



## Mansfield- High Ropes, Birds, &



## The Old Prison Troop 777 4/24-26/09 By Daniel Rylander Historian



It was an interesting weekend; definitely one to remember! We stayed at the KOA Kampgrounds and had beautiful weather all weekend long. That is to say if you consider cyclone-like winds nice. We had some minor and some major set-backs and even a few surprises along the way, but in true Troop 777 fashion, we overcame each one of these.

It was a “split weekend”. The older scouts ventured to the High Ropes Course while the younger scouts, of whose group I was a part of, went to a bird sanctuary and saw some really awesome birds. We had the privilege of seeing a pair of Red-tailed Hawks, a Peregrine Falcon, a Bald Eagle, many types of Owls, including a Great-Horned Owl, and many other types of birds! We spent some time feeding the birds and many of us had great luck in getting them to eat from our hands. After we had had our fun here, we loaded up and headed back to camp for lunch.

After lunch, we were on the road again, but this time headed for a much less serene place. We were headed for the Ohio State Reformatory. We met up with the older scouts outside the gates and waited for our tour guide while Mr. York gave us a brief overview of the place. Once inside, we were led throughout the prison and given a brief history of each section we visited by our tour guide. We started in the family’s quarters, worked our way to where the governor would stay and then finally, to the prison itself. Definitely not the place any of us would want to stay for any period of time. The prison cells were small and

anywhere from two to three men would stay in them. They were stacked one on top of another and you would stay in one of these cells if you were considered a “good” inmate. Those who posed more of a problem and who would not “reform” to the prison’s standards were sent to solitary confinement, and this probably was one of the worst places to be in the entire prison! It was very dark in these cells and the inmate who had to stay in them was only allowed one hour of light a day. He was fed meager amounts of bread and water, almost his entire stay there and didn’t have any clothes to wear. He was forced to stand in a cage that didn’t allow him any room to turn around, and a bucket of cold water was thrown on him to suffice as a shower. He was expected to stand in this fashion four to eight hours a day and then was allowed back into the dark, dank holding chamber to wallow in darkness for another eight hours. We visited other sites inside the prison, but no other place had left such an impression on each of us.

After we completed the tour we ventured to where they kept a replica of the electric chair and some other artifacts found around the prison, that were either worn by the guards or made by the inmates. We spent some time in the gift shop, and then helped the staff of the prison by cleaning up some of the litter found on the grounds outside. Once we had done our good turn, we drove back to camp.

When we got back to camp, dinner was started by some scouts, while others fixed their tents. As we were going about dinner and other things, we were surprised to see dozens of cars roll in the KOA Kampground driveway. Later did we know that it was Prom Night for a local High school. Of course, this was a point of interest to some of the older scouts, to which Mr. York said, “You may NOT go to the Prom!”

The rest of our evening was spent with our fellow scouts in tents or around the camp fire, but the evening was not over until Mr. York told us one of his most famous ghost stories. Once this was all said and done, we climbed into our tents to sleep off the events of the day. Sunday morning was spent tearing down camp and preparing to go home. Mr. Wells delivered our “Sunday Morning Service” and Mr. York wrapped everything up with some inspiring words.

All returned home safe and sound!

