Source: "National Railway Bulletin," Newsletter of the National Railway Historical Society, from issue circa 1960-61.

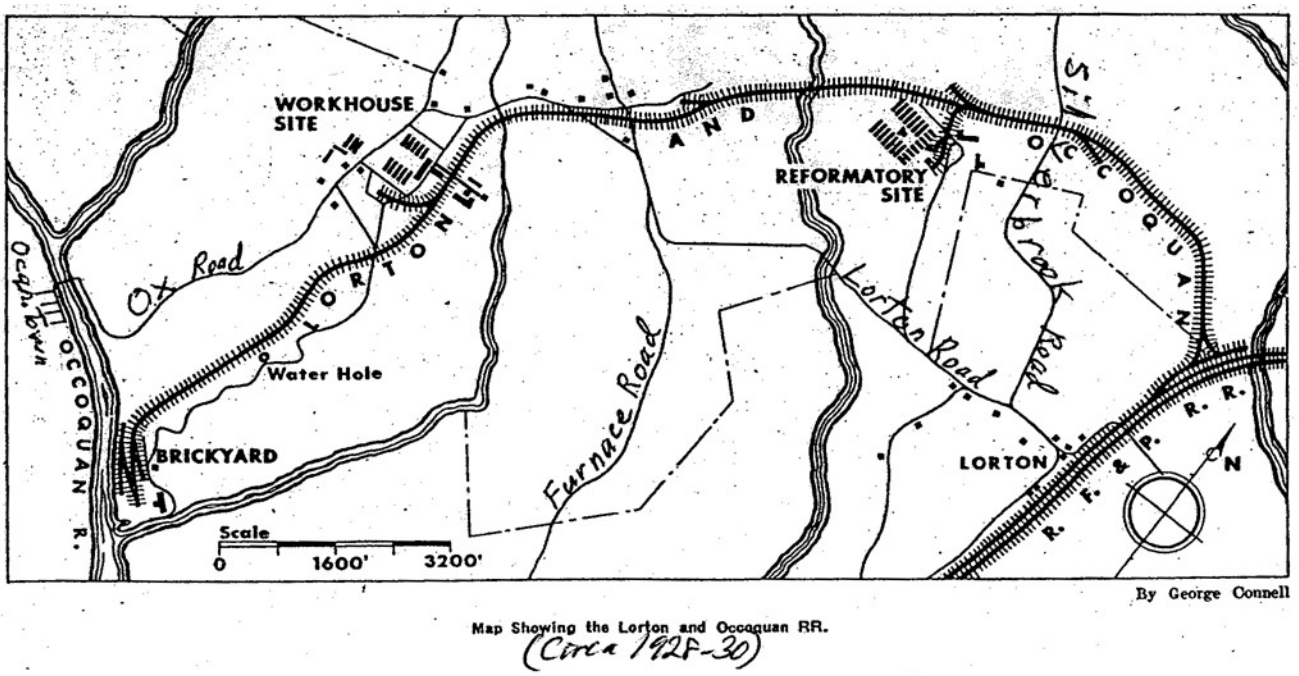
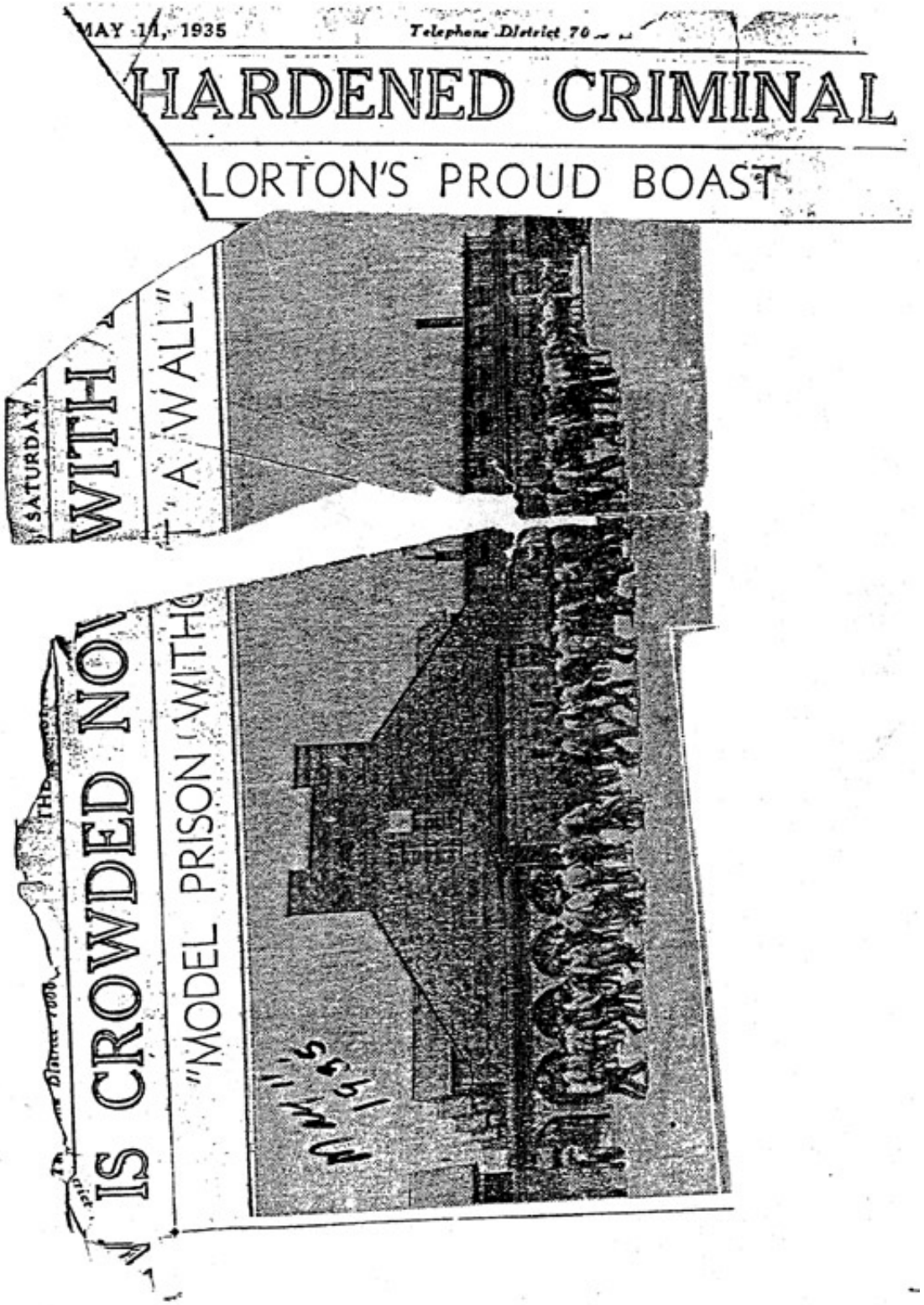


Figure 1: Ca. 1928-30 the Prison constructed a short line, The Lorton and Occoquan Railroad, between a station at Lorton on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad and the brickyard along the Occoquan River (shown here). The line ran through both the Reformatory and Workhouse complexes.


MAY 11, 1935 Telephone District 70

HARDENED CRIMINAL

LORTON'S PROUD BOAST

SATURDAY

WITH

A WALL"

IS CROWDED NO

"MODEL PRISON WITHO

Source: The Washington Post .

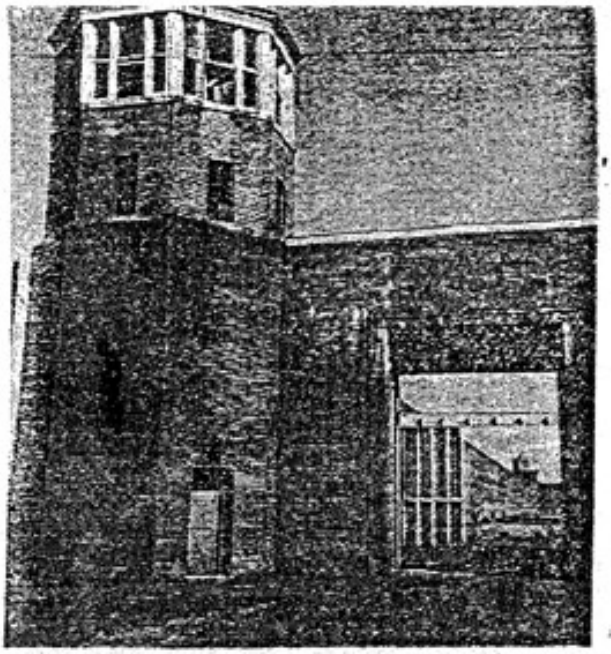
Figure 2: A 1935 newspaper photograph of the "Model Prison Without a Wall."

Source: DC Archives.

Figure 3: A 1972 view of the Reformatory.

Source: DC Archives.

Figure 4: A 1951 view of work being done on the Reformatory planting beds.



PRISON PLANE-SPOTTING POST—A prisoner scans the skies from Wall Tower 1 at Lorton Reformatory, a link in the Civil Defense Plane-Spotting network. —Star Staff Photos.

WASH POST MAR 27 1953

Lorton Prisoners Defend U. S. As Volunteer Plane Watchers

By Coit Hendley, Jr.

Two prisoners were in command of Wall Tower 1 at Lorton Reformatory. No guards were in sight.

One of the men picked up the telephone and put a call through to Baltimore. The prison switchboard gave the call priority, and within seconds, the prisoner was talking to his party.

"Aircraft flash," he said.

The prisoner then gave a description of a multi-motored plane flying south over the reformatory at a high level. His partner recorded the information in a logbook.

This has been going on at Lorton since last December. Wall Tower 1 now is "Nector Juliet, 44 Red" in the civil defense plane spotting network. The call to Baltimore was one of dozens the prisoners make daily to the Baltimore Filter Center.

Get Commendations.

Capt. James J. Laing, of the prison staff, said the spotter post has worked out well at the reformatory. Six of the men assigned to this duty have received commendations for their work.

The post is manned 24 hours a day. Two prisoners are on duty at a time and stand eight-hour shifts. Capt. Laing said the duty is assigned to men with good prison records. They are selected from among those prisoners who volunteer, he added.

During World War II, Lorton Reformatory maintained a similar plane spotting post, Capt. Laing said.

Five Penal Colonies Assist.

This prison post is among the penal camps, military installations and highway drawbridges that have been brought into the observer corps in Virginia, Maj. Andrew H. Petersen, Air Force liaison officer with the Virginia Civil Defense Office in Richmond, said 12 military posts, four bridges and five penal colonies are in the program so far.

At the State Penitentiary at Richmond, prison guards have added sky-watching to their duties. State prison farms at Goochland, Hanover and Southampton follow the Lorton practice and let prisoners man the posts.

"The prisoners do a good job," Maj. Petersen said. "It gives them a chance to defend their country while confined in the prison."

JAN 1 1953

Curb Dope Smuggling

Recent reports of dope smuggling into the Women's Reformatory at Lorton, Va., have led to tighter control over visitors, according to Director of Corrections Donald Clemmer.

"The policy that has been in force for many years has in general served its purpose, and is consistent with the spirit of modern penology," Mr. Clemmer said. "But, in view of the increasing number of narcotic offenders now lodged in the reformatory, it needed overhauling."

Each inmate is given a form to be filled out, naming the visitors she desires. If fraud is practiced in giving the names, the inmate will be punished.

The visits are permitted on the second and fourth Sundays, between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m., but no visits will be permitted for inmates serving less than 30 days. No person under 18 will be permitted to visit inmates, and the visits may not exceed 30 minutes. Not more than two persons may visit an inmate at the same time.

Visitors must be close relatives —mother, father, legal husband, one brother or one sister. No visits will be permitted from friends or common-law husbands.

A recent investigation at the reformatory disclosed that some of the inmates were receiving narcotics from visitors, but officials were unable to place the blame. The new regulations, it is hoped, will put a stop to this smuggling.

Source: Washington Daily News.

Figure 5: A 1953 newspaper article highlighting Lorton's role in civil defense.

A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

WASH. DAILY NEWS

Ella Wows 'em at Lorton

JUN 2 6 1959

By TOM KELLY

Ella Fitzgerald sang to a captive audience yesterday and a very good audience it was.

No one came late, no one left early, there were no crying babies and everyone clapped and clapped. They clapped with rhythm when Ella was singing and with abandon when she was thru.

No one worried about getting caught in a traffic jam after the show.

SMASH

Miss Fitzgerald was the complete smash at the Fourth Annual Jazz Festival held at the ball park of the D. C. House of Correction at Lorton, Va.

She was resoundingly backed up by such bright jazz lights as Oscar Peterson and Stuff Smith.

They all had a ball in the ball park tho they were occasionally interrupted by public address system announcements, such as: "88151 Brown Report to the Parole Board."

ORDERLY

The 1800 prisoners sat in the most orderly rows imaginable all over the bleachers and grand stand and many of those in the sun wore Arabian styled headdresses made of blue prison caps and white prison towels.

The Rev. Carl Breitfeller OSB, the Catholic Chaplain, who arranged the show, beamed into the microphone, said "It's great to be here" and got a great laugh.

Felix Grant, WMAL announcer, the master of ceremonies, told his listeners that it's "a real kick to be back," and got another.

Charlie Byrd, a guitarist who plays soft and sneaky like a man walking on a tissue paper roof, opened the matinee with lots of low rumbles to thunderous applause.

—News Staff Photo.

Ella Fitzgerald, a smash hit in a special show at the D. C. House of Correction, Lorton, Va., is led to the stage for her first number by The Rev. Carl Breitfeller, OSB, who arranged the show.

FAVORITES

Miss Fitzgerald, who obviously overstayed her schedule but not her welcome popped off and on the stage and belted out most of her old favorites.

Stuff Smith, a gnome of a man in Bermuda shorts, who plays an electric violin, ended the session on what was a wishful note anyway you look at it.

"I want you all," he said after rendering one of his specialties, "to go right out and buy this record."

Source: To be added.

Figure 6: This 1959 newspaper article describes the successful concert performed by Ella Fitzgerald at Lorton.

Source: DC Archives

Figure 7: This photo was taken in 1967 of the 12th annual Jazz fest held at Lorton. The gentleman in the middle is Duke Ellington.

Source: DC Archives.

Figure 8: A 1969 view of the Reformatory shop buildings.

Source: DC Archives.

Figure 9: A 1972 view of the Reformatory at ground level looking towards R-67.

Source: DC Archives.

Figure 10: A 1972 view inside the maximum security complex from the new guard tower.

Source: DC Archives.

Figure 11: The Reformatory tower after an escape in 1974.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 1: Buildings R-4 through R-9 (dormitories) from the central quad.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 2: Buildings R-9 through R-4 (dormitories) along the north access road.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 3: Building R-8 (Dormitory 12), east wall. This building forms a part of the Reformatory Quadrangle. The foreground is an exercise yard (S-2).

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 4: Building R-2 (Gymnasium) from the quad. This building was originally built as a school and hospital facility. It edges the Reformatory Quadrangle.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 5: Building R-3 (the Dental Facility/ Dorm 24), southwest corner. This building was originally built as a combination auditorium and hospital.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 6: Building R-55 (Tower 2) was built in 1940. It is located northwest of the Reformatory Quadrangle.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 7: Building R-30 (Steam Heat Plant), south elevation. This structure was built in 1932.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 8: Building R-20 (Dorm 19-OFACM Shop), built in 1920-23, from the southeast. Note brick roads (RT-21) in the foreground and along the left side.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 9: Buildings R-28 (Laundry) and R-23 (Laundry Annex), built ca. 1930, from the southwest.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 10: Building R-25 (Dorm 21) at center, built 1924-30, from the southeast.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 11: Building R-44 (Chapel), built in 1958-61, detail of west façade.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 12: Building R-44 (Chapel), west façade.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 13: View of Penitentiary Quadrangle, northwest corner.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 14: Penitentiary west side arcade, looking south from building P-3.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 15: Building P-10 (Tower 7) and gate, south elevation. This tower was constructed in 1940.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 16: Building P-4 (Cellblock 4), west elevation. This building was constructed in 1935.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 17: View of Building P-3 (Cellblock 3), looking west.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 18: Building P-2 (Cellblock 2), west entrance.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 19: Building W-15 (Assistant Director's office), view of the northwest corner with its truncated arcade extension.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 20: Building W-12 (Gymnasium), north gable elevation looking south-east. The building, constructed in 1930, has a slate roof, a projecting gabled entrance pavilion.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 21: Building W-13 (Educational Services Building), east gable end. This Colonial Revival-style building was constructed in 1930.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 22: Building W-01 (Dining and Kitchen Building), entrance door detailing.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 23: View from the northwest of W-23 (Farm equipment storage) and W-22 (Barn), built in 1925, at the Workhouse. WO-04 (Notice board) is visible at the right.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 24: LB-01 (Kiln building #1), northeast elevation.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 25: Structure LT-07, the beehive-style kiln was built circa 1915 as part of the prison brickyard complex.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 26: Old entry gate (RT-04), including gateposts and gatehouse, looking northwest.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 27: A brick sign support (RO-01) at the Reformatory's entrance drive.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 28: One of the collection of culverts with brick headwalls that exist throughout the district. This type of culvert (LO-02) is found along the rail trace to the brickyard.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 29: Another culvert brick headwall type (RO-04) at the Reformatory.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 30: A brick and concrete ventilation shaft (PO-01) at the Penitentiary.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 31: A lenticular-shaped brick-edged planter (RO-08) divides a brick paved road (RT-21) north of building R-28 (laundry).

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 32: This brick planter (RO-09) is a feature of a remnant rose garden (S-03) at the Reformatory.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 33: Reformatory Tower 1 (R-54) stands beside the southwestern gate into the complex, which is surrounded by a chain-link fence (RO-07).

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 34: A painted wrought iron fence (RO-14) encloses the exercise yards between the Reformatory's south dormitories.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 35: Historic lightposts (WO- 01) with more recent luminaires line the Workhouse Entrance Drive.

Source: Greenhorne & O'Mara, 2000.

Photo 36: Grave markers at Stoney Lonesome (S-12), the prison's cemetery, west of Ox Road.

Source: John Milner Associates, Inc., 2005.

Photo 37: Open pasture land and perimeter fencing (DO-01, LO-07) characterize much of the center of the district.