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A study of Georgia's new penal reform movement

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A STUDY OF GEORGIA'S NEW PENAL REFORM MOVEMENT

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

DOROTHY ELIZABETH WILSON

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

JUNE 1945
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The state of Georgia for many years has received unfavorable publicity about the conditions of her prison system. On some occasions Georgia prisons have been labelled the worst in the United States. From time to time small scale efforts have been made towards correcting the conditions within the penal institutions. Under the administration of Governor Ellis Arnall, the first whole hearted effort for prison reform was set in motion. In 1943 laws were enacted to set up the machinery necessary to carry out the penal reform program.

Purpose

It is the purpose of this thesis to give an historical account of the development of this new reform, to analyze its objectives, and to describe the functioning of the governmental agencies created to carry out the reform program.

Scope

This study relates to the activities of the State Department of Corrections and the State Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Method of Procedure

Because the program studied has only been in action for a comparatively short time there has not been much published material on the subject. Therefore, much of this research material has been gleaned from newspaper articles for the past two years. The material for past penal reforms was obtained
from the State Department of Archives and History. A good deal of the material has also been secured from the State Department of Corrections and the State Board of Pardons and Paroles.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PENAL REFORM
IN THE UNITED STATES

The prison system in the sense that it is known to-day did not come into existence until the end of the eighteenth century. The early history of American prisons centers chiefly in the struggle between the so-called Pennsylvania and Auburn Systems of prison discipline.¹

The Pennsylvania System was introduced in the Walnut jail at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1790. It rested upon the principle of solitary confinement during the period of imprisonment with the hope that solitude would not only prevent association with other prisoners, but would also promote earnest Christian reflection productive of efforts at self-reformation.²

The State Penitentiary in Auburn, New York, established between 1816 and 1824, provided for separate confinement at night in small cells, and labor in the day under a strict rule of silence. The Auburn System became known as the silent system, as contrasted with the Pennsylvania or solitary system.

The reformatory in Elmira, New York, in 1877, embodied most of the progress in penological thought and practice between 1825-1875, including among other things, emphasis upon reformation, commutation of sentence for good behavior, classification and promotion of inmates, a quasi-indeterminate sentence, and provision for productive labor. The Elmira

² Ibid., p. 517.
system was utilized for youthful first offenders and had not been extended to prisons for adults.

Pecuniary or monetary advantage to the states dominated the reform movement down to 1850, and for many years afterward remained a prominent factor. The pecuniary motive mixed with philanthropy during this period produced several county-penitentiaries in the state of New York. These were boarding prisons for misdemeanant prisoners from the jails of the surrounding counties. This system or practice was itself a reform movement.¹

During the 1870's, public attention was turned to prisons by the work of benevolent societies such as, The Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Prisoners, The Prison Discipline Society of Boston and The Prison Association of New York. At the Prison Congress held in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1870 provisions for prison reform were formulated which laid the foundation of the modern American prison reform movement. To Dr. E. C. Wines, who was then secretary of the Prison Association of New York, the world is greatly indebted for the convening of that congress, for its formulation of penological principles, for the published proceedings of that year (1870), for the permanent national and international organization and meetings, and for the powerful impulse to benevolent scientific prison reform that has emanated therefrom. Immediately after this convention the state of Indiana established the Women's Prison and Reformatory at Indianapolis, Massachusetts created the Concord Reformatory and the Women's Prison; Michigan founded the Industrial School for Dependent Children with the introduction into the management of new educational and reformatory measures.²

Since 1877, more than twenty-five of the states have enacted parole laws and put them into operation. The principle of the indeterminate sentence is now incorporated in the general criminal statutes of many states and the principle is constantly gaining favor in many others.

Places of imprisonment in the United States include lock-ups, jails or police stations for the detention of arrested persons pending immediate trial before the magistrates. Persons convicted of felonies are confined in the state penitentiaries. Prisoners of the federal government are usually kept in state institutions since the United States Government maintains only a few prisons.

Objectives of Penal Reform

Austin H. MacCormick, in an article in the 1943 Social Work Year Book, describes the present trends in prisons as being toward individualized treatment. It is generally agreed among progressive penologists that the essentials of a well rounded correctional program in institutions for adult offenders are: scientific case histories, examinations, tests, and studies of the individual prisoners, adequate medical and psychiatric service, psychological services, educational opportunities, work assignments and discipline. The employment should be comparable in variety, in type, and in pace with the work of the outside world.

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1 The indeterminate sentence refers to the fact that the exact period of custody is not fixed before the custody begins. E. H. Sutherland, Principles of Criminology (New York, 1939), p. 15.

Education should be planned in accordance with the individual needs and interests of the prisoners with emphasis on vocational training; library services designed for wholesome recreation and education; directed recreation, both indoors and outdoors, so organized as to promote mental and physical health; and a religious program directed toward the spiritual life of the individual as well as that of the whole group. Discipline that aims at the development of self-control and preparation for free life should be promoted. Adequate buildings and equipment for the varied activities of the institution and, above all, adequate and competent personnel, carefully selected, well trained, and serving under such conditions as to promote a high degree of morale and efficiency are important for a successful program of prisoner rehabilitation.

Standards of Prison Administration

The American Prison Association was founded in 1870. No more farsighted set of standards has been enunciated than the Declaration of Principles adopted by the American Prison Association at its inception. So progressive and idealistic were these principles that they have not yet been realized in states throughout the country.\(^1\) The Declaration of Principles of 1870 of the American Prison Association were revised and reaffirmed at the sixtieth annual congress of the association in 1936. The principles are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The treatment of criminals by society is for the protection of society. Since such treatment is directed to the criminal rather than to the crime,

its great object should be his moral regeneration. Hence the supreme aim of prison discipline is the reformation of criminals, not the infliction of vindictive suffering. The progressive classification of prisoners based on study of the individual, and administered on some well adjusted system, should be established in all prisons above the common jail.

Education is a vital force in the reformation of outcast men and women. Its tendency is to quicken the intellect, inspire self-respect, excite to higher aims, and afford a healthful substitute for degraded and vicious amusements. Recreation is considered to be an essential part of education.

The administration of public punishment will become scientific, uniform and successful only when it is raised to the dignity of a profession and men are specially trained for the job.

The construction, organization, and management of all prisons should be by the state, and the prisons should form a graduated series of reformatory establishments, being arranged with a view to the industrial employment, intellectual education and moral training of the inmates.

The application of the principles of sanitary science in the construction and arrangement of prisons is a point of vital importance. A competent and adequate medical staff is essential. The hospital accommodations, should be all that humanity requires and science can supply. All needed means of personal cleanliness should be met.

No prison system can be perfect or successful to any degree, without some central authority to direct, control and unify the whole system. This can best be accomplished by each state forming an harmonious and integrated prison system.
CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE GEORGIA PENAL SYSTEM
PRIOR TO 1943

Prior to the Revolutionary War the only prisons in Georgia were town lock-ups and local jails maintained chiefly to house debtors and persons accused of crime. Most convicted criminals were punished by some form of corporal punishment rather than by imprisonment.

During the Revolutionary War, prison ships were used by the British authorities in control of the Georgia colony to house criminals. The General Assembly of the newly created state of Georgia, in December 1811, appropriated ten thousand dollars for the construction of a state penitentiary to care for the criminal population. The penitentiary was to be erected on a site in Baldwin county near the city of Milledgeville. Work began on the penitentiary in 1811 but it was not ready to receive criminals until 1817. In 1816 the first penal code of Georgia abolished many forms of corporal punishment and substituted imprisonment as a method of punishment. In 1828 the General Assembly gave the governor power to make all appointments for the penitentiary system.

The development of prison management in Georgia can be traced through three separate periods. During the first period, which preceded the Civil War, the penal system was a simple one since the discipline of slavery was sufficient to handle minor crimes committed by the slaves who made up the larger part of the population. During this period there were few felons and

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2 Ibid., p. 3.
the state penitentiary at Milledgeville housed all of them. The local jails housed only misdemeanant prisoners and persons awaiting trial.

The second period lasted through the Reconstruction Era and into the early part of the twentieth century.¹ A large portion of the white prisoners were released during the Civil War to permit them to join the Confederate Army. With the establishment of peace, conditions changed. Crime increased among the Negroes, now emancipated. It was during this period that county camps were established both as a matter of expediency as well as to facilitate the labor of prisoners.

Being unable to cope with the large and rapidly increasing number of convicts in the county jails, the Military Governor, General T. H. Ruger, began the system of leasing convicts to private contractors.² Although the first lease of felony convict labor was not authorized by the General Assembly later leases were, and the practice was followed on a large scale until the abuses inherent in the system became so notorious that in 1908 the leasing system was abolished. Thereafter each county was allowed to receive felony convicts for work on the public roads only under state supervision.

The third phase of the development of Georgia's penal system can be said to begin with the creation in 1897 of a Prison Commission,³ consisting of three members serving six years and elected at the general elections. The commission was originally authorized to exercise general supervision over all convicts, whether felons or misdemeanants, but was granted actual control over the felons only. This resulted in the widespread distribution

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¹ Ibid., p. 8.
of convicts throughout the state on county work in county camps and on state road work in State Highway Camps. As a result only a small number of prisoners were cared for in the state institution. In 1937 the Governor and the Chairman of the State Highway Board were added as "ex officio" members to the Prison Commission.

A Survey of Georgia Prisons

The 1929 handbook of American Prisons and Reformatories, published by the National Society of Penal Information, gave a report on the prison camps in Georgia. The survey disclosed:

The prison system in Georgia is unique in a number of respects. It is, with the sole exception of Mississippi, the only state in which the governing board is an elective one. This method of establishing control has not commended itself to any of the other forty-six states. In no other state is the actual control of the state board over the state prisoners so limited as it is here. The state is only responsible for the transfer of the state prisoners from the county jail to the county camps. It has authority for inspections but little real control of the prisoners after they are transferred to the counties.¹

This survey also disclosed that prisoners in Georgia received no wages. On discharge prisoners were given clothing of poor quality and a railroad ticket to the station nearest the place of their conviction, even though their homes might be in another part of the state. Often when they arrived at the destination they were arrested as vagrants because they had neither money nor job. The practice of the Georgia counties of paying court officers and the sheriff on a fee basis also led to national condemnation.

The organization of Georgia's prison system was most defective because the state had no real voice in the selection of the wardens or deputies, and had little knowledge and no real control over the state prisoners after they were turned over to the counties, the survey concluded.

The surveyors made the recommendation that the state ought to make an appropriation large enough to put the whole plant at Milledgeville in good shape and should keep it up to the standards that have been accepted as proper for modern institutions. Because the inmates were noted to be deteriorating from idleness it was suggested that industries should be provided for the prisoners.

In recent years the state had to make provisions for the care of many more prisoners than its facilities permitted because the counties had little use of the prisoners to which they were entitled from the state. Even though at various times additional land and equipment were acquired in Baldwin County for the prison administration, The General Assembly found it necessary in 1931 to create a Prison Farm Purchase Commission with authority to purchase still more land and equipment. Under this authority the commission purchased a tract of 7,500 acres in Tattnall County and erected a stockade upon it. Adjacent to this the Federal Government constructed a modern penal institution which the State of Georgia arranged to take over on July 1, 1937.

Recommendation For Reorganizing Georgia's Penal System

Reorganization of Georgia's penal system was contemplated under a program considered by legislative and administrative authorities of the state in June of 1937. The initial step in the program was that the state take over from the Federal Government the new penitentiary at Reidsville in Tattnall County. The members of the House and Senate State Penitentiary Committees

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1 "The Prison Labor Problem in Georgia", op. cit., p. 5.
2 The Atlanta Journal, June 21, 1937.
were to visit the various county chain gang camps to determine, with the State
Prison Commission, what camps should be abolished. Since a large number of
the felony convicts would be housed at the Tattnall Prison it was proposed
that the State Highway Department use most of the misdemeanor prisoners for
state road work and maintain some camps for that purpose. It was proposed
that farming operations be carried on at Tattnall on a large scale so as to pro-
duce farm commodities for other state institutions.

Recommendations which would end the Georgia chain gang and would place
the penal system of Georgia among the most progressive in the country were con-
tained in a report on the prison labor problem in Georgia made public November
2, 1937 by Dr. Louis N. Robinson, Chairman of the Prison Industries Reorgan-
ization Board. The study was undertaken at the invitation of Governor Rivers
of Georgia and was prepared with the cooperation of prison officials and the
Joint Committee of the General Assembly On Prisons in Georgia.¹

At the 1937-38 Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly, the name
of the Prison Commission was changed from The Prison Commission of Georgia to
The State Prison and Parole Commission. During this same session the new com-
missioner's power was broadened in that he was given authority to grant parole
without the approval of the Governor.² Thus the basic foundation for a penal
reform was established in Georgia. However no great change took place until
the passage of the Penal Act in 1943.

¹New York Times, November 21, 1937
²State Prison and Parole Commission, Paroles in Georgia (Atlanta, 1941),
p. 15.
CHAPTER IV

THE PENAL ACT OF 1943

Georgia's pardon and prison system were for many years the disgrace of America. Ellis G. Arnall during his campaign for election as Governor of Georgia in 1943 promised to abolish the pardon racket. The political control over pardons and paroles had been exposed as nothing more than a pardon racket. After Arnall's election, even though he was successful in eliminating the pardon racket it was soon apparent that the prison system itself was entangled in the pardon racket and that it would be impossible to have a good parole system until a sound penal system was established.¹

At the urgent request of many citizens of Georgia, Governor Arnall appointed a committee from the House and Senate to inspect the penal institutions of the state. The report filed by the committee disclosed a deplorable condition existing in many camps. The committee felt that it was imperative that some immediate action be taken. As a result of this investigation, Governor Arnall called a special session of the legislature in September 1943 for the purpose of reorganizing the prison system. Even though this session lasted only five days it was nevertheless a very hectic and stormy one. Over the opposition of some politicians the House of Representatives voted to oust the members of the State Prison Commission and to create a Department of Corrections headed by an all-powerful director. An amendment to this proposal was adopted. This amendment called for the state payment of expenses of prisoners from the time they were convicted—thus assuring the counties they would not have to finance

a prisoner's trip to the proposed receiving and classifying station to be set up by the state. A second amendment which was adopted would not abolish county prison camps if they maintained state standards.

Provisions

On October 1, 1943 the legislators cleared the Reform Bill. The provisions of the bill required: retaining the members of the Prison Board until the end of the year, that county camps return incorrigible prisoners to the state for proper handling; that the various wardens, guards, and other employees in the county correctional institutions be chosen by the proper county officials subject to the approval of the Director of Corrections; and that the salaries of all such employees should be fixed by the proper county authorities. Counties were given until June 1, 1944 to let the prisoners wear out the old stripped suits which were to be abolished. The bill provided that in all cases where the wardens of county camps were discharged by the Director of corrections and where there was any disagreement between the director and the proper county authorities or any warden, these persons should have the right of appeal within a period of fifteen days to the Pardon and Parole Board and should be given the right of hearing before the commission.

Rehabilitation of prisoners would be the state's principal aim. The prisoners would be taught trades at the state institution and also were to be given all educational, recreational, and religious activities and advantages possible; the expense to be borne by the state. Special privileges would be the reward for convicts who behaved themselves. Central receiving stations

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1 The Atlanta Constitution, September 30, 1943.
for all prisoners would be established, and prisoners assigned to work to which they were best suited.

The county camps would continue under the reorganization program but only in the communities where they would line up to the standards laid down by the state director. Wardens and guards would henceforth have to live up to standard qualifications to be laid down by the new commission.

With the passage of this Reform Bill by the General Assembly the necessary machinery was set up in the state of Georgia for the reorganization of its prison system.
CHAPTER V

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Purpose and Function

The purpose and function of the Department of Corrections was set forth in the Corrections Law approved October 6, 1943. It was stated in this law that the Department of Corrections would be under the exclusive control of an appointed director. All the duties and powers formerly given to the State Board of Prisons were transferred and delegated to the Director of Corrections.1

It was the duty of the Director of Corrections to institute immediately a program of intelligent prison administration which would have for its underlying purpose the rehabilitation and reclamation of the inmates and the making of all correctional institutions as self-supporting as possible. The Director of Corrections was given power in making all rules and regulations to produce a modern program of progressive penal administration throughout the state of Georgia. He was authorized to establish a wise and humane prison system.

The abolition of leg irons, chains, and shackles from prison inmates was ordered. Whipping of inmates was prohibited, and the wearing of stripes was required only as punishment for violation of prison rules and regulations.

Standard qualifications for wardens, guards and correction officials were to be established by the Director of Corrections. The various wardens, guards and other officials were to be chosen by the proper county officials with the consent and approval of the Director of Corrections. The Director was to determine what special privileges should be offered to exemplary prisoners. Likewise it was his duty to establish rules and regulations for dealing with incorrigible prisoners.

It was the function of the Department of Corrections to see that all

1 Department of Corrections State of Georgia. Rules and Regulations For the Government of County Public Works Camps (Reidsville, Georgia) p. 18. (Mimeographed)
prison inmates infected by disease were isolated, hospitalized and treated; that juveniles, first offenders and all youthful offenders were carefully separated from hardened criminals. It was also the duty of this department to furnish transportation, necessary clothing and money to discharged inmates upon expiration of their sentence.

Administration Procedures For Georgia State Prisons

With the initiation of the reform program much progress was made in the administration of the two prisons at Reidsville, Georgia (one prison for male prisoners and the other for female prisoners). Formerly administered on the model of the smaller county camps, these prisons are now following a pattern in conformity with accepted prison administrative practices.

In accordance with the standards established by the Department of Corrections, qualified persons were placed in important positions in both prisons. One of the administrative policies was the establishment of rank among custodial officers. It is believed by those in authority that this assignment of rank has promoted efficiency among the custodial personnel. The wearing of uniforms by the custodial staff is another factor believed to have increased the efficiency of the prison administration.

Housing facilities provided for the administrative staff on the prison grounds has proved to be an important factor in helping to establish a permanent, well trained personnel. The Director of Corrections in his annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly pointed out that the shortage of housing facilities was responsible for the many changes in personnel.

\[1\text{Ibid.}, p. 13.
\[2\text{Report for Fiscal Year 1943-1944. op. cit p. 6.}
The removal of trustee prisoners from office jobs which should have been done by paid personnel removed the danger of giving the prisoners a chance to use confidential administration information to their own advantage. The replacing of these trustee prisoners also added to the security of bonded employees whose positions were formerly subjected to risk by the use of prisoners in their offices.

It was pointed out in the fiscal report of 1943-1944 of the Department of Corrections that poor administrative practices were costly and it was sincerely believed by the Department of Corrections that the installation of a well trained administrative staff though costly at the outset would in time reduce the actual cost of maintenance. The administration was to keep an accurate account of the actual cost of maintenance of the state prisons. Through inventory a method was found to prevent misappropriation of money.

The Department of Corrections erected for the state troopers and radio operators a barracks outside the entrance of the prison, from which information could be flashed to peace officers throughout the state.

Many progressive improvements were made at the state prisons at Reidsville, Georgia, from the standpoint of physical facilities. The prison landscape was improved, adding greatly to the appearance of cleanliness and orderliness. Not only did the erection of new guard towers\(^1\) and a new guard fence\(^2\) add materially to the general appearance of the prison plant but it also added to the efficiency of the custodial staff in preventing any attempts at escape by inmates.

\(^1\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 6.}\)
\(^2\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 8.}\)
General repairs to many buildings on the prison grounds have made them usable where previously they were only fire hazards.

Progress has been made in promoting efficiency in the prison farm. The purchase of additional stock for the dairy herd greatly increased the original value of the stock. The erection of two implement sheds for the storing of farm machinery not only insured against the loss of tools but also gave the inmates an opportunity to acquire skill in the repair of these tools. A development of poultry raising is to be started now that houses for brooding chickens have been completed. A new farm program has been started, the crops being primarily peas, harvest grain and grazing foliage. Further plans for increasing the vegetable program will not only be of value in prison consumption but also will open channels for a canning industry.¹

Rehabilitative Training Program

Considerable progress has been made in the rehabilitation training programs at Reidsville, even though it has been difficult to secure trained personnel. At the male institution, prisoners are now trained for various trades which will enable them to find suitable employment upon release. For those with mechanical aptitudes training is offered in the print shop and garage.² Through work in the prison plant, inmates have received training in plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, block making, brick setting, plastering and painting.³ Through farm work, training has been given in gardening, dairying and cattle raising.⁴ At the Women's Prison, training has been

¹Ibid., p. 12.
²Ibid., p. 12.
³Ibid., p. 12.
⁴Ibid., p. 12.
given in cooking, sewing and homemaking.

Through the installation of a well trained administrative staff, the morale of the inmates has apparently changed for the better.\(^1\) The custodial officers have been properly trained in handling the inmates hence there has been a great improvement in the discipline of inmates. The medical services for all the inmates are adequate at the present time. However for further improving the progress at the State Prisons there should be an increase in the medical staff to provide for special surgical treatment. Religious services are conducted weekly by a resident chaplain who assists inmates with all their personal problems. A resident psychiatrist would seem to be needed. He might be most helpful in solving discipline problems.

The general welfare of the inmates has been improved through provisions made for bathing facilities, clothing, and care of the dormitories and general living quarters of the inmates. Undoubtedly, all of these improvements have greatly added to the general well being of the prison inmates.

The County Public Works Camps

As of January 1, 1945, there were eighty-four counties which were operating a total of ninety-seven county public work camps.\(^2\) While the actual operation and supervision of all county public work camps are the direct responsibility of the county, the Department of Corrections exercises general supervision of them by means of its inspection service.\(^3\) In addition to the regular inspections, investigations are conducted into all complaints of mistreatment by inmates and deaths of prisoners, where death occurred from other

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 13
\(^2\) Ibid., Part I, p. 4.
\(^3\) Ibid., Part I, p. 6.
than natural causes. The inspection service at the present time is operating in an advisory capacity to assist the county authorities in a continuing and constructive improvement of their camps.

On February 15, 1944 representatives of the Wardens' and Commissioners' Association and the Director of the Department of Corrections met in Atlanta and drew up rules and regulations for the proper administration and maintenance of county public work camps throughout the state of Georgia. Each county public work camp was set up under the control and direction of appointed wardens. Standards were set up for housing prisoners, and work standards were formulated. Provisions were made for adequate food service, clothing needs, medical service, planned recreation and religious services.

1 Ibid., p. 6.
CHAPTER VI
THE STATE BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles was created by the Georgia General Assembly February 5, 1943. By an amendment ratified on August 3, 1943 this board was made a constitutional body. Under the Constitutional provisions, clemency powers, such as pardon and commutation were taken from the Governor and placed in the newly created Board. The State Board of Pardons and Paroles consists of three members appointed by the Governor, and approved by the Senate for staggered terms. Upon taking office, the three appointed members agreed that the paramount duties of the Board were mainly three-fold:

First, to protect society by not releasing from custody any prisoner who is deemed to be an habitual criminal or a menace to society, except in certain instances where a prisoner will be automatically discharged at the expiration of a flat sentence and it is thought wise, in the interest of society to place him under strict parole supervision rather than allowing him to go entirely free at the expiration of his maximum sentence.

Second, to release under parole supervision, in accordance with the established eligibility rules, all prisoners who the Board feels will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and whose release will not be incompatible with the welfare of society, and

Third, to make every possible effort to bring about the rehabilitation of those prisoners released.

Some of the highlights of the pardon and parole system of Georgia are:

1. The establishment of general eligibility rules governing parole

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1Georgia Laws, 1943. Part I - Title IV Government.
2Biennial Report of State Board of Pardons and Paroles of Georgia 1943-1944 (Atlanta, Georgia 1944), p. 3.
3Ibid., p. 3.
4The first members were appointed for terms of 3, 5 and 7 years respectively, their successors shall be appointed for seven years.
5Ibid., p. 3.
consideration and automatic consideration for parole of all felony cases in accordance with eligibility rules.

2. A thorough and impartial investigation of all cases reviewed for parole by the Board and also individual interviews of prisoners by members of the Board.

The investigation includes a review of the prisoner's previous standing, general reputation, community attitude, employment record, family history and the probability of his adjustment. The investigation also includes the arrangement of a suitable plan of employment and residence designed to assist him in becoming a law-abiding citizen.

Successful parole administration rests largely upon the proper selection of prisoners to be released from prison and effective supervision of those released under the Board's jurisdiction. Great stress is placed upon the importance of supervision as a means of protecting the public and rehabilitating the prisoner. There are thirteen supervisors working in the state who keep constant contact with the parolees and advise the Board as to the adjustment of the released prisoners. A parole supervisor has been placed at the State Prison whose duty is to keep in constant contact with the inmates and to advise the Board on the individual prisoner's progress and plans toward his ultimate release. From February 5, 1943 to October 1, 1944 the Board has granted 1,196 paroles and has authorized 654 conditional releases at the expiration of minimum sentences.

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1 Ibid., p. 4.
2 Ibid., p. 5.
CHAPTER VII

PRISON STATISTICS

As of December 31, 1944 there were 340 colored male misdemeanor and felony prisoners at Reidsville, Georgia and 617 white male inmates, making a total male population of 957. The total male population at Reidsville increased from 807 on July 1, 1944. It then fell to 957 on December 31, 1944. The increase in population during 1944 as compared with 1943 was brought about by the influx of white male prisoners into the institution at Reidsville from the institution at Reidsville from the State Highway Camps which were closed.¹

As of December 31, 1944 there were 97 white female prisoners in the female institution and 149 colored female inmates, making a total female population of 246 on that date as compared with 212 on July 1, 1944 and 347 on July 1, 1947. Therefore, the total population of the two institutions at Reidsville, Georgia was 1,203 inmates as of December 31, 1944² as compared with 1,217 on July 1, 1944 and 1,154 on July 1, 1943.

¹ Annual Report of the State Department of Corrections For Fiscal Year 1943-1944.
² Ibid., p. 13.
TABLE 1
RACIAL AND SEX CLASSIFICATION OF CONVICTIONS
IN GEORGIA FOR FISCAL YEAR 1943-1944.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total Felony Convictions</th>
<th>Total Misdemeanor Convictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro Male</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical records show that in proportion to adult population Negroes arrested, convicted, and committed to prisons a little less than three times as frequently as are native white persons.1

The explanation of racial variations in crime rates in terms of the direct effects of race biology can be discarded in view of the general evidence against the direct inheritance of criminality and also in view of the variations in the crime rates within one race.2 Race may conceivably be a factor in crime first, by inheritance of differential characteristics which, while not in themselves criminal tendencies, determine the social and economic level of the race in competition. Second, by the experience of the race, including a confinement of a race to a given status by barriers imposed by other races and the persistence of resulting reactions by force of tradition.3

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1 Edwin H. Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
2 Ibid., p. 122.
3 Ibid., p. 123.
TABLE 2

RECIDIVISTS CONVICTED IN GEORGIA DURING THE
FISCAL YEAR 1943—1944

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Total Felony Convicts</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total Misdemeanor Convicts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Conviction</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Conviction</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Conviction</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Conviction</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth or more</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The term recidivist refers to a convict who has previously served a prison term for some previous crime. The persistence of criminals may be explained either in terms of the characteristics and conditions of the offenders or in terms of the agencies of reformation.\(^1\) The personal characteristics and social situations which are conducive to criminality in the first place are also conducive to persistence in crime.\(^2\)

Persons who live in good residential areas, who are reared in wholesome homes, and have occupations on the higher levels with a comfortable standard of living are least likely to return to crime after any method of treatment. Those who failed most frequently on probation and parole were reared in deteriorated areas, in homes where destitution, vice and criminality were usual in isolation from the constructive agencies of the community. Isolation from law-abiding society is another possible explanation of recidivism. This  

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 586.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 588.
usually occurs more frequently after imprisonment.
Penal reform is functioning in Georgia. Progress has been made in re-organizing the Georgia prison system, even though it will still take a number of years to bring the Georgia prison system up to the accepted standards of progressive prison system.

What progress has been made can be credited in a large degree to the State Department of Corrections created by the General Assembly in 1943. Under the administrative guidance of this governmental agency improvements have been made in prison facilities and there has been an increase in the number of employees in the penal system.

The State Prisons at Reidsville, Georgia have shown the most marked improvements. A qualified and well trained personnel has been placed in key positions. Even though the medical staff is adequate at the present time, there is a need to increase it. A psychiatrist should be added to the staff. A resident psychiatrist would be most helpful in solving discipline problems as well as in dealing with parole recommendations.

A vocational training program was started at the State Prison in 1943 offering the inmates an opportunity to learn many useful trades. The entire physical establishment at the state prison has been improved by the inmates. The prison farm has been made more productive. Although the vocational training program is progressing there is still a need for more industries at the State Prisons to provide work for those inmates physically unsuited for farm work or other trades.

The rehabilitative and training program at the prisons for men and women have shown considerable progress, yet there is a need for even more
improvements. The trades learned by the prisoners will enable them to secure employment once they are released from prison and restored to society. A good start has been made in the segregation of the young prisoners, preventing them from associating with professional criminals. However, additional measures should be taken. An institution should be provided for these young prisoners so that a reformative and rehabilitative program can be established for them.

Though somewhat slower than the State Prisons, considerable improvement has been made in the county public work camps. The most marked improvement in the camps has been the improved cleanliness and sanitary conditions. There is an excellent health program throughout the public work camps. Rehabilitative work is carried out only on a small scale in these camps. There is definitely a need for greater rehabilitative work within these camps.

Penal reform is progressing in Georgia. However the end is not yet in sight. This reform has been in motion almost two years. It probably would have made even larger gains had it not been for the wartime conditions. Not only has it been difficult to obtain adequate trained personnel but there has been a shortage of the materials and facilities needed for furthering this work.
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**Unpublished Material**
