

Willowbrook Attendant Acquitted in Sessions

Doubt that an attendant at Willowbrook State School had used excessive force in maintaining discipline among the feeble minded patients there, brought about the acquittal yesterday in Special Sessions of the attendant, Thomas Brown, 40.

Brown, no longer connected with the school, was tried on three charges of striking boys who are Willowbrook inmates. He was adjudged innocent of these charges at yesterday's trial, but was discharged from the institution shortly after the alleged occurrences and now operates an ambulance for Staten Island Hospital, he testified.

The defendant was an attendant in a ward in which difficult patients were under treatment and among them, the evidence showed, were several who fought against taking baths. This situation, according to Brown, led to the charges against him.

Hadn't Been Instructed

Following his employment, Brown was assigned to duty in the ward at that time without having received the instruction course provided for attendants. Dr. Frank E. Glasser, assistant director at Willowbrook, stated that Brown was under the jurisdiction of more experienced attendants from whom he was supposed to receive his instructions.

It was one of these who made the direct allegations yesterday against the man on trial. Mrs. Mary Hamm, the attendant, declared that on three successive days she saw Brown punch boys with his fist. She gave the ages of these boys as 10, 13 and 14. The dates she could give only as about Sept. 19, 1951.

Her cross-examination by Ralph DiIorio, defense attorney, confirmed the assertion made by Brown that the boys in question fought against being given shower baths, a regulation of the school. She described one boy as "hard to handle."

Some Boys Difficult

It was his orders, Brown explained from the witness stand, to see that the boys took baths, but this was difficult because some of them kicked and fought against it. Never, he insisted even under cross-examination by Assistant District Attorney John A. Cosgrove, did he strike the boys with his fists but at times it was necessary, he said, to slap them to enforce his orders.

As to one of the boys, Brown said he had only shaken the patient to force the boy to stop tearing

from his leg bandages placed there by a doctor.

Two members of the Willowbrook State School staff were witnesses defending the accused man. One, Mrs. Esther Gorman, head nurse over the ward attended by Brown, insisted she never had seen him mistreat a patient.

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Willowbrook Rosary Society Lists Communion Breakfast

Members of the newly-organized Rosary Society of the Willowbrook State School will have their first annual Communion mass and breakfast in conjunction with the school's Holy Name Society May 24.

The Rev. Daniel Quinn, Catholic chaplain at the school, is moderator of the group. Mrs. Dorothy Smarsh is president; Miss Ada Miller, vice-president; Mrs. Blanche Sneden, secretary, and Mrs. Jean Gerdes, treasurer. The group will meet on the third Tuesday of each month. One of the group's first activities was to assist at a party given for the Catholic children who sing in the choir and the altar boys who serve masses on Sundays and Holy days.

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1953

Willowbrook Holy Name Schedules Breakfast

Plans for a communion breakfast were made last night by the Holy Name Society of Willowbrook State School at a meeting in Building 3 at the institution.

Sponsored in conjunction with the school's Rosary Society, the event will be held May 24 in the school. Members will receive communion at a 7 o'clock mass in the chapel. Breakfast will follow in the dining room.

Among the guests expected are Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of the institution; Frank A. Pavis, member of the school's board of visitors, and the Rev. Dr. John P. Monaghan, pastor of St. Margaret Mary's Church, Midland Beach.

Speaker at the meeting was the Rev. Michael Alessandro, assistant in St. Joseph's Church, Rosebank. He said "Civilization centers on a centerpiece—God." The Rev. Daniel Quinn, Catholic chaplain at the school, presided. A religious film, entitled "You Can Change the World" was shown.