

C O P Y

San Antonio, Texas
May 28, 1948

Dr. George W. Cox,
State Health Officer,
Austin, Texas.

Attention: Bureau of Sanitary Engineering

Subject: Migratory Labor Camps at Mathis Texas.

Dear Sir:

In response to your letter of May 18, 1948-file H-GRH-concerning conditions at migratory labor camps and schools at Mathis, Texas, the writers wish to report that on May 25, 1948 an inspection party consisting of Drs. Peavy, Fisher, Garcia and Engineers Bowman, Davis, Wilson made a field investigation of conditions at five labor camps and three schools.

In general sanitation was found to be almost exactly as reported by Dr. Hector P. Garcia and extremely unsatisfactory. Some garbage cleanup was in progress at every labor camp. Ownership of labor camps was found to be in error in three instances according to City of Mathis tax rolls.

Please refer to the "Labor Camp Investigation and Report" of Dr. Garcia and Associates as a guide for this field report which is submitted as follows:

Labor Camps:

1. Camp number 1 is owned by Mr. Howard Ayers, Mathis, Texas, and is located on lots 10-11-12 of block 8, Blackburn Addition. The three lots have a combined area of 150' x 140'. Items 1 thru 10 were found essentially as reported except that under item 8 a City sewer exists about $2\frac{1}{2}$ blocks or about 1000 feet from the camp area. Under item 9 a garbage clean up was in progress. General sanitation is very poor.
2. Camp number 2 is owned by Mr. Abe M. Katz, Robstown, Texas, and is located on lots 3-4-5 of block 71, Mathis Addition. The conditions found conformed to the report of Dr. Garcia with the exception that efforts were being made by occupants to clean up garbage and rats were not observed at time of inspection. Rat runs were noted. A city sewer is located one block distant. Conditions are very unsatisfactory.
3. Camp No. 3 is owned by Mr. John B. Hardwicke, 330 Leary St. Corpus Christi, Texas, and is located on lots 7,8,9,10,11, and 12 of Block 83, Mathis Addition, Water has been turned on prior to time of inspection. Trash was being moved. Otherwise it was found that unsatisfactory conditions existed as reported. Camp is located on city sewer line.

4. Camp No. 4 is owned by Mr. Abe M. Katz, Robstown, Texas and is located on lots 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, and 12 of Block 18, Mathis Addition. Conditions were found to be as reported. Sewer line is located two blocks from camp but it would be necessary to cross a railroad to connect. General sanitation is very poor. Garbage was being placed in old onion sacks by children.

5. Camp No. 5 is owned by Mr. Dave Carr, Mathis, Texas, and is located on lots 3 and 4, Block 19, Mathis Addition. An effort was being made by occupants to clean up. A sewer line is about two blocks distant but a railroad separates camp from the sewer. Sanitation conditions are unsatisfactory as reported by Dr. Garcia.

6. Labor camps at Mathis do not charge rental fees. Water is free. There is practically no supervision. Not all occupants come under the classification of migratory labor. None of the Mathis camps have flush toilets. None of the outside toilets are usable.

Comment on Labor Camps:

For a standard of comparison, the camp sanitation standards of Robstown and Sinton Camps were also investigated by the writers and are reported on as follows:

Robstown: This camp was built by the Federal Government and is now operated by Nueces County. Construction is considered very adequate for the purpose. Adequate facilities provided include the following:

- Wooden buildings with concrete floors
- Flush toilets, and hand washing facilities
- Showers rooms with hot and cold water
- Laundry tubs, permanent type, with hot and cold water, drained
- Electric lights
- Sewing machines and electric irons in community building
- Garbage facilities including covered cans on concrete racks, drained
- Recreation building
- Screens on all buildings. Glass windows
- Oil stoves furnished with shelters
- Isolation shelters for persons having communicable disease
- Continuous supervision

Sinton: Also built by Federal Government and approximately same as Robstown but operated by City of Sinton under revokable contract.

Sinton and Robstown: Two types of housing are available at each camp. The shelter type units, partially furnished, are entered for about \$2.75 per family per week. If a family requires two shelters there is no additional charge. The "furnished apartment" type

units are rented for about \$37.50 per month. These units are well furnished and the rental charge includes all utilities.

Elementary School at Mathis:

Schools were not in session at time of inspection and only outside conditions are reported on as follows:

1. Elementary school buildings are in poor condition.
2. Pit toilets are poorly maintained.
3. Flush toilets were being installed at one location.
4. One set of pit toilets had been moved to new location.
5. Sewer lines are available at all schools.
6. Some but not all approved type drinking fountains in use.

Conclusions:

Labor Camps at Mathis:

camps are entirely inadequate and unsanitary to the extent that they are not fit for human habitation.

Schools at Mathis:

Sanitation improvements are definitely needed.

Recommendations:

Mathis Labor Camps:

1. All of these camps should be abandoned and torn down inasmuch as they are not subject to practical improvements and are a definite public health menace to occupants and neighbors.
2. One adequate, supervised, camp should be constructed following insofar as practical the standards set at Robstown and Sinton. Camps should be so located as to be served by Mathis water and sewer systems. Unimproved land exists on outfall sewer line outside of city limits, northwest of town. Water service is near this point.
3. A cooperative effort on the part of producers, packers, and local governmental agencies could bring into existence a good labor camp at Mathis.

Mathis Elementary Schools:

1. Flush toilets and hand washing facilities should be provided at all schools.
2. Building repair is needed.
3. Some drinking fountains need repair.
4. General appearance of buildings and grounds need improving.
5. Interior conditions were not inspected and are not reported on.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

N. E. DAVIS DISTRICT MANAGER

/s/

J. W. WILSON, ASS'T DISTR. ENGR.