escaped from the farm last week and was arrested by city police Friday. Since then she has attempted to kill herself six times

and she tried suicide twice while an inmate at the dairy farm. Sunday afternoon she slashed her wrist with a piece of broken glass, but was detected by a matron at the city police station, where she is confined. Another woman prisoner at the station, Helen McDurman, 28, of 119 Woodward avenue, who is charged with disorderly conduct, also attempted suicide by the same method and at the same time. Both were treated at Grady hospital. Early Monday morning both women slashed their arms again, once more receiving treatment at Grady.

The Brooks woman told a Constitution reporter that several months ago while she was confined at the dairy farm, she was put in a sweat box at 5 o'clock one afternoon and left until 9 o'clock the next morning. She was being punished, she said, for shouting

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# WOMAN MAKES 6TH SUICIDE TRY

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a greeting to her husband from a window of the women's building.

She described conditions at the dairy farm as "horrible" and said that often the place was so crowded that two or three persons were forced to sleep on one narrow single cot, or on the floor.

J. W. Ellis, the night guard, said that though there are only a few prisoners quartered in the women's building at present, he had often seen the women sleeping on the floor.

He said the "sweat" boxes are constructed something like telephone booths and are kept in the bathroom. They are slightly taller than a woman and are screened over the top, but the sides are solid so that the prisoner cannot see out, Ellis said.

The Brooks woman has been sentenced frequently in recorder's court for drunkenness and also is under \$200 bond on a vagrancy charge, on which she was bound over by the recorder.

Both Councilman Lyle, who is chairman of the prison committee of council, and Superintendent Ellis said that Margaret Brooks had never been put in the sweat box and that only negro women were punished in this way.

"Since I've been chairman of this committee, for the last three years, the sweat box has not been used," Lyle said. He denied emphatically that Margaret Brooks or any other white woman had been put in the box. He said the Brooks woman had been arrested 53 times and had attempted suicide several times at the stockade by slashing her wrists and drinking poisonous disinfectants.

Superintendent Ellis, however, said the sweat box had been used. He said one white woman had been put in it sometime in the last two years for a period of only two hours, but that he was sure the woman was not Margaret Brooks. His records were not available, he said, and he did not know the name of the woman who was punished in that manner. This woman, he declared, was put in the "sweat box" "upon the recommendation of a physician."

"Men prisoners, mostly negroes, are put in the sweat box when they are incorrigible," Superintendent Ellis said.

A. A. Walker, 59, a prisoner at Fulton tower serving a six-month sentence for wife beating, attempted suicide Sunday morning by drinking a disinfectant. He was taken to Grady hospital for treatment and was returned to the tower.