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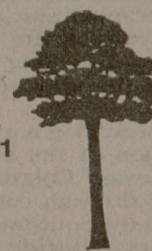
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Texas lacks funds to handle babies born to prisoners

GATESVILLE (AP) — Child welfare officials, overwhelmed by a steady increase in the number of babies born in prison, say they may want out of the infant business. In fact, there is no agency in Texas with authority or funds to deal with the children, officials said. Gatesville warden Susan Cranford said Tuesday a record 65 babies were born to women serving time in Texas prisons last year.

Legally, these newborn victims of crime are nobody's baby.

The infant can wind up as a ward of the state unless a relative or friend volunteers to rear the child. If the babies become wards of the state, mothers who want to regain custody after they get out of prison must first prove in court that they are fit parents.

Department of Human Services officials say they lack both the legal authority and the funding to accept responsibility for prison-born infants.

In the past, they have done cursory investigations and made placements "as a courtesy" to the Texas Department of Corrections.

Officials cited the case of a woman who recently gave birth to a child. She will have problems when she gets out of prison and goes to court to reclaim her baby.

Among other considerations, the judge will take into account her 1980 conviction for injury to a child. The woman told the *Dallas Morning News* she plans to tell the judge she wasn't responsible for the death of her infant daughter when she was 17.

The number of women in Texas prisons rose from 760 in 1975 to

1,240 in 1980 and almost 1,800 last year.

In 1983, 29 babies were born to Texas inmates. That number jumped into the 50s a year later and into the 60s in 1985. Last year, according to Cranford, a record 65 children were born to inmates.

"The numbers are growing quite a bit," said Jim Marquart, assistant commissioner of protective services for the Department of Human Services. "The Legislature gave us a clear message of the kind of cases we should be involved in, and that's abuse and neglect."

Prison officials say they are even less qualified for the role of child care supervisor.

"We're as poorly suited as anybody to deal with those kinds of problems," said Kirk Brown, an attorney for the Texas Department of Corrections. "We don't have any legal relationship with the child one way or the other."

Women serving time in Texas prisons often have no contact with their children during their incarceration. And the separation may be permanent.

Despite the Department of Human Service's goal of reuniting families, that is often difficult in the case of former inmates and their children, officials said.

"It's hard for us," said Janice Gammill, an attorney for the Texas Department of Human Services. "If the child has been in foster care for two years, they've become attached to the foster parents."

A Texas inmate may see her children once a month if she has been incarcerated for more than six months and if she is in good standing.

Houses

(Continued from page 1)

As one of its first actions, Van Riper said, the group sought to commemorate two of Bryan's historical landmarks, including Brazos County's oldest house. "In 1976, the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence was coming up, and we wanted to do something for that," he said, "so we got this house and the Bryan Public Library placed on the National Register of Historic Places."

A listing in the Register requires proof of the site's unusual age, historical significance or remarkable architectural features. The Cavitt house on E. 30th Street in Bryan met each specification.

Built between 1878-1880, the house and surrounding property were owned by the Cavitts, a prominent family long associated with Bryan and A&M.

Cavitt Street and Esther, Ethel and Twin Blvds. in Bryan were named for members of the family, which once owned all the land between the house and College Station, Van Riper said.

After the death of the last members of the Cavitt family, the house began to fall into disrepair, he said. With the financial support of the City of Bryan, the CHP bought the block of property on which the house was built.

"We wanted eventually to try to save this house if we could," said Van Riper, who bought the house in 1986. "The last two sisters died in 1978, and the house was vacant then for three years while the estate was being settled."

"The house was broken into, and nothing was being done to care for it. Finally, after the estate was settled, the Citizens for Historic Preservation bought this property, intending simply to hold it long enough to put some deed restrictions on it. The National Register marker helped protect it from governmental bodies, but it did not protect it from a private owner."

"Some deed restrictions on it would make it difficult to destroy the house or build an apartment building or something there."

Construction has begun on two acres of the Cavitt property to create a public park, which the CHP plans to donate to Bryan in return for the city's help in funding the land purchase. When complete, "Heritage Park" will include walkways, benches and a gazebo, all in turn-of-the-century style, Batchelor said.

"We specifically asked the landscape architect to design something that would have been typical of a park built around 1900 to 1920," she said.

The park design will blend with the style of the Bryan historic district. Homeowners generally have preserved the original designs of the houses, which range from the elaborate Victorian ornamentation of 1885-1905 to the rectangular electric brick construction of the 1920s.

Although passers-by may admire the homes' external designs, seldom do people have a chance to see the inside, Batchelor said, so for the past seven years, the CHP has sponsored

a Christmas tour of four houses in the historical district.

"One of the ideas behind the homes tour is to show people what these houses look like and how with a little care and a little fixing up, they can be wonderful homes," she said.

Many people do not recognize the potential of older homes, she said, and even some real estate agents often discourage their clients from buying the houses.

"When we bought this house in 1976, nobody was interested in old houses," Batchelor said. "Quite frankly, no one even wanted to show this house to us. The realtor just didn't think anyone would be interested in these homes. She was really rather reluctant to show it to us."

"In fact, I actually found our house — somebody casually mentioned that there was an old house for sale on 29th Street. I drove out here and found it and showed it to my husband before the realtor even saw it. I'm sure she must have thought we were crazy."

Batchelor said she hasn't regretted her choice of home, however. Even without some modern household luxuries — like air conditioning — the house is comfortable, she said.

To help residents survive the summer heat, she said, contractors developed cooling systems through certain features of construction: houses often faced southeasterly to catch the prevailing breeze; rooms were left open on three sides to circulate the air; double-hung windows allowed warmer air to escape outside while cooler air stayed in; overhanging porch roofs shaded the housefronts.

The porches, classic features of Victorian and neoclassical architecture, often served as sleeping and relaxation areas during summer nights, Batchelor said.

"The porches had a functional role, to block the sun's rays on the house, but they were also where people went in the evenings to be in the breeze," she said. "Because people were outside more, there was a great deal more community interaction. My husband is fond of saying that many of the problems in America today are attributable to the demise of the front porch."

"There's something to that in the sense that with air conditioning, we have all gone inside and shut the doors. So it seems that the porches are very interesting indicators of what society was like then."

Indicators of modern society can be seen in the gradual loss of residential areas to business districts, Batchelor said. Members of the CHP became "painfully aware" of that trend, she said, when a convenience store-gas station was built on a residential street.

"It became evident that if something were not done to try to preserve this neighborhood, it would quickly cease to exist," she said. "We became aware that that type of activity was going to increase if we didn't try to do something to protect the neighborhood from conversion to commercial property."

The "something" they did resulted in the creation of the historic district.

Gore ponders political future after NY loss

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Sen. Albert Gore Jr., whose presidential campaign suffered a reportedly fatal blow in New York, came here Wednesday to discuss his political future and money.

"Let me say I'm in the process now of consulting with friends and supporters all over the country and asking their advice how we can best continue our cause for which I have been elected, which is to bring the Democratic Party back into the mainstream, to bring the party toward the center," Gore said after arriving at a private airport.

He refused to answer questions but said he would announce whether he is pulling out of the race for the Democratic presidential nomination at a Texas news conference in Washington.

A campaign source told the Associated Press on Wednesday Gore had decided to end his campaign, leaving Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis and Rev. Jesse Jackson as the only candidates remaining in the once-crowded field.

Gore, the favorite of many Texas Democrats, would not be in "consultations" with friends and supporters in the state. From the airport, he headed for an Austin hotel where a \$1,000-a-plate fund-raiser was scheduled for Wednesday night. The Gore campaign has a \$15 million budget. Gore ran a distant third in the primary in Texas, behind Michael Dukakis and Jackson in Texas' New York primary. In Austin, called the Dukakis win a "triumph" victory" and said he had made a "tremendous gain."

Because Bryan has no laws, there are no restrictions on mining separations between dental and business areas. They had to seek enabling legislation from the Bryan City Council for the establishment of a historic preservation ordinance.

The Council was skeptical of the idea of creating a historic district, Batchelor said, and required the CHP to collect consent from 75 percent of the residents in the proposed district.

Although the requirements "absolutely huge," she said, the group filled the quota of consent forms, and the Council approved the ordinance in 1987.

The CHP's success in preserving the historic project is one indication of a trend toward appreciation of historic resources, she said.

"I think the efforts of our contributors to people's appreciation of the old houses," she said, "there has also been a general American society an increasing awareness of the value of historic preservation."

Although historic awareness is growing in other states, especially always have a strong pride in their heritage, JoAnn Rabins, assistant director of A&M's Center for Historic Resources.

"In Texas, there's a lot of appreciation for the history of the state," Rabins said. "There's a real desire to preserve the state."

By recruiting faculty with specific areas of expertise in historic preservation projects, the Center's directors hope to assure the important markers of the state — churches and bridges, archeological sites and collections.

"The Center was started with the idea that we could build projects so we could pull in a variety of colleges and departments in the University. Some special knowledge was applied in certain instances."

One of the houses on campus — the former of the Center and returned to as the Center's new headquarters. The house will be as close as possible to its original form on Throckmorton Street, Rabins said, and the project as a model for future restoration efforts.

"We're going to be preserving an optimal example of what can be done," she said. "This kind of historic preservation is important for us to have a shame to let old buildings go to the rate when they could be used for other purposes or can be used for the same purpose as just letting them go."

"I think that from the interest and support in these projects is, in general, across the country — the Bicentennial. But it started to penetrate that turn around on this old buildings go to pieces."

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