A Sociological Analysis of the Transition of the Louisiana Penal System

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A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSITION OF THE LOUISIANA PENAL SYSTEM

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

The Department of Sociology

by

James Wayne Allgood
B.A., Louisiana College, 1951
June, 1956
MANUSCRIPT THESSES

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ABSTRACT

In this study a sociological analysis is made of the transition of the Louisiana penal system. The study deals almost entirely with the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola which is the only penal institution being operated in the state at the present time.

The study first considers the American prison system and makes an analysis of a modern prison giving emphasis to its structure, its method of operation and its program for the treatment of the convicted criminal.

The structure and methods of operating the old Louisiana penitentiary, consisting of a series of farm camps with an absolute minimum of trained personnel, are presented for the purpose of explaining the need for a new penal system. A lack of adequate physical facilities and the absence of an organized program of treatment and rehabilitation prevented the institution from fulfilling its responsibilities to society in the matter of reforming criminals.

With legislative approval and planning by trained penologists from the Federal prison system a new centralized penitentiary was constructed and new methods of operation were applied. The development of industrial facilities at the prison is expected to change the institution from a
predominantly agricultural operation to one of industry and farming with a greater emphasis being placed on the training of the prisoners for a life after their release.

A comparison and contrast of the old prison system to the new system are made in this study and both are evaluated as to their efficiency in fulfilling the functions of the prison system.
CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study is a sociological analysis of the transition of the Louisiana penal system. It applies almost entirely to the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola because of the fact that this institution is the only one operated by the Louisiana penal system during the period of time which is covered by the study.

DEFINITIONS

(1) **Sociological Analysis.**

Webster defines the term "analysis" as "separation of anything into constituent parts or elements; also, an examination of anything to distinguish its component parts or elements, separately or in their relation to the whole."

Sociology is defined by Bennett and Tumin as "the study of society or social life or group life." Cuber states that "sociology may be defined as a body of scientific knowledge about human relationships." By applying the adjective


"sociological" to the term "analysis" it may be said that a sociological analysis is a "scientific study which separates the various human relationships in a society and examines them both as separate components and as to their relationship to the social order." An analysis is made in this study of the human relationships and functions which make up a social institution known as the Louisiana State Penitentiary while a major change is being made in environment, in policy, and in the administration of that institution. Human relationships are involved in almost every part of prison operations. Education, recreation, religion, punishment and discipline, classification, and work are each discussed as separate parts of the prison society. The effects of the change in the application of these elements are examined in this study.

(2) The Old System.

For convenience the term "old system" is being used in referring to the Louisiana penal system as it existed during the period from the year 1916 (when it was last reorganized) to May of 1952.

(3) The New System.

The penal system which was planned and begun in June of 1952 and is at the time of this writing still somewhat
in the process of being organized is referred to in this paper as "the new system."

(4) **Transition Period.**

The transition period refers to that period of time during which the new system is in the process of being organized and covers that period of time from June, 1952, up to the present.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is a threefold one. It is intended to (1) explain the spending of a huge sum of public funds for a new penal system in Louisiana, (2) to present a new system in the making and (3) to show the effect of this reorganization on the prisoners, public, and all persons and groups concerned.

This study deals primarily with a state institution known as Louisiana State Penitentiary which is located at Angola, Louisiana, a community located on the Mississippi river sixty miles north of the city of Baton Rouge. The community consists of the prison population, i.e., the employed personnel and the prisoners who occupy an 18,000 acre area on which a number of separate farm units have existed since the year 1901.

The Louisiana State Penitentiary is presently the
only state institution to which adult felony offenders are committed. Its population includes males and females of all races and of ages ranging from seventeen upward. More than one thousand persons are committed to the institution annually and approximately the same number is discharged or paroled each year.

THE PROBLEM

The primary function of a prison according to Sutherland is "to confine criminals." This policy is adopted as a means of protecting society from crime and it is justified by the fact that: (1) it incapacitates criminals by removing them from society so that they cannot commit other crimes; (2) the punishment of imprisonment serves as a deterrent of the general public and; (3) it reforms some criminals. Sutherland points out that a relatively high efficiency has been reached in the first of these three justifications but that the success of the prison in deterring the general public from crime is probably much less than that of incapacitation, and as a means of reformation the success of imprisonment is very slight. 

Louisiana Law requires that the Superintendent of the Louisiana State Penitentiary "shall enact rules for the grading and classifying of convicts according to the most modern and enlightened methods..., the purpose being to restore and reform the individual to a better man physically, intellectually and morally." Therefore it may be said that treatment toward rehabilitation of Louisiana felons was the intention of the Louisiana law makers when the law was passed creating the office of superintendent in the year 1950.

The problem to be considered in this study is stated as follows: (1) Has the Louisiana Penitentiary as it was operated under the old system fulfilled its obligations to society according to the functions just listed? (2) Was there a need for reorganization and a new physical plant in order that the institution might function more efficiently? (3) Is the new penal system with its new facilities expected to function more efficiently and to the extent that its enormous cost is justified?


5Although the office of superintendent was established under Act 252 of 1944, it was "created" again in 1950 when the law was revised to establish the office of warden - see Ibid.
The state penitentiary at Angola has long been the source of widespread criticism by the press, by interested persons within the state, and by criminologists and penologists throughout the nation for its inadequate physical plant and for its method of operation. Every governor who has served Louisiana since 1940 has made some effort to have the institution investigated or studied either by a committee appointed by him or by federal prison experts. Until 1952 very little had been done by any administration toward carrying out any of the proposals and recommendations made by the investigating authorities.

In 1951 there was disorder at the prison brought on by a large group of inmates who cut their heel tendons in protest of treatment of the prisoners by prison guards. Unfavorable publicity brought on by these incidents caused Governor Earl K. Long to appoint an investigating committee to study problems at the prison and give a full report to him. Pressure from civic groups and from the press caused the operation of the prison to be a major issue in the gubernatorial campaign of 1952 and some of the candidates for governor pledged that if they were elected a penologist would be put in charge of the institution.

A penologist was brought in from out of state in
May of 1952 to reorganize the prison system. More than eight million dollars of public funds have been spent to build a new institution to house the prisoners and to provide facilities for a treatment program. A study of the two prison systems by way of comparison and contrast may help one decide whether or not these changes were justified.

**SOURCES OF DATA**

Unlike most sociological studies the writer has made a very limited use of statistics and of mathematical calculations. This analysis emphasizes a contrast between two prison systems. There are no worthwhile statistics available which would contribute to any degree to an evaluation of the old prison system. The new system has not existed for a sufficient amount of time for any statistical evaluation to be made of its operating efficiency.

In preparation for this study the writer has made use of literature in the field of criminology and penology prepared by recognized authorities in the field, newspaper clippings, investigating committee reports, articles appearing in popular magazines and professional periodicals, and books and pamphlets prepared by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

A valuable source of data in this study has been the writer's direct contact with the prison system through his
employment by the institution. This arrangement has made possible direct contact with the prison population as well as with the warden and other high ranking prison officials. First hand observation has been made of activities taking place at the prison during the reorganization. The United States Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia, and at Leavenworth, Kansas, the Federal Reformatory at El Reno, Oklahoma, and the Federal Correctional Institution at Seagoville, Texas, all operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, have been visited and observed by the writer. Two other state institutions, one in Texas and one in New York, have also been visited.

ORDER OF PRESENTATION

In order that one may gain an understanding in the methods of operating a penal institution an analysis of literature dealing with good practices of penal operations is presented in chapter two. It should be recognized that the ideal prison does not exist. Yet practices which have been tried by the more progressive penal institutions are being presented because they are recognized as being the best practices thus far devised for prison operations.

A brief study of the origin and development of the Louisiana penal system is presented in chapter three. By presenting this information the reader is able to understand
better how the institution operating under the old system came into being.

The Louisiana prison system as it operated prior to the beginning of this transition period is presented in chapter four. This section is important because it points out the inadequacies of the old system and emphasizes the ways in which it failed to measure up in structure, in operations and in function.

Chapter five of this study presents the new penal system in the making. The structure of the new multi-million dollar penitentiary is described as being one of America's most modern at the time of this writing. New methods of operation, industrialization of the prison, and a treatment program is shown to be playing an important part in the new penal system.

An analysis of the reaction of interested parties to the new prison system is drawn in chapter six. A study of prisoner reaction is presented first and it is followed by the reaction on the part of prison employees, the public, and nationally known penologists respectively. Even though the transition period is not completed one can have some insight of its effects at this stage.
CHAPTER II

THE AMERICAN PRISON SYSTEM

The prison system as we know it in America today is of American origin. Even though prisons and dungeons had existed for thousands of years before 1790 they had not been used as a place of punishment for criminals.¹ It is said that America gave the penitentiary system to the world.

The first known penitentiary established for the purpose of punishing criminals was opened in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the year of 1790. This institution, known as the Walnut Street Jail, was located in downtown Philadelphia near the famed Independence Hall and was an achievement of the Quakers.²

The Walnut Street Jail was built originally to serve as a detention jail but was changed into a state prison after its completion. The following year the neighboring State of New York received the first prisoners in their penitentiary known as Newgate Prison in New York City.³

²Ibid., pp. 391 - 394. ³Ibid., p. 382.
New Jersey, Kentucky and Virginia all built penitentiaries before the turn of the 18th century.

The Quakers, with the help of inheritance received from their founder, William Penn, are given credit for having had much to do with the development of the prison system in America. Because of their benevolent spirit they condemned war, slavery, and capital punishment. They were active in the affairs of a prison reform organization known as the Philadelphia Society for Relieving Distressed Prisoners. This organization, first organized in 1776 and re-organized in 1787 with a slightly changed name, is the parent of all modern prison associations.

Philadelphia's Walnut Street Jail was built for use purely as a jail and detention house but was converted into a state prison, as stated previously, in the year 1790. The type of prison structure used in this jail was known as the congregate plan because there were no cells and no type of segregation in the prison. Men, women, boys and girls of all ages who had violated the law were placed in large open dormitory rooms together to serve their sentences.

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5Ibid.
The New Jersey prison also followed the congregate plan and it was not until 1820 that any serious attempt was made to provide for segregation in this institution.6

The Philadelphia reformers soon recognized that some kind of segregation was necessary in prison and began building solitary confinement cells at the Walnut Street Jail soon after its use as a prison was begun. A few years later, between 1796 and 1800, the State of Virginia built a prison that was cellular in structure.7 With the cellular plan solitary confinement cells were provided which were twelve feet long, six and one-half feet wide, and nine feet high.8 The term "cellular" was used because the structure contained cells.

Some of the early European prisons are given credit for having set the pace for the cellular type penitentiaries built in America in the early 19th century. As early as 1704 the Hospice of Saint Michele for delinquent boys was erected by Pope Clement XI at Rome.9 With this structure originated the first outside cell block, so called because it lined up individual prison cells along the outside walls of a rectangular shaped building.

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6 Barnes and Teeters, op. cit., p. 395.
7 Ibid., p. 394.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 382.
The Pennsylvania system of prison architecture originated with the construction of the Eastern State Penitentiary at Philadelphia in 1829. It was designed with a row of outside solitary confinement cells which kept the prisoner confined to his cell at all times except for one hour a day when he was permitted to exercise in an individual yard just outside his cell. He was not permitted to see or communicate with any other prisoner. He worked, ate, and slept in solitary confinement. This type of imprisonment became known throughout the world as the Pennsylvania system.\(^{10}\)

Another type of prison system pioneered in America originated with the erection of Auburn Prison at Auburn, New York, in 1819.\(^{11}\) This institution also initiated a new type of prison architecture, providing what is known as inside cells. In contrast to the outside cell block which lined up rows of cells along the outer wall with the corridor in the center, the inside cell block lines up two rows of cells in the center of the rectangular building and provides a corridor between the cells and the outside walls.

The Auburn plan (later known as the Auburn-Sing Sing plan) provided a type of treatment of prisoners differing

\(^{10}\)Ibid., p. 404.  \(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 406.
from that of the Pennsylvania system in that inmates would be permitted to work and eat together. In work shops the prisoners would work together during the day under a strict rule of silence. At night they were locked in individual cells.

With the establishment of the two prison systems just mentioned the stage was set for the prison system which exists in America today. The Pennsylvania system because of its emphasis on solitary confinement was also known as the "solitary system" while the Auburn plan was characterized by the silence demanded of the inmates and was known as the "silent system."

It is suggested by Haynes that penal treatment may be compared to medical practices. In the early days of our nation's existence doctors did not know how to treat diseases so they bled the patient. Medical science has made much progress since that time and no longer uses bleeding as a remedy for illness; in our treatment of the offender, on the other hand, we use about the same methods as were employed at the beginning of our national history. In most American states the emphasis has been on custody and maximum custody cell blocks have been constructed at

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12 Haynes, op. cit., p. 40.
enormous costs to the taxpayer to house a majority, or in some cases all the inmate population. This practice has existed up to the present time. In a few states, mostly in the South (Louisiana included in this group) the emphasis has been placed on the so called "free" labor. Politicians have advocated this emphasis on convict manpower because they felt it would be good politics to have a prison or a penal farm pay its own way. Only a very few states have made very much effort to carry on a program of rehabilitation for the transgressor of man's law.

The rapid increase in the American population coupled with the increased crime rate has brought about the crowding of nearly all of the state penal institutions. The high cost of prison construction and the lack of interest of legislators and the general public in penal reform have prevented the expansion of prison facilities. In our present day the press and radio deserve some credit for having pointed out this social lag to the American public. The Federal Bureau of Prisons, operating under the administration of the United States Attorney General, has made the greatest gains with the possible exception of one or two state penal systems in improving its penal institutions.
PRISON STRUCTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

There is, perhaps, no other phase of penology and prison management in which actual practice has lagged so far behind rehabilitative policies and ideas of enlightened prison administrators as has the architectural design and structure of the prisons. Barnes and Teeters point out that many of the prisons built in the last one hundred fifty years were constructed on plans that were already outmoded at the time planning began.\footnote{Barnes and Teeters, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 483.} Many penologists feel that this is one of the primary reasons why rehabilitative programs have not been more successful. Far too many prisons have been built without the help of professional planners, that is, architects who are familiar with prison policy and problems.

Since 1830, most of the prisons designed and built in this country have followed the Auburn-Sing Sing type of design. In addition they have been built as fortress prisons with the main emphasis on security. Only the Federal Bureau of Prisons has, to any great extent, repudiated this idea of building all prison cells for the worst prisoners.

One of the newest and perhaps the most modern...
penitentiary in this country which has been in operation long enough to warrant evaluation is the United States Penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana. This penitentiary, which was opened in 1940 by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, is what is known as a "mixed custody" institution. It is so called because it has both inside and outside cell blocks for maximum custody inmates in one section of the prison, and in another section it has open squad rooms and dormitories for prisoners of medium and minimum custody status. For those who have made exceptionally good adjustment and whose behavior may be considered excellent there are honor rooms comparable to the rooms in a modern college dormitory. These rooms are provided for treatment purposes making it possible for an inmate to learn "how to live" in an environment that is almost normal. In addition, they are great incentives to better conduct by prisoners who are eager to make things better for themselves.

Another outstanding feature in the new penitentiary at Terre Haute is that there is no wall around the institution. In place of the wall there are two woven wire fences, each topped with barbed wire. Guard towers are so located around the institution that a minimum number of such are required.

There are two kinds of cell blocks provided in this prison. The inside cell blocks, that is the building in
which the rows of cells are backed up against each other in the center of the building away from the outside of the building, are only three tiers in height. This is an improvement over the older type cell blocks in which there were as many as five tiers to the cell house which made good ventilation and a regulated temperature throughout the building almost impossible. The outside cell blocks are only two tiers in height.

The Terre Haute institution is thought of as being a modern penitentiary because it makes possible, from the standpoint of design and structure, a more intensified use of classification. The varied types of housing in the institution make it possible for each prisoner to be placed where the classification committee feels he can best adjust to institutional life and at the same time undergo some sort of treatment which will make a contribution toward the ultimate rehabilitation of the prisoner.

The Terre Haute prison has been mentioned in this chapter because it is recognized by prison authorities as the most modern penitentiary in structure and design of any in the United States which has been completed and in operation long enough for any worthwhile criticism to be made of it.
When penal institutions were first founded in this country, the administration of each institution was entrusted to a board of citizens which was usually appointed by the governor of the state. As time passed, however, the larger states began to set up additional correctional facilities with varying degrees of security and special institutions for certain types of offenders, with some kind of centralized control over these institutions. In some states, there was a prison board; in others, the state board was given administrative power over a variety of institutions including correctional institutions, hospitals for the mentally ill, and institutions for the mentally defective. In some states there was set up a department of the state government to deal with the correctional and penal institutions or with all state institutions. This department is usually administered by a board of citizens appointed by the governor, or in some cases, named by the electorate.

Politics still dominates administration of the penal system in many states. Often the warden or superintendent of a state prison is named by the governor, usually in return for political support, and his term of office expires when the governor's term expires. When this practice is followed the warden and his staff and all other prison
employees are usually hired and fired on the basis of their political affiliation. It goes without saying that such practice makes good prison administration impossible. It is very difficult to find qualified, professional personnel who will work under such a political set-up.

Today, there are a few states that have taken politics and political influence away from the administration of their prisons. Usually these states maintain a department of corrections or a department of institutions which is administered by a board of citizens appointed by the governor for overlapping terms. As a rule, the governor in office will not appoint more than half the board members during his tenure, unless he serves for more than one term. Normally, this prevents one governor from dominating the board by putting pressure on his political appointees.

The chief administrative officer of the department of corrections or the department of institutions in the more progressive states is usually named by the board. As a rule, this board also names the warden or superintendent of the various penal institutions. This appointment may come with or without the recommendation of the departmental director. In the better prisons of today the warden is usually the chief officer. His assistants are one or more associate wardens and a staff of department heads. A common practice is to place one associate warden in charge of
custody and discipline, and another in charge of individual treatment. Directly under the warden and associate warden each division of the prison is administered by a departmental head. (see illustration, Fig. I) For instance a captain is placed in charge of the security or custodial division and all guards come under his supervision. The classification department has a director or supervisor just as does the education department. Other departments such as culinary, industries, farm, medical and maintenance have a chief who has department head status. An administrative officer handles prison business and he is generally considered as a department head or is even given status as an associate warden or deputy warden in some instances. The responsibility for the efficient operation of the department falls on the department head and he must answer to the associate warden over him or directly to the warden.

In general, there has been no criticism by penologists of the pattern of operations just mentioned. The Federal Bureau of Prisons has adopted this system in the operation of its penitentiaries, reformatories, and correctional institutions. The all important factor is that qualified, professional personnel must be acquired to staff the institution.
PRISON OPERATION

It was more than eight decades ago, in the year of 1870, when the Declaration of Principles was adopted at the Cincinnati Prison Congress. This declaration, along with the establishment of the Elmira Reformatory in 1876, represented a distinct milestone in the march toward a more tolerant and humane brand of prison discipline. It was with these two events that the concepts of classification, vocational training, education and parole began to become a part of a program of rehabilitation in the minds of prison administrators. This declaration of principles actually was so far advanced when applied to prison operations and practices that even eighty-five years later the principles still have not been put into practice. There are today many prisons in the United States which do not even have a classification program, and very few prisons have a worthwhile vocational education program.

Classification and Orientation

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has led the way in establishing a classification program and making it a vital

14 Ibid., p. 558.
part of the prison operations. In the modern Federal prisons or in any one of the few good state penitentiaries, a classification system has been established as a necessary part of prison administration. When a new inmate is admitted to the institution the classification department begins working with him. Some states maintain a classification clinic usually in connection with one of the penitentiaries in which the new commitment remains during his first thirty to sixty days of confinement. Personal interviews are conducted by professional staff members of the institution. Questionnaires and letters of inquiry are mailed to members of the inmate's family, former employers, schools and to other former associates in order that as much as possible can be learned about his background. After this rather comprehensive study is made, a case summary is prepared for a professional classification committee. It is this committee which places the inmate where it feels he can serve his time for maximum benefit to himself and to the institution.

The introduction of classification, diagnosis, and treatment in prisons has begun a definite trend on the part of prison officials to treat inmates as individuals rather than en masse. Classification employs the services of psychologists, sociologists and social workers. It also
demands the cooperation and active participation of at least a half-dozen other prison staff members, usually the heads of departments who are experienced at working with prisoners and can contribute their ideas to an overall program for the inmate. These people are members of the classification committee which usually holds at least two meetings per week to classify and reclassify prisoners. The warden usually serves on this committee along with heads of various departments such as the security department, classification department, the education department, the person in charge of prison labor, the chief medical officer and the chaplain.

Functions of the classification department generally vary in different institutions. However, in the well-run modern prison, the classification department's primary function is to prepare admission summaries, progress reports and other types of reports which involve social data and case history material. As a very important secondary function, the classification department serves as a social agency for the inmate. Its members serve as counselors to the inmate who has a problem. The department approves visitor lists and correspondent lists which permit the inmate to maintain contact with his family and friends outside.

The classification department in a penal institution does all the paper work for the classification committee.
This committee is the "backbone" of a good rehabilitative program in any institution.

Orientation is a very necessary part of the prison program designed to help the new prisoner make the necessary adjustment to prison life. Perhaps it is safe to say that most of the prisons today make little effort to orient new commitments. However, all Federal prisons and a number of good state institutions have realized the importance of orientation and have organized orientation programs.

The orientation period for the inmate is for thirty (even less in some institutions) to ninety days. This period is sometimes referred to as quarantine, but the term "orientation" is preferred by penal authorities. During this period the new prisoner is segregated from other inmates who are already classified and have become adjusted to prison life. He attends, with other new commitments, lectures or sessions of instruction by prison personnel. Prison rules are explained and adjustment problems are pointed out. He is usually presented with a handbook containing information which he will need during his incarceration. This period makes it possible for the inmate to have some idea of what he can expect in prison and what adjustment problems he may confront after he is sent to his permanent quarters.
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

WARDEN

ASSOCIATE WARDEN TREATMENT

PERSONNEL TRAINING

ASSOCIATE WARDEN CUSTODY AND DISCIPLINE

BUSINESS MANAGER

RELIGION

EDUCATION

CLASSIFICATION

WORK

CUSTODY-DISCIPLINE

FOOD SERVICE

CHAPLAINS

DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR

CAPTAIN

FARM

MAINTENANCE

INDUSTRY

SUPERVISOR

SUPERVISOR

SUPERVISOR

LIEUTENANT

RECREATION

ACADEMIC EDUCATION

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

HOBBIES

LIBRARY

GUARD

FIGURE 1. CHART SHOWING ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN FOR AN AMERICAN PRISON
Ways of Occupying a Prisoner's Time

Work. Throughout the entire history of the American Prison system there has not existed a greater problem than that of inmate labor. Since the early part of the 19th century, prison authorities have been well aware of the fact that prisoners adjust better and are easier to control when they work on full time jobs. Nearly all major disciplinary problems are a result of idleness in prisons.

Stafford Bates, the former Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, once stated, "No serious prison riot has yet taken place in an institution where all of the inmates have been provided with steady and productive labor."15 The Osborne Association is of the opinion that "without work, every constructive measure in every department of the prison is thwarted if not doomed to defeat, for idleness is an insurmountable barrier to any sane purpose of imprisonment."16 In 1931, a survey of prison labor in the United States, by Dr. Lewis N. Robinson, showed the actual number of idle or virtually idle prisoners to include about 30 or 35 per cent of the total prison population.17 Barnes and Teeters state that in 1940, 44 per cent of all prisoners

15Haynes, op. cit., p. 310. 16Ibid. 17Ibid.
sentenced in the United States were engaged in productive labor. The percentage of idleness in prisons today is not available to the writer. But because of the increased population in the institutions throughout the United States for the past two years, it is believed that idleness is on the increase. In a meeting of the Southern States Prison Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 17 through April 19, 1955, one of the main topics of discussion was increased prison population and the increase in the amount of idleness brought on by this increase. Some of the Federal institutions have found it impossible to place prisoners in productive work in recent months, and have instead assigned them to full time school programs.

There are a number of reasons why prisons have not been able to maintain a productive work schedule for all inmates. No doubt the most important reason is the objection to prison industry by the public, or more specifically, by business enterprises and organized labor. Formerly, prisoners in almost every state manufactured goods for the open market. As far back as the first half of the 19th century, organized labor began to object to the sale of prison-made goods on the open market. This objective has resulted in the enactment of laws, both state and federal, designed...

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18Barnes and Teeters, op. cit., p. 732.
to prevent such sales. Now, Federal laws prohibit inter-
state traffic of prison-made goods for sale on the open
market.

Today, there are only three systems of prison labor
in use in state penal institutions which employ prisoners. The most widely used of these is the state-use system.
Nearly all states use this system, and in twenty-two states
it is mandatory that all state institutions and agencies
purchase such commodities as are available from the state
prisons. In Louisiana it is not mandatory that state
agencies purchase prison-made products, but at the present
time, all state institutions are encouraged to purchase
meat, canned goods, and metal furniture from the state
penitentiary. Other state agencies purchase automobile
license tags and highway signs from prison industry.

Even though the state-use system is without question
the most rational and hopeful prison labor system, it too
receives some public criticism from labor and business
enterprises. No doubt this opposition has retarded pro-
gress in prison industry and has indirectly increased the
idleness in many state penal institutions. Any moves on
the part of officials to expand industry has been made
cautiously in order to avoid the opposition of pressure

19 Ibid.
Two other prison labor systems in operation today are: the state-account system and the public works and ways. The state-account system permits products to be sold on the open market for the benefit of the state and the prison. However, the only goods produced by this system are those which do not arouse the antagonism of pressure groups; in 1940, only 12 per cent of prison productive labor was accounted for by this system.20

Public works and ways system is still used in a number of states, mostly for the maintenance of highways and country roads, and for the construction of prisons. Louisiana does not maintain road camps as do many southern states, but a limited amount of prison labor was used in the construction of the new penitentiary.

The writer does not feel it necessary to justify the importance of a well-rounded industrial program as a prison rehabilitative effort, as well as for the economic good of the prison. The necessity of productive labor as a means of occupying the prisoner's time is obvious, even to the most ardent opponent of prison industry. Industry is not only helpful in supporting the prison, but it helps to provide valuable training facilities for men and women who have

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never learned how to work and earn a livelihood. Although penal authorities do not advocate self-sustaining prisons, they do feel that an efficient and well-run industrial program is a definite economic asset both to the taxpayer and to the inmate. So long as this sort of a work program can be maintained without jeopardizing the overall rehabilitative plan, it will relieve the heavy burden of public maintenance of convicted felons, and in some institutions, provide limited compensation for the prisoners as well.

The United States Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia, is one of the very few penal institutions in the country that is self-sustaining, in spite of the fact that it pays compensation to prisoners assigned to industrial tasks. At the same time it is doubtful that there is an institution in America with a vocational program superior to that of the Atlanta institution.

With the present trend of the increased population in America, it is generally agreed by the prison authorities that the most practical answer to the problem of idleness is increased prison industry. Louisiana and a few other states are blessed with excellent farms which provide employment for large numbers of prisoners. However, Louisiana has been awakened to the fact that, since 75 per cent of its prison population has come from urban areas, (according to
prison statistics) it is not profitable to use most of these people in farming operations. At the same time it is felt that a much smaller percentage of prisoners can be employed in farming by means of a modern farm mechanization. Prison industry can be provided to employ a much larger number of men under the state-use system, and thus provide that valuable training for prisoners in trades and industrial operations.

Education and Vocational Training. It is almost unbelievable that as far back as 1801 a school was established in a New York prison. In the Massachusetts State Prison a school was organized in 1823, and in 1847 the state of New York passed a law providing for schools in its prisons. At the first prison conference held in this country, the Cincinnati Prison Congress of 1870, the following principle was adopted:

Education is a vital force in the reformation of fallen men and women. Its tendency is to quicken the intellect, inspire self-respect, excite to higher aims, and afford healthful substitute for low and vicious amusements. Recreation is considered to be an essential part of education. It has come to be recognized that recreation and education are, therefore, matters of primary importance in prisons, and should be carried to the utmost extent consistent with the other purposes of such institutions.

All the schools in the early days of prison education were

--21 Ibid., p. 652. 22 Ibid. 23 Ibid.
were crude and poorly equipped and staffed. They were usually conducted by the chaplain or by other inmates. Very little progress has been made over the years in most prisons in the educational programs and even today a number of states maintain no educational facilities whatever in their penal institutions.

Again, it is the Federal Bureau of Prisons which has taken the lead in educational planning. All Federal institutions maintain an educational staff with paid supervisory personnel, and in many institutions a number of instructors are employed. In California, the local school board provides teachers for penal institutions. A few other states have made at least a nominal effort to begin a school program. Even in some of the best prisons, however, there are still a number of weaknesses in the educational program.

In many of our prisons, attending school is considered an extra-curricular activity. Inmates who work on a farm or in prison industries are usually too tired at the end of the day to attend classes in the evening. There are few prisons which allow inmates to attend school during "working hours."

Barnes and Teeters point out that the educational program should be closely integrated with the work program, but not dominated by it.\(^{24}\) Some prisons place inmates on

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\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 573.
jobs which are in keeping with their educational program. In these instances the inmates work for one-half day and attend classes the other half-day. This is also the procedure in a prison vocational program.

Vocational programs are usually somewhat further advanced in today's better prisons than are academic and, particularly, social studies. The writer on recent visits to Federal penal institutions has observed very fine vocational activities which include such trades as auto mechanics, radio and television repair, building trades, commercial art and others. Any inmate who is willing to apply himself can learn a worthwhile trade in one of these institutions. It is generally agreed by prison administrators, however, that most educational programs are lacking in the field of social education. The writer, in his conversation with the warden of a Federal institution recently, was told that no matter how good the vocational program might be, it is of little value unless the inmate is taught how to live in society and get along with other people.

Religious Instruction. It has been customary since the first prisons were built in this country to employ chaplains to provide religious instructions for the inmate. There has always been a need for this man's services. Today, as has been the custom down through the years, an inmate is
always permitted to consult the chaplain even when he may be confined in isolation and not permitted to see anyone else but the warden, or the captain.

In the modern penitentiary the chaplain is provided office space and with suitable places for worship and counseling. He serves as a sort of religious social worker for the inmate population. In most prisons at least two chaplains are employed, one Catholic and one Non-Catholic. These men are generally members of the classification committee and play an important part in planning the program of the inmate.

Recreation. There is, perhaps, no type of inmate activity which has been so badly neglected in prison as recreation, and it is difficult to find an author who gives much space in his writing to recreational activities. However, most penologists do recognize the importance of well-rounded leisure time activities. The spending of public funds on organized recreation is, like some other phases of a prisoner treatment program, still frowned upon by some of the more conservative citizens who take an interest in civic affairs. These critics often complain that the modern prison is being turned into a "country club" because it provides athletic activities, movies, radios and television to occupy the prisoner's time. Some critics contend that the
progressive prison provides better recreational activities than is provided for children and young people in some communities. In some instances this may be true. To those who would make such accusations, two important factors should be pointed out: (1) Unlike a person in a community, a prisoner has no other way to occupy his time during the hours he is not working. After he has completed his work day, he cannot step out to a place of his own choosing to spend his leisure hours. All leisure activities must be prescribed, or at least permitted by the prison officials. (2) An inmate in a penal institution is part of a select group and special treatment is required to help him regain that which he has lost or has missed entirely. It is therefore felt that recreation will play an important part in helping him to build or to re-build his character and improve his attitude toward society.

Recreation in the better prisons includes such sports as baseball, basketball, football, soft ball, tennis, volley ball and boxing. Indoor sports such as ping pong and shuffle board are also a part of the program in some prisons. Organized ball leagues within the prison promotes sportsmanship and improves the attitudes of prisoners.

Nearly all good prisons of today and some that are considered not so good, provide from one to three movies for
the inmates each week. Too often, however, these films are purchased with only the cost being considered. In nearly all prisons more time should be given to the careful selection of films which are conducive to the character building effort being made in the overall prison program.

With improvements being made in the prisons today, recreation and leisure time activities are making some worthwhile contributions to the overall rehabilitative program. In most institutions still more money is needed to acquire trained personnel and to provide proper facilities. Yet, progress is being made.

Control of Prison Population.

Control of the prison population as it is described in the American Prison Association's Manual of Correctional Standards involves, "supervision of prisoners to insure punctual and orderly movement to and from living quarters, places of work, classrooms, vocational shops, the chapel, recreational facilities, clinics and sick lines."25 Control of the prisoners varies in degree and in methods between

various prisons almost as much as the outward appearance of the structure of these prisons. In some institutions, regimentation is the order of the day, and it is with this plan of operation that the warden or the captain attempts to maintain rigid control over the inmates. Other prisons operate with almost no regimentation and very little control while still others, and particularly the better institutions, are successful in maintaining control with a minimum amount of regimentation. Some of the newer and more progressive institutions are in the latter category.

Prison authorities believe that since custody is one of the primary functions of a prison, it is necessary that control of the prisoners be considered of primary importance. They feel that control is necessary not only to keep prisoners within the walls of the institutions, but to maintain order and discipline. Control does not necessarily mean that all prisoners be kept under close supervision at all times; however, in a well-run prison, the control center is able to locate any prisoner at any time by merely checking its roster. The institution maintains complete and up-to-date work details and educational lists, lists for sick calls, interviews, visits and means of controlling other types of inmate activities. Passes and other such devices are used when an inmate moves or is moved from one custody area through the check point into another area.
In the modern penitentiary the control center serves as a sort of nerve center for the prison as the brain does for the human body. All information concerning custody, discipline and the location of inmates is promptly reported through the control center and it is from there that this information may be obtained at any time by prison officials.

Obviously, custody and control are closely inter-related, yet it is necessary to point out that other prison activities such as, visiting, correspondence, and the use of money in the buying and selling of merchandise must all be controlled in the well-run prison. Perhaps, to the layman who is unfamiliar with the prison problems, justification of this latter statement is necessary. This, however, will involve a considerable amount of discussion, and will be taken up in another chapter.

Release from Prison.

All but a small percentage (fewer than 10 per cent) of the persons convicted of crimes in America are, at some-time or another, released to return to society. This is a fact that is so often overlooked by the sentencing judge and by the layman who is glad to see the criminal "put away for a while." The time has come, however, when progressive prison authorities and social workers can see the need for well-organized programs to prepare the prisoner for his
return to society. When the judge hands out a ten year sentence in a state which does not have the indeterminate or indefinite sentence, it does not necessarily mean that it will be the full ten years before the person actually regains his freedom. There are at least three legal methods by which his release may be effective before the expiration date of the prescribed sentence. These methods will be discussed here in the following order: (1) good time laws, (2) executive clemency, and (3) parole.

Today, many states provide for statutory "good time" credits to be given to prisoners in return for their good behavior. A prisoner does not have to present his case to any kind of board in order to get good time. State law (and Federal law in Federal institutions) makes a provision that the governor or the warden of the institution may discount a sentence by a certain number of days each month, so long as the prisoner's conduct is satisfactory. In addition to this, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (and perhaps some of the more progressive states) provides for additional good time for outstanding performance on industrial or other types of job assignments. In the state of Texas, a prisoner working on certain highly productive job assignments may actually earn two days for one day served in prison. Other states are less liberal, but most of them provide for some good time credits. Louisiana provides
twice as much good time for the legally classified first offender as it does for recidivists. Prisoners automatically start earning good time upon entering prison and it is forfeited by inmates when serious disciplinary measures are required to be taken against them. A certain number of days good time is taken away for each offense. Under no circumstances, however, can the discharge date be deferred later than the expiration date of the full sentence. Good time laws in some states actually shorten the sentence of the prisoner when he earns it and when one is released on a "good time date" he is released unconditionally.

In the Federal system and in some states, good time laws do not actually hasten the discharge date, but they do make it possible for the prisoner to be released under supervision on his good time date. This is an arrangement similar to parole but the release is automatic if the good time credits are earned.

Another type of release prior to the expiration of sentence is that of executive clemency. This is the procedure by which the governor of the state, a board of pardons, or a combination of the two may grant a commutation of sentence to a prisoner.26 This commutation may be a full

pardon, (restoring all civil rights), a commutation of the sentence to time served or a commutation to a lesser number of years. Pardons granted are usually unconditional, but there are some exceptions. The pardon board sometimes suspends a man's sentence and places him on probation. They are in this way assuming the role of the board of parole.

Parole is the third type of release from prison prior to date of expiration of sentence and this method is preferred by most prison authorities and social workers. Parole makes the necessary provisions for a prisoner to be released from actual incarceration but placed back in society under close supervision to serve the remainder of his sentence. This is a means by which the prisoner can "prove himself" and his ability to live in society and adjust to the social order. The American Parole Association in its meeting held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, October 9, 1933, adopted a Declaration of Principles, one of which was, "all offenders leaving correctional and penal institutions should be released by the method of parole." Parole is preferred to other types of release because it provides assistance to the person who has served time in an institution by helping him cope with the many problems of the "outside world" which he

has not had to face during incarceration. The writer has, on some occasions, interviewed prisoners who have stated that they prefer to be released on parole because they believe proper parole supervision would be beneficial to them in their attempt to adjust to the "outside world" after their release. A good parole officer who does his job well will be looked upon as a friend by those under his supervision rather than as a policeman. Unfortunately, however, far too many parole officers are grouped in the latter category.
CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PENAL SYSTEM IN LOUISIANA

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST LOUISIANA STATE PRISON

A magazine article appearing in Collier's in the fall of 1952\(^1\) referring to the Louisiana institution as being "America's worst prison" was not the first such accusation made against a Louisiana prison. As the original penitentiary neared completion in Baton Rouge in January, 1835, Governor Roman made the comment: "Louisiana no longer bears the reputation of having the worst prison in the United States."\(^2\)

When Louisiana became a state in 1812, convicts sentenced to hard labor within its boundaries were sentenced to serve time at the New Orleans jail where they were placed in dungeons and jail cells to spend their time in idleness. Cost of keeping these prisoners incarcerated was so great that some were pardoned as an economy measure, when the justice of their claims to clemency was doubtful.\(^3\)

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\(^3\)Ibid., p. 9.
It was Governor Claiborne who first recommended to the Louisiana legislature that a penitentiary be built. He was unsuccessful in his continued efforts during his term as governor of this state to build a penitentiary. A number of his successors likewise failed though most of them, like Claiborne, felt that the construction of a penitentiary would not only serve as a prison reform measure but would provide profits which would defray the high cost of keeping the convicts.

It was on January 16, 1818, when a committee first presented to the House of Representatives a bill authorizing the erection of a penitentiary. Actually it was many years later when these plans were converted to a physical structure and the new prison was ready to house its inmates.

Most of the governors who followed Claiborne went to the legislature with proposals of plans for a penitentiary. On one occasion a site of one hundred and sixty acres was purchased in the city of New Orleans for the sum of $21,010.00, but during the administration of Governor Henry Johnson the site was sold at a loss of almost $2,000.00. Prisoners continued to be incarcerated in the Orleans Parish Prison in spite of the crowded conditions there and the high

\[\text{Ibid.}\] \[\text{Ibid., p. 12.}\] \[\text{Ibid., p. 19.}\] \[\text{Ibid., p. 21.}\]
cost of prisoner maintenance.

Construction of the Louisiana penitentiary was finally begun with the approval of the legislature in March, 1832. It was constructed on a lot in the city of Baton Rouge between what is now Florida Street and Laurel Street, and fronting on St. Anthony Street. The plan of the state penitentiary at Wethersfield, Connecticut, was adopted and followed for the most part during the construction of the prison. It was intended that the cost should not exceed $50,000 but necessary deviation from the original plan resulted in the cost being raised to almost twice that figure.

With the establishment of the new Louisiana prison its supporters made plans to develop a threefold program designed to "curtail expenses, improve prison conditions, and reform men." It was felt that in order to meet the popular expectations the penitentiary must support itself and that prison industries were the most practical way of doing this. A shop system was adopted and a number of industries were begun. They included bookmaking, the tanning of leather, carpentry and cabinet making, tailoring,

8Ibid., p. 27.

9State Times, (Baton Rouge, La.) January 16, 1942.
10Stout, loc. cit.
canning, jewelry and watch repairing, and the manufacture of clothing. Prison goods were sold on the open market and in competition with private industry.\textsuperscript{11}

After one year of operation, the industrial program proved to be quite successful from a financial point of view. However, business people complained of the competition and some effort was made to change the program so that there would be less competition with private industry.

The administrative staff of the penitentiary developed with the institution. The acts of the legislature authorizing the penitentiary had created a board of five commissioners to build a penitentiary and remove the convicts to Baton Rouge. Later, in 1834, a board of inspectors, composed of seven members, was authorized by the legislature and assumed many of the powers formerly possessed by the commissioners. It was this board that hired and fired all officers and employees, fixed their salaries, supervised prison industries and made regulations governing the convicts. In 1836 the power to appoint the warden of the institution was removed from the board and made a function of the governor. The warden's salary was set at $3,000.00 per year. Guards were paid $50.00 per month, originally, but the salary was reduced to $30.00 per month in 1842.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 34
during a financial crisis at the prison.\textsuperscript{12}

Growing opposition to the penitentiary program because of its competition with private enterprise and its failure to support itself caused the press and private citizens to demand changes. These changes resulted in the adoption of the lease system by the prison authorities.\textsuperscript{13}

THE LOUISIANA PRISON UNDER THE LEASE SYSTEM

The act of the legislature which leased the penitentiary was passed on March 25, 1844, and provided that the entire establishment would be leased for a period of five years or less. The leasee was required to put up $25,000.00 bond and to pay all operating costs and to maintain the prisoners without changing anything in their treatment before securing consent from the state. The physical plant, all tools and machinery and the inventory was to be returned to the state when the lease expired in the same condition as when the lease began. The leasee was to make good any shortages and depreciation.\textsuperscript{14}

The lease system proved to be, from a financial standpoint, a satisfactory arrangement. While the state in past years suffered a deficit of some $20,000.00 or so each year, it was now, under the lease system, actually realizing

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 40 - 42. \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 51. \textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
a profit.\textsuperscript{15}

Little is known to the writer about the operations of the Louisiana State Penitentiary during the last half of the nineteenth century. It is noted, however, that when the Board of Control of the Louisiana State Penitentiary was organized in 1900 the prison was under lease. It seems likely, therefore, that the Louisiana prison was under the lease system during that period of time.

THE PRISON SYSTEM UNDER THE BOARD OF CONTROL

It was during the legislative session of the year 1900 when a law was passed creating the Board of Control which was to be the administrative body under which the new penal system was to operate. Slightly less than one thousand prisoners who were under the care of F. L. James, the lessee, were to be turned over to the state when the lease expired on March 3, 1901. When the board was organized in October, 1900, an arrangement was worked out with Mr. James whereby the state would take charge of the prisoners on January 1, 1901, two months in advance of the expiration of the lease. The state then purchased two plantations, one at Angola, a total of 8,000 acres for which $200,000.00 was paid; the other was the Hope planta-

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., pp. 54 - 67.
tion, 2,800 acres which was purchased for $78,000.00.\textsuperscript{16}

In addition to the newly purchased state farms, the Board of Control set up two levee camps which operated under yardage contract\textsuperscript{17} on the Atchafalaya river as revenue producers.\textsuperscript{18} In the following year 1902 the Board purchased two additional farms at a cost of $35,075.00.\textsuperscript{19}

At the outset of its operation the board inaugurated a policy that these farms would be made self-sustaining as soon as possible. It was felt that with energetic and competent managers and officers the result would be assured and at the same time the prisoners could be well taken care of and treated in a more humane manner.

During the first year of its operation the Board of Control took pride in its claims of humane treatment and its health record of the prisoners. A physical classification program was established which was recorded in the Annual

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}Annual Report of the Louisiana State Penitentiary for 1901 (Baton Rouge: 1902), pp. 3-5.
\item \textsuperscript{17}A yardage is defined here as one by which the state paid by the cubic yard for its work on the levees.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Annual Report of the Louisiana State Penitentiary for 1901 (Baton Rouge: 1902), p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{19}Biennial Report, Board of Control, Louisiana State Penitentiary for 1902-1903 (Baton Rouge: 1904), p. 3.
\end{itemize}
Immediately upon taking charge we inaugurated a system of physical examination and classification of the prisoners in order that each might be assigned to work according to his training. After consultation with Dr. Sparling of Baton Rouge, in whose experience and judgment we have full confidence, the following rule was adopted:

First class shall comprise all men of sound physical health, between the ages of 20 and 50 years, of 140 pounds weight or more, who have been accustomed to physical labor.

Second class shall comprise all men of sound physical health, who are slightly under or over the age limit of class one, who are obviously less than 140 pounds weight, or who have not been accustomed to hard outdoor labor.

Third class shall comprise all old men and boys, all men suffering from any impairment of health, not sufficiently severe to confine them to the hospital, and all healthy female prisoners.

Fourth class shall comprise all sick prisoners who should be in the hospital under a physician's care.

Only those being in the first class are sent to the labor camps to perform the heavy work. The second and third class are sent to the farm and utilised for lighter work.

Thus far about one third of the prisoners received came up to the standard of the first class, but this has been sufficient to keep the two labor camps being operated, usually carrying a force of 320 men. By weeding out these forces as men become run down or enfeebled by age, they can be kept in good physical status and the mortality within the normal limits.

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The prison administration thought that the needed reforms had been accomplished with the following statement in reporting to the governor:

As to the reform inaugurated in the handling and care of the prisoners, the death record is the best evidence. We at once stripped the shackles from every man employed in outdoor work. No prisoner is allowed under any circumstances to work in chains or irons of any description or to be clogged or handcuffed in any way, either going to or coming from work. No sub-officer or guard can strike a prisoner unless in defense of his life. The captain alone can administer punishment. If a prisoner is sick he must be sent at once to the hospital and a doctor decides upon his case and he decides also when he is returned to labor or whether he shall be put at some other form of work. Each man is graded physically and put at labor suited to his ability.

But we have by no means yet brought about the conditions which ought to exist. After so many years of leasee management, reformation is difficult and slow. The material question before us has demanded attention first, and physical conditions have to precede the moral upbuilding. The organizing and training and building had to be first on business lines, preparatory to the finer work of the best modern system of prison management. There is yet much to do to lead up to the point where we can take hold of the individual and deal with him. ²¹

Under the original bill which created the Board of Control of the state penitentiary, three commissioners were provided for. They were to be appointed by the governor, by and with the consent and advice of the senate for terms to be staggered so that a new commissioner would take office each two years. This board was to appoint a warden who was

²¹Ibid., pp. 13 - 14.
to have charge of the state penitentiary, including all farms, and receive a salary of $2,000.00 per year.\textsuperscript{22}

**LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY AT ANGOLA**

The penitentiary operated under the Board of Control until the year 1916 when it was abolished by a legislative act. At that time in lieu of the board a general manager of the state penitentiary was named, "in whom was invested all the duties, powers and responsibilities theretofore exercised by the Board of Control, thus centralizing the management and all authority in the hands of one individual, automatically removing any opportunity for friction and divided counsel, and putting the responsibility for success or failure, so far as the management can determine, squarely upon the shoulders of the general manager."\textsuperscript{23} The general manager was appointed by the governor.

At the time General Manager Fuqua's report was published in 1916 the Louisiana State Penitentiary had turned almost entirely to agricultural operations. The old penitentiary in Baton Rouge was sold to the city of Baton Rouge.

\textsuperscript{22}Biennial Report, Board of Control for 1902-1903 (Baton Rouge: 1904), pp. 38 - 39.

in 1917 and its use as a prison was discontinued. Angola then became the main prison although the receiving station was to remain in Baton Rouge for a number of years, located in a building now occupied by the state police barracks.

Under the legislative act of 1916 there were no tax monies available for the operation of the penitentiary. The funds under which the prison was operated were taken from what was known as the Penitentiary Fund which was the revenue coming in from the sale of goods produced at the penitentiary. The prison was at that time, of necessity, a self-sustaining organization.

In 1917 a system of inmate trusty guards was inaugurated at the prison. A year later the general manager reported that the system had worked admirably and "is saving

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24Morning Advocate, (Baton Rouge, La.), May 16, 1932.


26The inmate trusty guard system is one which makes use of prisoners chosen by the warden, one of his assistants, or a committee, to guard other prisoners. Guards are chosen on the basis of their trustworthiness, dependability and stability and are of a necessity chosen from a minimum custody category. It is a system which brings about a considerable savings to the institution in the way of salaries since the prisoners receive very little or no pay and yet fill a post which would normally be filled by a paid employee. It is frowned upon by penologists because it creates a feeling of resentment among the prison population. It is presently used in the states of Mississippi and Arkansas and is just being abolished in the Louisiana system.
NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS TO ANGOLA BY THE YEAR

FIGURE 2

Courtesy of Department of Institutions
the institution a large amount of money, and at the same time giving a large number of prisoners opportunity to better their living conditions, and by voluntary discipline and good conduct, shorten their sentences under the good time acts, and necessarily by this discipline prepare themselves to make better citizens when their terms expire."

In addition to inmate guards, three other custody classifications existed at Angola in 1917 and 1918. "Risky men" and "gunmen" wore white clothing while the trusties were clothed in pin stripes. Inmate guards were clothed in a khaki uniform.

Little change was made in the system of operations in the Louisiana State Penitentiary from 1917 up to 1952 when the transition period being described was initiated. There were many newspaper and magazine articles about the institution, some of them praising it as being an ideal institution and others condemning it.

27Ibid., p. 25.

28Morning Advocate, (Baton Rouge, La.), May 16, 1932.
CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION OF LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY
UNDER THE OLD SYSTEM

The usual criticisms of the older penitentiaries throughout the United States by modern-day penologists and criminologists do not apply entirely to the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. The Angola institution is not a typical prison, in many ways, either in structure or in methods of operation. Present day penologists have numerous criticisms to make of the existing prisons throughout our country. Some of the most common are as follows:

1. Huge sums of money are spent by prison authorities to provide maximum custody confinement for all prisoners. This results in the crowding of prisoners and the placing of two or more prisoners in a cell that is built for only one.

2. Existing prisons are located in crowded areas where there is no room for expansion and no room for proper recreational facilities to be provided.

3. Idleness is prevalent. There are not enough jobs provided to keep the inmates busy.

4. Much of the paid prison personnel is untrained and underpaid.

Only the fourth of these complaints can be applied to Angola. Thirty-three years ago, there was some publicity given to the claim that Louisiana had at that time a well-rounded, efficient penal system on the sprawling farm at
Angola. It was described by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., of the Washington Times-Herald, as "the most remarkable prison on the North American Continent." An interesting observation is that less than 30 years later it was referred to in a popular magazine as "America's worst prison."^2

The penal system that existed in Louisiana in the summer of 1952 is, for the most part, the same one which was begun by General Manager Fuqua in 1916. Since the operation of the main penitentiary in Baton Rouge known as "The Walls" was discontinued there has been little emphasis placed on prison industry. Actually the prison was made up of a series of farm camps, eight of them located at Angola and one at St. Gabriel, a small community fifteen miles below Baton Rouge. Some industry had been added through the years but the vast majority of the inmates were employed at manual labor on the farm.

STRUCTURE

As mentioned previously the Louisiana prison from 1916 to 1952 was atypical in prison structure. There was no centralized prison building surrounded by a wall or fence.

^1"Life in a Prison Deluxe in Louisiana," Literary Digest, LXXVII, (April 21, 1923), 50.

but the farm camps were scattered over an 18,000 acre\(^3\) prison compound. Each camp was an individual unit consisting of two or three brick or frame buildings surrounded by fences. Two of these camps were frame structures and were said to be around fifty years old when one of them was destroyed by fire in April of 1955.

The older brick buildings in three of the old camps were two stories in height. On the lower floor there was a kitchen, mess hall, shower room and a recreation hall. The upper floor was a cell room in which there were confined from one hundred to five hundred prisoners in double decked beds (some of them three decks) so crowded that one could hardly pass between them. Toilet and bathing facilities were inadequate. Each unit had its own dining room in which there were long crude tables with benches.

Health and safety conditions in these old farm camps were poor. A citizens committee appointed by the governor making an inspection of the penitentiary during the month of February, 1944, reported that the camps revealed decidedly inadequate sanitary provisions and that bathing and toilet facilities were "decidedly antiquated, often in poor

\(^3\)In the original purchase of the Angola farm in 1901 only 8,000 acres were acquired. Later the state purchased an additional 10,000 acres.
repair and evidently neglected as regards to cleanliness.  

Educational facilities for inmates of the penitentiary prior to 1952 were non-existent. Newspaper clippings of the early 1930's revealed that a school for illiterates had been established at that time, but the classes were held at camp mess halls in an atmosphere that was certainly not conducive to study on the part of inmates. There was also no library and no auditorium where meetings could be held.

In 1935 the prison's first real cell block, which was designed to house "incorrigibles" was constructed at Camp E. This was the building that was later known as the famous "Red Hat" building in which some of the institution's worst prisoners were housed at one time. In recent years the building has been used only as punishment cells.

Women prisoners were confined in a camp similar to those in which the men were quartered. Its worn out frame buildings were the oldest at Angola except those which burned in April, 1955, as mentioned previously. There had been little or no improvements in these buildings for many years.

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4 Unpublished report of the "Advisory Committee to the Department of Institutions, State of Louisiana, to Governor Sam H. Jones," New Orleans, April, 1944, p. 16.

5 Morning Advocate, (Baton Rouge, La.), May 16, 1932.

6 The Times Picayune, (New Orleans, La.), February 3, 1935.
and the same crowded and unsanitary conditions existed which have been described in the discussion of the men's quarters. A man held the position of camp captain and at times there was only one matron employed at the camp.

**PRISON OPERATION**

*Organization.*

Operation of the Louisiana penitentiary for the thirty-six years just prior to 1952 was about as unique as the prison's physical structure. When the Board of Control was abolished by legislative act in 1916 the office of general manager was established and was granted all the duties, powers and responsibilities theretofore exercised by the Board of Control. However, the act which created the office of general manager also provided for a warden. The act failed to make clear the division of authority between the general manager and the warden and this situation led to controversy over which officer had charge of personnel and prisoners. Because of this situation the governor's advisory committee recommended to Governor Jones in 1944 that the positions of both general manager and warden be abolished and that the "chief officer be appointed and be known as the superintendent of the penitentiary." The superintendent would be in complete charge of the institution and would
be assisted by a chief deputy known as the assistant superintendent.7

As a result of the committee's recommendations the state legislature under Act 252 of 1944 changed the title of general manager to "superintendent." The title of the warden was also changed to that of "principal assistant to the superintendent."8 The penitentiary continued to operate under this arrangement until 1950 when there was another revision and the office of warden was again created. Act 65 of the 1950 legislature created the office of warden who like the superintendent was to serve at the pleasure of the governor. The warden's duties were "to superintend all the agricultural production of the penitentiary" and perform other such duties as were delegated to him by the governor or by the superintendent.9

The general managers, superintendents and wardens at the penitentiary usually maintained their offices at Angola even though the prison camp at St. Gabriel was also under their supervision. Much of the authority having to do with custody and discipline of prisoners was delegated to the

8State Times, (Baton Rouge, La.), December 14, 1944.
"camp captain" who was placed in charge of each individual camp. These captains were permitted to administer punishment as they saw fit and with little or no interference from the warden.

Since 1916 the system of inmate trusty guards has been used at the prison. This system which originated in Mississippi in the 1890's is one which permits certain prisoners chosen by the warden to carry guns and guard other prisoners. It was described as being a most remarkable system by a Washington newspaper correspondent in 1923 when he referred to it as a system of "letting those convicts who through good work and exceptional service become trusties, and guard themselves."¹⁰ Prior to 1916 the prison employed one hundred and fifty paid guards. In 1923 there were eleven employed guards,¹¹ and this number was increased by only eight between then and July 1, 1952.

The argument given in favor of inmate guards in 1923 by the newspaper correspondent just mentioned has been refuted many times in recent years by prison experts. There has been no reasonable evidence to support the newsman's claim that there is any rehabilitative value in promoting

¹⁰"Life in a Prison Deluxe in Louisiana," Literary Digest, LXXVII, (April 21, 1923), 50.
¹¹Ibid.
one prisoner to guard over another. The inmate guard sys-
tem has brought about many problems not only in the insti-
tution where it is practiced but in other penitentiaries
throughout the nation. The "convict code" practiced by
inmates in all penal institutions severely condemns any
prisoner who "snitches" or in any way prevents another pri-
soner from attempting to escape or to violate any institu-
tional rule. This makes it absolutely necessary for inmate
guards to be segregated from the rest of the population.
If a guard has to be reduced from his status and take up
his role as an ordinary prisoner the institution must con-
tinue to segregate him to prevent his life from being taken
by the other prisoners. The ex-inmate guard is a protection
case in any prison anywhere because of the convict's "grape-
vine" which passes the news from one penitentiary to another
throughout the country.

There has been only one argument given in favor of
inmate guards which has not been disproven in the eyes of
penologists. No one can deny the fact that it brings about
a tremendous savings in the salary funds available. How-
ever, most prison authorities feel that this saving is out-
weighed many times by the many disadvantages of the inmate
guard system. Due to the fact that they themselves are
prisoners, inmate guards cannot be trusted to maintain
proper discipline and to enforce all prison rules in such a way that order and control may be maintained properly.

Discontinuance of the inmate guard system at the Angola penitentiary was recommended by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 1946.\(^2\) This recommendation has been repeated a number of times by other prison experts who have visited the institution, one of whom was Reed Cozart who was hired by the governor in 1952 to re-organize the institution.

Needless to say the use of the inmate guard system and a lack of paid employees brought about a serious shortage of trained and qualified custodial officers. A prison, like other organizations, cannot function properly without personnel properly trained to do a good job. This inadequacy has been one of the major criticisms of the Louisiana penitentiary.

Control.

Under the conditions just mentioned control of the inmate population at the Louisiana State Penitentiary for a number of years prior to 1952 has been somewhat of a farce. Prisoners, particularly trusties, traversed, almost

The interior of an old camp mess hall is shown above, with kitchen in background. One of the two main dining rooms of the new prison is shown below. Meals are served cafeteria style from steam tables in the background. Nine hundred and eighty inmates can be seated at one serving.
at will, from one unit to another without their whereabouts being known to any one other than themselves. Until 1953, inmate guards were not required to stand counts, since they were considered a part of the security force. One could be gone for hours without it being known to the proper authorities. Mail and visits were censored to a degree, but no check was made to determine the character of persons visiting or corresponding with inmates. Many disciplinary problems have resulted from the use of money in that gambling flourished and inmates were permitted to borrow from one another.

Prior to 1953 some of the large prison camps at Angola were operated without a single paid employee on duty during the night. Inmate guards were in charge of counts and of any other matters that would need attention. If an emergency did arise an employee could be called, but fights and sexual perversion were seldom considered emergencies.

Inmate politicians made the most of the situation existing at the penitentiary during the period under discussion in this chapter. Inmate guards accepted bribes for failing to see infractions of the rules. Certain inmate guards and trusties who stood in with officials were paid for "recommending" other inmates for soft jobs. An inmate who returned to the penitentiary in 1952 after having served a number of previous terms in the institution informed the
writer that he had paid as much as two hundred fifty dollars for an office job during his previous sentence. This money was supposedly paid to an inmate but there is reason to believe that certain unscrupulous employees engaged in this practice of job selling also.

Since money was not contraband in the penitentiary and there was no organized recreation activities gambling was a common practice. Some professional gamblers won hundreds of dollars off their fellow inmates. Little effort, if any, was made at any time to curb this practice even though it caused a number of serious fights among the inmate population.

Prior to 1952 there was no paid steward at the penitentiary. Each prison kitchen was operated by an inmate steward and he, like guards and other inmate politicians, showed favors to those who could afford them. Although plenty of food was provided some of it never reached the tables in the mess halls. Meats, desserts and other favorite foods were sold by those who had access to them. In the dormitories beds were sold to new inmates by "strong-arm" men.

Discipline.

Because of his duties and responsibilities the inmate guard at the penitentiary under the old system played
an important role in the discipline of the inmate population. It was the responsibility of the inmate guard to report all violations which he observed to the captain or to some other officer on duty who would in turn report them to the captain. Although there is no record of the inmate guards ever administering punishment it was usually their testimony that brought it about. The guard's counterpart on the work line was the inmate "pusher" who was assigned the responsibility of seeing to it that all inmates did the work they were required to do.

The most common form of punishment at the penitentiary prior to 1952 was lashing by a leather strap. In December, 1944, Governor James N. Davis issued an executive order prohibiting the flogging of prisoners.\(^1\) It was no secret, however, among officials at the prison, that this order did not stop the use of the leather strap which was referred to by inmates as "the bat." Flogging was done by the captains, for the most part, without the approval of the warden and the punishment was never recorded on the inmate's record.

Another common form of punishment at the prison included a system whereby the prisoner was handcuffed and

\(^1\)The Times Picayune, (New Orleans, La.), December 2, 1944, p. 1.
fastened by the handcuff to a post at a height approximately parallel with his chin. He was required to remain in this position for the greater part of a day in the hot sun or in a stiff breeze.\textsuperscript{14}

In exceptional cases solitary confinement was administered as a penalty.\textsuperscript{15} At one of the Negro camps there existed solitary confinement cells in the prison yard built out of reinforced concrete which were usually referred to as "dungeons" or "sweat boxes." These were the same dungeons which were wrecked by the governor using a bulldozer soon after the reform program was begun in 1952.\textsuperscript{16}

Health Provisions.

Hospital facilities which had been seriously lacking at Angola prior to that time were greatly improved under the administration of Governor Sam H. Jones due to the solicitude and zeal of Doctor Myron E. Walker who was the resident physician.\textsuperscript{17} Equipment was acquired from Charity Hospital and other state institutions which made the hospital a well-

\textsuperscript{14}Unpublished report to Governor Jones, op. cit., p. 21.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16}At a special "press day" observed at the prison in October of 1952 at which the press was invited to observe the beginning of the new program Governor Kennon actually took the controls of a bulldozer to destroy the concrete cells.

\textsuperscript{17}Unpublished report to Governor Jones, op. cit., p. 16.
equipped plant. There was a shortage of personnel, however, in that only one doctor and one trained nurse were employed. Inmate nurses and technicians made up the remainder of the hospital staff.

After Doctor Walker left the hospital sometime during the year 1944 there were at least seven resident physicians that served the institution (no more than two at one time) during the eight years that followed. Some of them stayed only a short time. In addition to the full time resident physicians there were also surgeons and other part time specialists whose services were made available to the institution one or two days of each week. There have also been times, usually for periods of two or three months, when there was no resident physician at the penitentiary. During these periods all treatment was administered by the nurses and other medical employees. Cases requiring surgery and major treatment were either handled by the visiting surgeons or transferred to the Charity Hospital in New Orleans.

In 1951 the new general hospital and receiving station was constructed on the compound using a plan similar to the one originally submitted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons about five years earlier.\textsuperscript{16} With the help of funds

Shown above is the exterior of old Camp C which was destroyed by fire on April 30, 1955. More than two hundred Negro trusty prisoners were quartered there at the time of the fire. The prison yard of the new medium custody compound is shown below with the sixty man dormitories in the background. Telephone poles shown in the photograph have now been removed.
from the Rockefeller Foundation this new hospital was well-equipped and is today an asset to the new penitentiary.

**TREATMENT**

After having described the physical structure and the methods of operating the penitentiary one can easily see that even a well-planned treatment program would have difficulty in achieving any great degree of success in the Louisiana penitentiary. As has been pointed out previously a program of inmate treatment requires not only an adequate and qualified staff but also the proper physical facilities in which the staff can operate. A classification program requires adequate office space, an admission-orientation unit and adequate quarters to house all incoming prisoners for a period of thirty days, and a qualified staff. An educational and vocational program requires classrooms, equipment and trained supervisory personnel and instructors.

Prior to 1952 a quarantine or admission unit in which inmates were quartered while awaiting classification had not existed at Angola. Inmates had been received at the receiving station, given a suit of prison clothing and sent to the farm jobs generally called the "long-line." There they were to remain, for a few days maybe, or perhaps for years. It was felt that by giving the new prisoner a taste of the
"long-line" he would know better how to appreciate a good job when he got one.

At some time during the middle 1940's a classification director was employed at Angola. He later acquired two assistants. The classification director assumed the duties of an assistant to the superintendent. He was in charge of inmate records and he and his assistant served in the capacity of inmate counselors on some occasions. Actually, however, classification as it is known in prisons throughout America was not established. A classification committee did not exist. Assignments were made by the warden or the superintendent upon the recommendation of the camp captain or some other high ranking official. Inmates complained that favoritism was shown by officials to a few who were given soft jobs.

As has already been stated there was once a feeble attempt to institute an educational program at Angola. As far back as the early 1930's a school was begun which held its classes in the camp mess halls. There is no indication that a full time education supervisor was ever employed and that anything other than a few classes for illiterates was ever a reality. A vocational-educational program was never attempted at the prison under the old system.
RELEASE

Louisiana law provides two methods of release for prisoners confined at the penitentiary, namely discharge and parole. When an inmate is given a discharge from the institution he is released without any kind of supervision and all ties with the institution are broken unless he commits another crime and is re-committed. One may be discharged when he has served his full sentence or he may be released with the help of good time credits at an earlier date. State good time laws provide that a prisoner's sentence may be discounted by an amount ranging from one-seventh to one-third of the actual sentence. A prisoner released with the help of good time credits is given a full and final discharge from the institution.

A prisoner may also be discharged after he has been granted executive clemency by the governor. The law provides for a board of pardons which consists of three voting members: the lieutenant governor of the state, the attorney general, and the judge who passed sentence on the case being considered. This board acts in an advisory capacity to the governor and the governor normally grants clemency only to those recommended for it by the board. Inmates discharged as a result of an executive time cut or pardon are also released by a full discharge.
The other form of release is that of parole. Under the old system the board of parole was changed a number of times, usually with the beginning of a new governor's administration. From 1942 to 1948 the parole system operated under the State Department of Public Welfare and the board was comprised of the attorney general, the commissioner of welfare, and the sentencing judge. In 1948, the parole system was removed from the welfare department and a three member appointive parole board was established with its members appointed by the governor. The term of this three member board ran consecutive with the term of the governor and expired when his term expired. Parole was administered by a state parole officer who was also named by the governor.

The parole board met once each month and considered granting paroles to all inmates who were eligible. To be eligible, a prisoner must have served one-third of his sentence. When parole was granted the inmate was released and permitted to return to his home but was to remain under the supervision of his parole officer until he had completed his full sentence. Before being released the prisoner must agree to observe any and all rules established by the board of parole to govern the conduct of prisoners under parole supervision. The board had the authority to revoke the parole of any prisoner who failed to observe these rules.
COMMITMENT RATES TO ANGOLA BY AGE AND RACE

FIGURE 7

Courtesy of Department of Institutions
CONCLUSION

In preparing for this chapter the writer has talked with a number of officers and inmates who were at the prison during the later years of the period under discussion. The acts of brutality such as had been committed by various officials and inmate guards have not been mentioned in this paper. Needless to say the main emphasis in the prison’s operations during this period was on keeping the prisoner, working him and making as much money as possible for the institution. A former university president who had actually served time at the penitentiary was once named to the post of director of rehabilitation. Though he was perhaps quite qualified to institute a treatment program he was without the necessary staff and facilities with which to begin. He died a short time after his appointment before any of these necessities could be acquired.

A training program for guards and other employees was never established under the old system. There were no qualification requirements for personnel and most employees obtained their jobs through political appointment. One ex-prisoner was hired as a guard to fill the duties he had formerly performed as an inmate guard.

A new governor was inaugurated in Louisiana in 1952 who had pledged to reorganize and improve the penal system.
Upon taking office he acquired the services of an outstanding warden from the Federal Bureau of Prisons who was asked to investigate the penitentiary and to make recommendations for its improvement. As a result this penologist was employed by the state to direct the planning of the new penitentiary which will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER V

THE NEW PENITENTIARY AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

On June 6, 1952, Warden Reed Cozart of Seagoville, Texas, assumed the duties of Superintendent of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. He moved to Baton Rouge where he established an office in what was to become the new Department of Institutions of the state of Louisiana. Later his title was changed to "Assistant Director of the Department of Institutions in charge of penal and correctional institutions."

The new prison administrator was recognized by many penal authorities as an outstanding authority in his field. For seven years he had served as warden of the Texas institution which is referred to by Barnes and Teeters as the "one model minimum security institution" operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.¹

Upon assuming office Cozart's first move was to name a warden who would reside at the penitentiary and operate the prison. He asked the Federal Bureau of Prisons for another of their officers to fill this post. The new warden came to Louisiana from Washington, D. C., where he had been the

director of the District of Columbia jail system. The new warden served only about six months before he resigned and returned to Federal service.

On coming to Louisiana the new prison superintendent advised the governor that an entirely new prison plant was necessary before much could be done to improve the prison program. His recommendation won the approval of the legislature and approximately four million, five hundred thousand dollars were appropriated to begin construction of the new institution. Other funds were provided to employ additional custodial personnel and the budget was increased to provide staff members for a treatment program.

The first plans drawn up for the new Angola prison included three separate institutions, providing one each for maximum, medium, and minimum custody inmates. In drawing the plans Cozart acquired the assistance of the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, James V. Bennett. The bureau's senior architect Robert D. Barnes was also brought in to aid in the planning of the institution. These experts soon decided that a great deal of money could be saved both in construction cost and in operation cost if the three institutions were consolidated into one central prison providing three separate custody areas. This represented a new idea in prison planning. In the summer of 1953 construction was actually begun which would make these plans a reality.
In December of 1952 Maurice H. Sigler was named acting warden of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. He, too, had come from the Federal Bureau's institution at Seagoville, Texas. After six months as acting warden Mr. Sigler was given permanent status as warden.

STRUCTURE

As this chapter is being written the physical plant of the new penitentiary has not yet been completed. Some of the buildings have been completed and occupied, and almost one thousand inmates are quartered in its dormitories and cell blocks.

In addition to the four and a half million dollars mentioned previously which was set aside to begin the new institution, another three and a half million dollars have been made available to complete the prison. More than a half million dollars was spent on an administration building and on forty-one housing units for prison personnel.

A new type of construction known as the "Lift-Slab" process was used in the building of the new prison. It was learned that by using this method a great deal of construction costs would be saved. Concrete slabs for the first and second floors and for the roof were poured on the ground and lifted into place by hydraulic jacks. Walls were then constructed in between the floors and the roof.
The new Angola prison is built to house two thousand, one hundred prisoners. Nine hundred sixty inmates can be quartered in the minimum custody section and the same number in the medium custody section. Two hundred forty individual inside cells are provided in the maximum custody compound.

The three custody sections are laid out adjacent to and all connecting a fourth compound which houses a huge kitchen and two gigantic dining halls (see figure 8). One dining hall is provided for minimum custody inmates and the other, exactly like the first, is designed to serve medium and maximum custody prisoners. In connection with the kitchen there is a large food warehouse and an officers' cafeteria.

The medium and minimum custody compounds in the new prison provide open dormitories which will house sixty men each. There are sixteen of these dormitories in each compound, which make it possible for the classification committee to segregate men into sixteen different groups putting together those who have the most personality traits in common.

At the entrance end of each dormitory there is a locker room and a shower room with toilet facilities. In each unit where there are sixty men quartered there are four showers, six toilet stools, and four urinals in addition
FIGURE 8. DRAWING OF LAYOUT OF NEW PRISON.
to two fountain-type wash basins and two large lavatories for shaving purposes. A steel locker is provided in the locker room for each inmate quartered in the dormitory.

Each of the single beds in the sixty-man dormitory has a metal locker attached where the inmate's personal belongings may be kept and locked up to prevent them from being stolen by other prisoners. There are no double deck beds. In the end of the dormitory opposite the locker room there is a day room which contains tables for writing and playing cards. There are also television and radio for entertainment.

The medium custody compound is surrounded by a single woven wire fence topped with barbed wire. Guard towers are located around the perimeter of the compound. The maximum custody compound is surrounded by two woven wire fences both topped with barbed wire and a guard tower on each corner. There are no fences or guard towers surrounding the minimum custody institution.

Adjacent to the medium custody compound and the compound in which the kitchen and dining hall is located there is an industrial compound. A license tag plant and furniture factory is already located in this area. Automotive and other industrial shops are to be built there.

When the planning of the new penitentiary was begun it was intended that all male inmates of the institution
except those quartered at the new general hospital building would be housed therein. The general hospital and two maximum custody cell blocks located in the same building will house approximately three hundred inmates. It was also contemplated that the new reformatory for young adult offenders would be ready by the time the new prison was completed. At the time of this writing, however, the population of the institution would indicate that at least one and possibly two of the old farm camps will have to be used to house the population, at least until the new Louisiana reformatory is completed.

The new Angola prison plant has drawn international attention and has been described by a number of penologists as being "one of the most modern prisons in America." A model of the institution was on display at an international prison conference which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in the summer of 1955. Architectural Forum magazine praises the new institution in an article entitled "A New Kind of Prison" and describes it as one which is "designed to prevent riots, save money, and help criminals go straight."  

Control and Custody

It would be difficult to say whether the operation of the Louisiana Penitentiary has changed more or less than the physical plant itself. Much change has been made in methods of operation by the warden and other high ranking staff members. The pattern of operations being established to administer control and discipline in the prison is similar in many respects to the procedure used in the Federal institutions. This brings about a rather intensified change from the old system which permitted some inmates to have an almost unlimited amount of freedom and placed them in supervisory capacity over other prisoners. It is the policy of the new prison program that no partiality is shown to one inmate or to one group over another.

The new penitentiary provides a control center in which there are two custodial officers on duty at all times. These officers are notified when any unscheduled movement of a prisoner or group of prisoners takes place. They are also called when there is any deviation from regular procedure in the handling of inmate problems. When the inmates are counted by the various work supervisors or by the officers in charge of the individual housing units the counts are called in to the control center and each prisoner must be
accounted for. The officers on duty in the control room are provided with up-to-the-minute information regarding all inmate housing moves and work assignments. In other words it is their responsibility to maintain a master count which shows the total number of prisoners in each and every work detail and housing unit at all times.

The much-criticised inmate guard system described in the last chapter is being abolished with the opening of the new Louisiana penitentiary. It has been estimated that a total of two hundred twenty custodial officers would be required to maintain proper custody in the new institution. This is a complement of ten officers less than the one suggested in 1946 by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. 3 It is quite likely that this complement will have to be increased in the future, especially if and when the working hours are cut below the present sixty-six hours each week.

Inmate foremen and “pushers” are no longer used at the penitentiary. No prisoner is given any authority whatever over his fellow inmates. A prisoner must obey the officer in charge of his work detail or his housing unit and failure to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken against him.

With the new program the list of contraband items at the penitentiary has increased and now includes such items as postage stamps and money. The ban on postage stamps has made it more difficult for inmates to "kite" letters out of the institution by handing them to civilian visitors and getting them mailed without the knowledge or the approval of the prison officials. However, postage on the letters which an inmate is permitted to write out to his family and friends is paid by the state whereas previously the inmate was required to buy his own postage.

The placing of money on the contraband list has eliminated a number of inmate "rackets" that formerly existed at the institution. Scrip, in the form of coupon books, has been substituted for money and the coupon book issued to an inmate carries his name. No inmate is permitted to spend coupons from any book other than his own. This makes it much easier to control gambling in the institution since funds cannot pass from one prisoner to another. This arrangement also prevents inmates from making deals with unscrupulous employees in the form of bribes, etc... In the past a number of employees have been fired for purchasing contraband and bringing it in to inmates. Three employees were discharged for smuggling in rather large sums of money to inmates attempting to buy their way out of prison from an inmate forgery ring which had been successful in changing a
number of inmate records to make early releases effective.

A higher degree of control exists in the new penitentiary on inmate contacts with people on the outside. Prisoners are now permitted to write to members of their family and to a limited number of other friends or associates on the outside. However, they may only correspond with and receive visits from persons whose names have been approved by an agency of the institution. Approval is made of these correspondents and visitors only after some investigation has been made by the institution to determine the relationship and the reputation of the person with whom correspondence and visits are requested. This system controls visits and correspondence and prevents prisoners from writing to and being visited by gangsters, racketeers, prostitutes, and other underworld characters.

In the new penitentiary trusties are no longer permitted to wander at will over the penitentiary compound. Formerly, inmate guards and trusties were permitted to visit at other units, drive automobiles belonging to employees, etc., their whereabouts being known at times only by themselves. Inmate guards were seldom, if ever, required to be counted when the other prisoners were accounted for. All prisoners are now required to stand count and they can be moved from one location to another only after permission has been received and the movement recorded by the control room.
Shown above is one of the eight cloverleaf units in the new prison. Each unit has four sixty-man dormitories with shower rooms, locker rooms and day rooms connecting.
With the operation of the new control center, the replacement of inmate guards with trained custodial personnel, and with a more rigid control on contraband and movement of prisoners it would seem almost certain that fewer inmates would escape. It may also be pointed out that with the new physical plant a much higher degree of security can be maintained. The layout of all three custody areas makes supervision of the population much easier than it was previously, and the fences and guard towers surrounding the medium and maximum custody areas make escape virtually impossible so long as the officers on duty remain alert. At the time of this writing we cannot evaluate security in the new prison since the medium and maximum custody compounds have not yet been occupied.

The number of escapes at the penitentiary, even since added security measures have been initiated by the new administration, has been the target of much criticism from the public and particularly from the residents of the area surrounding the penitentiary. With this in mind it can be expected that when the new penitentiary is completely occupied every effort will be made to tighten security regulations and to bring the escape rate down to an absolute minimum.
Food Service

One of the operations which always demands close attention in a prison is the preparation and the serving of food. Poor food has caused many riots and other disturbances in prisons. Barnes and Teeters have stated that "all penal administrators worthy of their hire recognize that good wholesome food with variety, served up in appetizing manner, is essential to keep prisoners from becoming dis-gruntled or rebellious."

In the new Angola prison a qualified staff of trained stewards has been placed in charge of food preparation and service. The very latest type of equipment is provided in the new kitchen and a great deal of emphasis is placed on cleanliness and careful preparation of food by the culinary staff. Food is served under the supervision of officers and every inmate is given as much as he can eat, but he must eat all he takes. Only servings of meats and desserts are limited.

Discipline

Disciplinary measures are taken against those inmates who violate prison regulations and are handled by a committee known as the disciplinary board. When a violation occurs it is reported by the officer in charge on a pink slip known as

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4Barnes and Teeters, op. cit., p. 569.
a disciplinary report. This report is turned in to the officer on duty at the control center who takes whatever immediate action is necessary.

For a more serious disciplinary report the prisoner is sent to isolation where he is locked in an individual confinement cell and placed on a restricted diet. This diet consists of two or three vegetables, bread and water and is prepared without seasoning. It contains all the calories necessary to maintain the human body and keep the prisoner in good health while he is confined but is not a tasty meal. The prisoner will eat it but not enjoy it.

Within a day or so after an inmate is placed in isolation he is taken before the disciplinary committee. This committee, made up of the associate warden, the chief security officer and one other official (usually from the medical department), tries the case and renders some kind of verdict as to how much additional punishment is required. For serious violations such as escape, etc., a number of days or months of good time may be forfeited by the prisoner which would delay his release from prison.

For minor violations of prison rules deprivation of privileges will be a form of punishment in the new penitentiary. Quarters will be provided in both the minimum and medium custody areas where inmates under this form of punishment will be quartered. For the duration of their
punishment they will not be permitted to attend movies, listen to the radio, watch television, or engage in any other kind of recreational activities.

Work

As has been pointed out in previous chapters the work program at Angola in the past has been largely farming operations. Much of the farm work had been done by hand and during slack seasons some prisoners were placed on jobs where little productive work was done. Except for the sugar refinery which operated during the months of November and December of each year the only prison industry was a tap plant, a cannery, and a cold storage plant.

For the new work program a great deal of emphasis is being placed on industry. The farm will continue to be the principal part of the program but it is being mechanized to the extent that a much smaller percentage of the inmate population will be required for its operation. The latest types of farming machinery have been purchased which include cane cutting machines for the harvest of the sugar crop. A livestock division has been established under farming operations and is proving to be a very profitable part of the over-all work program.

A new department of industries has been established at the prison which includes, in addition to the cannery
and license tag factory previously mentioned, a metal furniture factory, a mattress factory, a soap factory, and greatly increased operation of the abattoir and the meat packing house. A new cannery is also being built to replace the old one which has been operating in an old dilapidated building. A concrete block plant was established when construction began on the new prison and has produced all the concrete blocks used in the construction program.

In the operation of the new prison it is intended that only minimum custody prisoners will be used in the farming operations. This would eliminate the necessities of having to maintain an armed guard line around farm work details, an operation which with paid guards is almost too expensive to be profitable. Medium and maximum custody inmates will be assigned to jobs in the industrial compounds which will be guarded from guard towers outside the compound fence. It is believed that this plan of operations will not only save money in cutting down the number of guards required but will also bring about a much greater degree of security.

Health

Just prior to the year 1952 and under the previous administration a new hospital and receiving station was completed. It is located a little less than two miles from
The number of prisoners quartered in the dormitory of old Camp E (as shown above) ranged from 200 to 300. (Notice how beds are crowded together with little or no space between). Some beds are three decks. The new dormitories in the medium and minimum custody compounds as shown below contain sixty beds each.
the new prison near the outer perimeter of the prison farm. This building was constructed on the plans submitted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and is modern, clean and equipped with the latest hospital equipment. The building also includes two cell blocks built for the purpose of confining new commitments during their quarantine period.

The new prison administration will continue to operate the hospital and receiving station in its present location and for the purposes for which it was built. Qualified doctors and trained medical staff will operate the hospital and offer medical diagnosis and treatment to all prisoners when it is needed.

THE TREATMENT PROGRAM

Classification

In September of 1952 a classification program was begun at the penitentiary. Since then five qualified staff members with college degrees and with training in either sociology or psychology have been employed for this department. Adequate office space and equipment have been provided and an efficient classification program is getting under way. All new prisoners being admitted to the institution are held in an admission unit while the classification department makes a case study of each one. The medical department, the education department, and the chaplains
also participate in the pre-classification study and all contribute to preparation of a case summary by the classification department. The classification committee consisting of the warden, associate warden, classification director, education director, doctor, chief security officer, and the chaplains meets each week and classifies all new commitments that have been processed by the classification department. This committee is responsible for the assignments to living quarters and work details of all prisoners and also decides the custody status and works out a vocational program for them.

Case loads are assigned to classification officers on the basis of a system which makes use of the inmate's prison number. An officer, on being assigned to work with the prisoner when he is admitted, continues to work with the same inmate throughout the entire period of his incarceration. This system makes it possible for the officer to become better acquainted with the prisoner and be familiar with his problems as they arise. The officer serves as a sort of social case worker to the inmate and when changes are required in his classification he presents the inmate's case to the classification committee. He is permitted to make recommendations to the committee which may or may not be followed when the case is heard.

The classification department is expected to play a
very important role in the treatment program in the new penitentiary. It is without question one of the primary essentials of any rehabilitative effort. Without proper classification the academic and vocational educational programs would be of little value. Action taken by the classification committee must be observed strictly by all departments of the institution in order that other phases of the treatment program may function.

**Education**

The educational program at the new penitentiary is still somewhat in its infancy even though it has been established for the same length of time as the classification department. Two major factors have brought about the retardation of the educational program. One has been the lack of physical facilities such as classrooms and equipment. The other factor was the failure of the institution to develop a qualified educational staff.

An education supervisor was first employed in September of 1952. The officer established a few classes for illiterates which were held in the camp mess halls in the evenings. Correspondence courses were also offered and a few inmates were awarded certificates for their accomplishments. No vocational program was planned until February of 1955 when a new educational director was employed.
to supervise both the academic and the vocational training. Before plans were complete for the vocational program to begin both the director and the supervisor resigned leaving the educational department without the services of any officials.

February 10, 1956, a new education supervisor assumed his duties at the institution and has moved into the new education building where there are well-equipped classrooms and offices to be used exclusively for educational purposes.

Academic classes are being conducted for the prisoners only in the evenings at the present time. Later it is expected that at least one-half of the work day will be allowed the inmate who is in need of schooling provided he makes satisfactory progress.

The vocational training program will be dovetailed into an inmate's work assignment. The department expects to follow the plan of one-half day of vocational instruction and one-half day of on-the-job training in the same field.

A modern, well-equipped library is located in the new education building which will be accessible to all the inmate population sometime during the week.

Recreation

A full time recreation director is employed at the penitentiary who works under the supervision of the educa-
tional supervisor. Leisure time activities are planned by this officer which include nearly all kinds of athletics as well as movies and indoor games. Two movies are shown each week to all inmates except those in punishment status. Baseball, football, and basketball leagues have been organized which promote competitive games between the teams of the various housing units. An umpire school has been established by this department using an inmate instructor who had previously completed the course in another institution.

Radio is provided for inmates in all housing units in the new institution. Television is provided in all units except in the maximum custody area and in the punishment units of the medium and minimum custody area.

The recreation program is designed to occupy the inmates' leisure time. The prison administration feels that this program will not only discourage homosexual activities but will prevent trouble that is so often caused by idleness in penal institutions.

Religion

Two full time chaplains are employed at the peniten- tiary to administer a religious program for men of all faiths except Jewish. A Catholic chaplain ministers to all inmates

5There are only five (5) Jewish inmates incarcerated in the institution at the present time.
of his faith and a Protestant chaplain is employed who works with inmates of all Christian non-Catholic denominations. In addition to the regularly scheduled services conducted by these chaplains they also counsel with the inmates and help them with their spiritual and domestic problems.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

With one of America's newest and most modern prison plants nearing completion, the Louisiana penitentiary is in a position to institute a prison program that would be coveted by a number of other states. Even though the present warden's administration has been in charge for more than three years, it has not been in a position to really set up a program hoped for because of the lack of facilities. Construction of the new penitentiary has been slow but has been faster than was first anticipated.

The writer has already explained at some length the program that is already underway at the institution. For the future it can be stated briefly that all the many phases of this program will be expanded and improved.

The penal system of Louisiana will be much improved when the new correctional institution for young offenders is opened at DeQuincy. The contract for this institution has already been awarded and construction has begun. It is anticipated that it will cost the state of Louisiana more
than three and one-half million dollars by the time it is completed. It will, however, remove from three to five hundred of the younger men at Angola from their present environment and place them in a setting where a greater amount of emphasis can be placed on training and rehabilitation.

The Angola institution will continue to serve as a receiving unit for the entire Louisiana penal system. A classification clinic will be maintained at Angola where all new commitments will be screened. All young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four who, in the opinion of the classification committee, would profit by a program such as will be carried on at DeQuincy will be sent there.

As has already been stated the DeQuincy institution will place a greater emphasis on education and training. As a small institution it will be easier for a more individualized type of treatment to be administered. The warden and all his staff will be in a position to know more about the problems of the inmate than is the case in a large penitentiary such as the one at Angola. More time will be provided for school work there and the inmate will be given greater opportunity to attend and to profit by the instruction he receives.

At Angola new and modern prison buildings are nearing
completion to provide facilities for women prisoners. This women's institution will be operated as a separate unit and is located on the northeast section of the prison farm several miles from the main prison. New buildings will provide small individual rooms for the prisoners. A modern tailor shop is to be installed which will employ most of the women and will manufacture clothing for the male prisoners. An educational and vocational program is being planned which is similar to the one in the men's institution but on a much smaller scale.

When money can be provided in the years to come a number of new buildings are planned for the new men's institution at Angola. The new industrial compound is large enough to accommodate a number of additional factories and shops. Present plans are to add industrial plants in this compound so that all medium and maximum custody prisoners may work inside where a constant fear of escape on the part of prison officials will not hinder the inmates' work program.

Other buildings that are planned for the future include a huge auditorium building within the maximum custody compound where the entire prison population can be gathered together when necessary. Such an auditorium will be used for lectures, movies, and other types of entertainment, and religious services.
The classification department at the institution plans a number of improvements. One that should be mentioned here is the establishment of a pre-release program which will provide for all inmates scheduled for release within thirty or sixty days to be quartered in a unit segregated from the rest of the population and given special attention. This pre-release treatment will include lectures from labor officials and union leaders from nearby cities, special counseling and opportunities for job placement by the United States Employment Service. These inmates will also be given some additional privileges and additional contacts with people from the outside which will play a part in preparing them for freedom.

Plans for the education department have already been discussed in this chapter. In fact the entire educational program is still more or less in the planning stage. However, it should be pointed out here that it is the intentions of the prison administration that all the inmates with the necessary mental capacity and with the willingness to learn may add to their educational achievements while incarcerated. Illiterates will learn to read and write. Classes will be offered in all grade levels up through high school, and college courses may be taken by extension. High school diplomas or equivalency certificates will be issued when the necessary credits have been earned by the student.
Toilet facilities are shown in these two photos. The old above and the new below.
When the plans for the vocational program at the institution have materialized it will be possible for an inmate to become a skilled tradesman in many different fields. Vocational training will not be over emphasized, and it will be necessary for an inmate to develop his academic education along with his vocational studies.

In summarizing the institution's plans for the future it must not be overlooked that one of the prison's greatest needs is to train and to organize its staff so that a greater degree of efficiency in operation can be obtained. One weakness of the program thus far is the failure of the institution to train its custodial personnel in modern methods of control and discipline. Plans for the future include a greater emphasis on this phase of operations by a well qualified personnel training officer.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the past five chapters the writer has attempted first to point out the need for a new system and has presented a new penal system in the making. In this chapter an attempt will be made to analyze the transition of the system from old to new considering its effects on the prisoners and on prison employees, and the reaction of the Louisiana public and American penologists to the changes. A comparison and contrast of the function of the two systems will also be made.

From the publicity given to the Louisiana State Penitentiary in 1951 and 1952 one would draw the conclusion that Louisiana lagged behind most other states in the treatment of convicted criminals. As was pointed out in chapter one there could be little doubt in the minds of anyone giving much thought to the treatment of offenders but that some change was needed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Other states have made progress in their penal institutions and some of them, especially California, have received much praise from prison authorities for the development of progressive institutions and efficient rehabilitation programs. It will be shown in this chapter that the changes made in
the Louisiana penal system since July 1, 1952, have been considered outstanding by some well known authorities.

REACTION OF THE PRISONERS TO THE NEW LOUISIANA PENITENTIARY

The writer has had occasion to observe first hand the effect of the change of prison operation and treatment of the inmate population since the new program began. During this time there have been food strikes, self-mutilation, murders, escapes, and other problems requiring alertness and clear thinking on the part of the prison officials. These incidents, however, have been regarded as housekeeping problems by the prison administration and it is believed that many of them would have happened anyway and are not the result of any adjustment difficulties brought on by the transition.

Conclusions drawn by the writer as to the effect of the new prison program on the inmate population are listed as follows:

1. The escape rate has remained unusually high because of (a) lack of institutional organization during early days of the transition period, (b) new and untrained prison officers in all departments and particularly in the security division, (c) an unusual heavy amount of traffic in and out of the institution brought on by the building program, (d) fear and anxiety of some inmates as a part of their reaction to anticipating a move into the new quarters, (e) the sudden change in treatment from the brutal to the humane caused some
prisoners to feel that a breakdown in control and discipline existed and they took advantage of the first three factors just mentioned.

2. Inmate guards and other inmate politicians have become somewhat disgruntled because they have lost many of the privileges they had formerly enjoyed.

3. Some inmates who were at first skeptical of the new program and expected it to go the way of all previous penal reform movements in Louisiana have been somewhat surprised and have been made "believers" as the program progressed.

4. Most of the grumbling by the inmates has come from those newer prisoners who had not previously been confined at the institution prior to 1952.

5. Prisoners who had served time at the institution under the old system are, with few exceptions (excluding inmate guards mentioned previously), well pleased with the new system and wish it to continue.

An analysis of the escape record for the past ten years would be very difficult and perhaps impossible because of the failure of the institution to maintain accurate records of escapes on an annual basis. Records of the prison do show that during the first year of the new program (1953) there were one hundred two escapes. In the following year the number of escapes was forty-six and this figure was increased by three in 1955. Of these one hundred ninety-seven prisoners who escaped, however, all but twenty of them were recaptured either on the prison grounds or outside the compound within a few days. Most of the remaining twenty have been recaptured in other states and will be returned.
to Louisiana after they have served sentences there. It should also be mentioned here that the figures just given include all prisoners who attempted to escape and were missing at count time. Many of them never actually got away from the prison compound before they were recaptured by prison guards.

Since the writer has been unable to acquire accurate escape records for much of the time during which the prison operated with the inmate guard system and prior to the beginning of the new program it cannot be determined whether or not the escape rate has increased or decreased since the new program began. Records do show that in 1917 the average population at the institution was 1,775 and there were sixty-eight escapes. The previous year there had been ninety-four escapes when the average population was 1,930.

In 1920 when there was an average of one thousand, three hundred sixty-four inmates the prison had seventy-two escapes and in 1930 with two thousand, two hundred eighty-two as average population the escapes numbered seventy-six. The writer in discussing the escape rate with employees who were at the institution under the old system has learned that they notice very little change in the number of escapes since the new program began. It does appear, however, in the first year of its operation the escape rate increased considerably. In that year many new employees were hired and most of them
began working with little or no training. In 1953 the institution was still using a number of inmate guards. These guards had lost the authority they had once held over other prisoners and this situation brought about some disorganization within their ranks. Even though they had lost their authority they were still depended upon to a degree to maintain custody of other prisoners.

The situation just described brought about a certain amount of laxity on the part of both paid guards and inmate guards. There was also a lack of administrative control brought on by the two factors just mentioned, and the institution was not organized to cope with the many problems of custody and discipline.

As the institution neared completion some of the prisoners were slightly disturbed emotionally over the anticipation of moving. They did not know just what to expect in the new quarters and many of them were afraid of greater regimentation and more strict discipline. Those who were hoping for an opportunity to escape felt as if they must make their attempt before the new prison was occupied for they would have no chance to do so later.

The administration feels that the situations just described have been contributing factors to the unnecessarily large number of escapes during the past three years. With the completion of the new prison this year and it
NUMBER ON RECORD AT LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY ON JUNE 30 OF EACH YEAR.

FIGURE 14 - GRAPH SHOWING TRENDS IN THE INMATE POPULATION AT LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY.
being occupied completely by June 1, 1956, it is anticipated that the escape rate for the year of 1956 will be reduced considerably. The year 1957 should bring about a still greater reduction of the escape rate for by then all medium and maximum custody prisoners will be working inside well guarded compounds.

As has already been stated there is one element of the inmate population at Angola who is, for the most part, not too well pleased with the new program. This would include the group of inmate guards and other inmate "politicians" who are being subjected to more rigid regimentation and discipline than they had formerly experienced. Those who were formerly inmate guards no longer have authority over other prisoners. They are now subjected to the same kind of prison regulations as their fellow inmates. "Prisoner politicians" who stood in well with their officers (commonly called "free men" or "bosses") formerly had access to food and other commodities which they could and did sell to other prisoners. These and other rackets carried on by the "politicians" and strong-arm men, as were described in chapter four, have been broken up by the new system much to their disappointment and disapproval. This group represents between fifteen and twenty per cent of the inmate population.

One of the factors most noticeable about the prisoners' reaction to the new program has been the change in
the attitude of some of the prisoners who had served time at the institution under both the old and the new system. For many years they had heard talk of better treatment, new quarters, and rehabilitation and had seen little improvement made. These inmates did not actually believe that the practices of giving some prisoners authority over others, selling soft jobs, selling food, and using brutality would ever cease at Angola. The fact that these changes did actually take place has certainly made an impact upon the thinking of most of the prisoners who have since had a taste of better treatment.

There have been complaints by one group of prisoners other than inmate guards and inmate politicians previously mentioned. They come from some of the men who have been admitted to the institution since the new program has been in operation and have not had a taste of discipline under the "bat" and have not been subjected to other forms of brutality. An old timer who had served almost half of his entire life at the penitentiary recently told the writer, referring to an inmate strike, "Them guys don't know what they are beefing about. They should have been here when it was really rough." This statement seems to be characteristic of the thinking of many of the older prisoners who have lived under the old system and the new system.
Since there is no yard stick by which accurate measurement of the attitudes of the prison population at any given time can be taken, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions as to prisoner reaction to the new program. The management at the prison feels that an actual sampling of the inmate feeling toward the changes at this time would not serve any good purpose because of a psychological effect it might have on the prison population. Out of more than one hundred inmates interviewed by the writer who were familiar with both the old and the new system only one prisoner, who had been an inmate guard under the old system, openly stated that he would prefer to return to the old system. No doubt there are some other former inmate guards and inmate politicians who would again like to hold the status they once held and enjoy the special privileges which were permitted.

REACTION OF THE PRISON EMPLOYEES TO THE NEW PROGRAM

A truly objective analysis of the employees' reaction to the new Louisiana penitentiary is not considered feasible by the writer at this time. One reason for this is that the number of employees has more than doubled since the new program began and most of the employees are new. Another is that many of the persons employed in July, 1952, have since
separated from the institution for one reason or another. A third and more important reason why an analysis is difficult is that the writer, being himself an employee of the institution, is not in a position to poll other employees regarding their attitudes about the new program. Therefore any remarks pertaining to employee reaction to the new program are, of a necessity, generalizations.

When the new penitentiary program was instituted there was no wholesale firing of personnel. There were some employees who were illiterate, some who were too old, and some who were not physically fit to become a part to the new program. A few were fired because of their records of brutality and others resigned because they did not feel they could live up to what was expected of them. At the time of this writing, however, no less than thirty-five employees are still at the institution who were there prior to May, 1952. These chose to remain with the institution regardless of whether or not they were in accord with the new methods of operations. Some, however, by their actions, indicate that they are in disagreement with the methods presently used. Others who were skeptical at first have indicated to the management that they have since approved of the changes in procedure. Of these thirty-five employees there are also some who have shown little concern and have been apathetic toward the new program.
In discussing the attitude of the employees it should be pointed out here that at the time of this writing a new state administration has been elected and will take office May, 1956. Even though constitutional civil service has been instituted in Louisiana it is still new and has not yet encountered a test of administration change. A number of employees are uncertain about their jobs and some of them feel that there is no doubt but that the warden and a number of other high ranking prison officials will be replaced by the new administration. Some will be pleased, others disappointed, if such changes are made. Regardless of their approval or disapproval there does exist among a large number of employees a feeling of uncertainty as to just what the future holds for them in their work at the prison.

REACTION OF THE LOUISIANA PUBLIC TO THE NEW PROGRAM

In general the citizens of Louisiana who have shown an interest in civil affairs have indicated that they approve of the new penal system and are in favor of continuing it. During the past three years there have been civic groups, religious groups, and school groups from every section of the state visit the institution. The writer has been privileged to escort many of these groups on tours of the prison
and has observed their reaction to what they saw. Almost without exception the comments made by these groups indicated that they are overwhelmingly pleased with the program.

Indications are that the public today is showing a greater interest in Louisiana's penal institutions than has been the case at any time previously. The warden and other officials of the institution have been invited on many occasions to speak in various cities and towns throughout the state about the penal program. A Lion's club in one of the state's major cities has pledged itself to make an appeal to the legislature this year for a statute which would permit the institution to pay a wage to inmates who merit it.

Since the new program began the governor has sponsored three special days two of which were referred to as "press days" and the other as "dedication day." On each of these days members of the press, members of the state legislature and on the dedication day members of the clergy throughout the state were invited to inspect the facilities and observe the changes being made. All these special days, particularly the dedication day, drew large groups of visitors. Leading daily newspapers in at least five of the state's seven largest cities have given support to the new
Old bathing facilities shown above were to serve three hundred men. The new showers shown in the lower photo serve sixty men in the medium custody section. (The same type of showers are also used in the minimum custody dormitories.)
prison program through their editorials.¹

Support given the institution by the Louisiana legislature has certainly given indications of its approval by that governmental body. Every major appropriation requested of the legislature since 1952 by the Department of Institutions has been granted with overwhelming approval in both houses of the legislature. In addition to the eight million dollars appropriated for the purpose of constructing the prison a sizeable increase in the operating budget of the institution was also approved making possible the funds with which the many new staff members were employed.

REACTION OF THE PRISON OFFICIALS OUTSIDE OF LOUISIANA TO THE NEW INSTITUTION

At least four of the nation's top prison experts have visited Angola since the new prison neared completion. Among them was Austin H. MacCormack who is director of the Osborne Association (national organization for the improvement of prison administration) and is presently a professor of criminology at the University of California. He is also a former

¹Clippings of newspaper editorials were observed in Warden Sigler's personal file which were favorable to the new program from the following newspapers: New Orleans Item, New Orleans States, Morning Advocate and State Times (Baton Rouge), Lake Charles American Press, Monroe Morning World, Shreveport Times, Shreveport Journal, and The Times Picayune (New Orleans).
assistant director of the U. S. Bureau of Prisons and a former commissioner of corrections in New York City. Mr. MacCormack who is no doubt one of the foremost prison authorities in the United States was high in his praise for the new prison after he visited the institution and conducted a two day inspection there on August 29 and August 30, 1955. He expressed his views to the effect that there was in the beginning an excellent prison system and that he was "tremendously encouraged" at Angola. Mr. MacCormack believes that the Angola institution is well on its way from one of the nation's worst prisons to "one of the finest." He did warn against politics entering into the operation of the penitentiary and cited this as being the only danger to the new prison program.

Another penologist who spoke well of the new Louisiana institution is James V. Bennett who is the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Mr. Bennett has actually had a part in the planning of the new institution in that he was consulted a number of times by Reed Cozart while the plans were being drawn. Visiting the prison on November 28, 1955, Mr. Bennett stated that the new prison was "unique" and an example to the entire nation. He also stated that the new

*2* Morning Advocate, (Baton Rouge, La.), September 1, 1955.

*3* Ibid.
institution was "an important and significant contribution to penology such as has not been seen in this generation."  

In a letter to the editor of the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate, E. R. Cass, general secretary of the American Correctional Association extended his appreciation on behalf of the association for an editorial supporting the prison program at Angola. Cass, who has for a number of years been associated with the New York penal system, stated that "the tremendous improvement in the Louisiana correctional system marks it as the modern miracle of penology."  

Louisiana, in his opinion, has every right to be proud of her penal program.

Kenyon J. Scudder who is the superintendent of the California institution for men at Chino, under the Youth Authority, has also visited Angola and made favorable comments about the prison. Mr. Scudder spoke to a group of prison supervisory personnel at the penitentiary during his visit in April, 1955, and praised the physical plant of the new institution.

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4State Times, (Baton Rouge, La.), November 28, 1955.  
5Morning Advocate, (Baton Rouge, La.), January 4, 1956.  
6Ibid.
There have also been wardens and other prison authorities from a number of states who have visited the Louisiana penitentiary in recent months and almost without exception they have praised the structure and the economy of the new program and have spoken favorably of the possibilities for the prison to become one of America's best. At a conference of prison wardens and other officials held in New York on February 8, 9, and 10, 1956, the Louisiana institution was given much praise for its accomplishments.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THE FUNCTIONS

In the two preceding chapters the various human relationships existing between prisoners of the Louisiana penitentiary and between inmates and prison employees have been presented as they existed both under the old system and under the new system. The physical facilities of the two prisons were also presented to show their effect on the prisoners and especially in the ways that they relate to the functioning of the prison. For the purpose of comparison and contrast these prisoner relationships and prisoner-employee relationships along with the structure of the prison are being presented in this chapter.

As stated in chapter one, the three main functions
of a prison according to Sutherland are "incapacitation, deterrence, and reform." Consideration must now be given as to whether or not the efficiency has been improved in fulfilling each of these three functions.

**Incapacitation**

No doubt with both the old and the new system this function has been fulfilled to a greater degree of efficiency than have the other two. Generally speaking the old system confined criminals, kept them removed from society, and prevented them from committing other crime. However, there were exceptions. As has been mentioned previously, a number of the prisoners were permitted to have special privileges in that they were not subjected to prison routine to the extent the majority of the prisoners were. Since some prisoners served in somewhat the same capacity as employees such as guarding and supervising other prisoners they enjoyed a relatively unusual amount of freedom for persons incarcerated. Some were permitted to drive penitentiary vehicles unescorted to towns and cities in Louisiana to conduct penitentiary business. Inmate guards were placed on posts outside the compounds of the institution when escaped prisoners were loose. Some prisoners were permitted to fish and hunt both inside and outside of the prison compound without being accompanied by officers.
Furloughs were granted by the governor for periods of thirty to sixty days during which time certain prisoners were permitted to go home and live with their families and the rest of society.

Because of these special privileges which provided a limited amount of freedom to a number of prisoners and also because of the relatively high escape rate existing at the prison it may be said that the prison as it was operated under the old system has not been 100 per cent efficient in removing criminals from society and preventing them from committing other crimes. There is record of crimes having been committed by prisoners out on escape or out on special privileges. Crimes such as murder, sexual perversion, theft, burglary, auto theft, aggravated escape, assault, and sale and use of narcotics have all been committed inside the confines of the prison compound.

Certainly it cannot be said that the new prison system is now or is expected to be completely successful in preventing escapes and preventing crimes from being committed in prison. However, it has been shown in the preceding chapter that more rigid control of prisoners and a more secure prison structure, particularly for medium and maximum custody inmates, can certainly be expected to bring about a substantial reduction in the number of escapes. Closer supervision has been made possible by the new facilities and
by an increased and better qualified staff of prison personnel. Favoritism which was shown under the old system to certain inmates caused tension and ill feeling among the inmate population. Under the new system the practice is to show no favoritism and enforce the regulations on all prisoners alike. This factor is expected to contribute to the matter of reducing the rate of escapes and the rate of crimes being committed in prison by eliminating one of the causes. An improved recreational and leisure time program, educational facilities, classification, better food and better working conditions are also expected to be factors in maintaining better discipline and preventing escapes and vice.

Since the transition period has not yet ended and the new program has not yet been completely established no statistics are available which would indicate beyond any doubt that any greater degree of efficiency is maintained at the institution insofar as incapacitation is concerned. Yet a system which is more in keeping with the facilities and practices recommended by authorities in the field of penology and outlined in chapter two of this study promises a greater degree of efficiency in the fulfillment of this function.

**Deterrence**

Sutherland points out that it is difficult to compare the deterrent effect of prison policies or to isolate the
effect of any prison policy from the effect of arrest and conviction.

It may also be said that even if there were a yardstick by which the efficiency of deterrence could be measured it would be much too early to evaluate the efficiency of the new Louisiana penal system in this respect. Therefore no worthwhile comparison or contrast can be made of the functions of the old and the new systems with respect to deterrence.

Reformation

Penologists and criminologists have not yet devised a truly accurate means of determining the efficiency of the prison in fulfilling the functions of reformation. Like deterrence, the effect of imprisonment on the character of the individual cannot easily be evaluated. For this reason any comparison or contrast of the efficiency of the old and the new prison relating to the matter of reformation must be limited to considerations of what may be expected to result from the changes of program and policy.

The old system as it existed in May, 1952, made no attempt to foster classification of prisoners, or educational or vocational training. As was pointed out previously, the attempts made to establish these essentials of the treatment program had met with little success during the twenty years
prior to 1952. No doubt the lack of adequate facilities and personnel was an important factor in the failure to establish a treatment program.

The new system has provided both facilities and personnel that are expected to maintain a classification program and an educational and vocational organization which will contribute to the functions of reforming criminals. Religious activities and leisure time activities have also been expanded. Greater diversion of labor has brought about greater possibilities of inmates acquiring useful experience while in prison.

In chapter two the various elements of a prison treatment program were emphasized. It was shown that penologists and progressive prison authorities feel that these elements play an important part in the matter of reforming criminals. It is reasonable to assume that if these elements are of value to the rehabilitation of criminals the function of reform should be improved with the operation of the new prison since they are provided for in its operations.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF OTHER FACTORS

There is need for some comparison and contrast to be made in this study between living conditions of the two prison systems. Society expects that even in prisons certain standards of human decency should be maintained. In figures
A contrast is shown between the old Louisiana prison facilities and the new. Purpose of the structures existing in the two systems is the same, namely to provide living quarters for the inmate population. Yet these photographs present a contrast which would indicate that a higher level of living can be maintained with the new facilities. These new improved conditions may certainly be expected to fulfill to a greater extent the state's moral obligations to society insofar as the principal of human decency is concerned.

Establishment of civil service in Louisiana has brought about a change in the method in selecting of personnel for the prison. Under the old system there were no established qualifying requirements to be met in the selection of employees. Because of the fact that inmate guards were used to maintain custody there were very few employed guards. The new system, eliminating inmate guards, has made it necessary for the security force to be increased several times. Qualification requirements have been established under the civil service system which require that applicants for the position of correctional officer (guard) pass a written examination designed to evaluate his general knowledge and his ability to adjust to the duties of the position sought. It should be pointed out that these requirements are not as high as they should be to provide
personnel capable of performing the duties of correctional officers; yet they are better than no requirements at all. Even with these requirements the prison has found it difficult to employ enough correctional officers.

All new employees of the prison are required to attend training classes administered by the institution's personnel training officer. At the present time these classes are much too brief, but the institution does plan to broaden the personnel training program in the future.

Methods of release under the new program are, for the most part, the same as they were under the old system. The only major change has been in the administration of the parole system. Legislative Act 162 of 1952 established the parole board under the Department of Public Welfare, and created a five member parole board which includes the commissioner of public welfare, or his duly appointed representative, the attorney general, or his duly appointed representative, and three other members appointed by the governor for a term to run concurrently with the term of the governor. There have been no major changes in rules governing parole and parole eligibility.

SUMMARY

In the five previous chapters to this thesis the writer has attempted to point out first a need for a new
penitentiary and a reformatory in Louisiana and also the transformation of the institution from an old outmoded system of prison farm camps to a new and modern centralized penitentiary. In this chapter the reaction of this program to all parties concerned has been emphasized, and a comparison and contrast of the two systems have been made.

If any conclusions are to be drawn from this study of the Louisiana prison system they are: (1) that criminologists and penologists have, through many years of experience and study, devised a reasonably efficient plan for the operation of the modern American prison, which was presented in chapter two of this study, (2) that there was too great a contrast between this recommended plan and the old Angola prison, as was described in chapter four, for a high degree of efficiency to be maintained at the Louisiana institution, (3) that the new prison at Angola compares favorably with the recommended plan and may be expected to fulfill the functions of a prison to a higher degree of efficiency.
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AUTobiography
James Wayne Allgood is the only child of Dorsey Stanley and Anna Hammock Allgood. He was born on October 18, 1921, at Summerfield, Louisiana. His parents lived at Homer, Louisiana, until he was three years old. The family then moved to Summerfield where they lived until 1937. Allgood was graduated from high school at Summerfield High School in 1938 and joined his family who was then living at Pineville, Louisiana.

In 1942 Allgood entered Louisiana College at Pineville, Louisiana, and attended for one semester before resigning to enter military service. Upon being rejected for military service he entered defense work at Orange, Texas.

On December 18, 1942, he was married to Deta Bird of Sicily Island, Louisiana. They lived at Orange, Texas, until 1944 when they returned to Louisiana and made their home in Alexandria. He then re-entered Louisiana College and completed his sophomore year in 1945. Because of family obligations his education was again interrupted in that year, but in 1949 he entered Louisiana College for a third time and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in May, 1951, with a sociology major.

Allgood entered graduate school at the Louisiana State
University in June, 1951, to begin working on a Master of Arts degree in sociology. In September, 1952, after having developed an interest in penology while at the university, he accepted the position as director of classification at the Louisiana State Penitentiary and has held that position since that time.

Allgood is the father of a daughter, Judith Elaine, born January 28, 1946.
Candidate: James Wayne Allgood

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: A Sociological Analysis of the Transition of the Louisiana Penal System

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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