

The following was taken from the S.F. Examiner (10/28/40):

Alcatraz Convict Beats Two Guards

5th in Series of Battles on 'Rock'

Bloody climax to a mounting series of attacks by Alcatraz convicts on guards was staged Saturday afternoon, it was learned yesterday.

A giant Negro mail robber came charging out of his cell, snatched a blackjack from one guard's grasp, beat him and a second guard unconscious and was finally subdued only by a whole squad of prison attendants.

The outbreak, which took place in the hushed corridors of the rock's segregation ward, was the fifth of a series of attacks by inmates on their guards within recent weeks.

GUARD BADLY BEATEN.

One of the guards injured in the latest battle still showed marked signs yesterday of the punishment he received.

He was Milton Amende, 40, of 1276 Thirty-second Avenue. The right side of his face was blue and swollen, his right eye was dark and puffed, and his head showed evidence of having suffered heavy blows. However, he refused to discuss the attack.

Veteran guards at Alcatraz, speaking anonymously in fear of the strict veil of secrecy which is officially thrown about happenings on the Rock, hint that prisoners' disregard of guards authority is on the increase, and that lack of decisively effectual punishment is emboldening some among them.

PREVIOUS ATTACK.

Within the few weeks preceding this month, three instances of prisoners' attacks on guards occurred on the island.

In one case, a convict, with a record of murder, suddenly attacked a guard, beat him down and crashed a chair over his head before other guards quelled him.

A short time later, in the prison hospital, another of the Rock's desperate convicts set upon a guard, managed to smash him down, and was trying to gouge out the officer's eyes with his thumbs when other attendants rescued the man.

CONVICT STABBED.

Then, on October 4, an incipient riot broke out in the prison's blacksmith shop. Two convicts said to be named Brandt and Long, both serving quarter century terms for bank robbery, had long had bad blood brewing.

One of the men snatched up a sharp edged tool, lunged at the other. In the battle, Long was stabbed

in the chest and stomach so seriously that he had to be taken to the hospital.

Guard Walter Petersen tried to break up the battle. He stepped between the two battling men, was slashed deeply on hands, arms and legs before other guards, rushing to aid him, quelled the disturbance.

For several weeks then, comparative order reigned—until last Saturday afternoon, it was revealed yesterday when details of the newest violence leaked through the Rock's heavy curtain of secrecy.

CELL DOOR UNLOCKED.

While the prison's inmates were in the recreation yard, Guard Amende unlocked the segregation block cell of a Negro prisoner named Martin—a 35 year old mail

robber, standing six feet three inches tall, weighing more than, 200 pounds. Martin is doing twenty-five years for mail robbery. Amende, only five feet seven, and far below the Negro's weight, opened the door without suspicion that the Negro, apparently gone what old timers call "stir crazy," was lurking ready for a berserk charge. As the lock clicked, the convict came charging out, fists flailing.

SENT TO FLOOR.

Amende was struck full in the face, sent sprawling to the floor with blood gushing from his mouth and nose. Courageously, he tried to rise to fight back. He drew his billy —and in the same instant the mad convict was on him, snatched the blackjack from his hand, and rained a murderous barrage of heavy blows on the guard's unprotected face, head, neck and shoulders. Amende fell unconscious under the brutal pummeling.

A second guard, hearing the commotion, rushed to help Amende. The Negro was ready for him having beaten Amende to the floor, he swung the billy again and again, and sent the other guard also unconscious to the ground. But by this time, still other prison attendants, summoned by the second guard as he rushed to help Amende, arrived and after a terrific battle, subdued Martin, hauled him off to the isolation ward, where he was thrown into another cell.

UNCONSCIOUS 3 HOURS.

Meantime, Amende was rushed to the Alcatraz prison hospital, where his wounds were dressed. For three hours, until 6 o'clock in the evening, he lay unconscious. Then he came out of his coma, and was sent across the bay to his home, where he was recovering yesterday.

The second guard beaten into unconsciousness by the Negro suffered lesser hurts, and soon recovered at the prison hospital.