Women in Prison: a Study of Social Relationships

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WOMEN IN PRISON: A STUDY OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

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

Charlotte Mae Richardson
B.A., Emory University, 1957
January, 1959
MANUSCRIPT THESSES

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ABSTRACT

During the preceding half century, sociologists have conducted an increasing number of studies of small informal groups; however, few social scientists have studied these phenomena among inmates in prison. Particularly is this true with regard to female inmates. This thesis seeks to present a sociological description of informal inmate groups, their leaders, and the isolates in a women's division of a state prison. It is hoped that the study will provide insight into possible hypotheses and methodological procedures for future research. The conclusions tend to support the findings of other social scientists who have written in this area.

Non-participant observation, structured interviews, informal interviews, statistical reports, and case histories are used to focus attention on the historical background, population characteristics, and formal organization of the prison as they relate to the women's division, and upon leaders, informal groups, and isolates among the inmates.

General findings or conclusions of the study are the following: there are informal groups within each racial division; bi-racial friendships and associations...
are present, but no bi-racial groupings; among the whites the tightly knit groups are more homogeneous with respect to age, educational attainment, marital status, occupation prior to commitment, type of crime, length of sentence, and group participation prior to commitment than are the loosely knit groups; leaders are usually "old timers" serving sentences for narcotics offenses; the isolates among the Negro and white female inmates are generally illiterate or mentally retarded newcomers.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the growth of sociology, shifts in areas of interest develop. One recent trend is the emphasis placed on the informal group. From 1890 until 1890, less than one study a year involved small groups; however, the number of items completed annually in this area has steadily increased. A period extending from 1950 through 1953 yielded an average of 152 published small group studies per year.\(^1\)

For purposes of sociological theory, Charles H. Cooley introduced the concept "primary group."\(^2\) For several decades his conceptualization was ignored. What seemed to be of greater concern to sociologists, as Coser and Rosenberg\(^3\) have pointed out, was the growth of "secondary" groups. When the "primary group" was rediscovered it occurred not as the result of a re-evaluation of Cooley's conceptualization, but as a result of failures of experiments

\(^1\)Fred L. Strodtbeck and A. Paul Hare, "Bibliography of Small Group Research (from 1900 through 1953)," \textit{Sociometry}, 17:110, May, 1954.


based upon other assumptions. Since this rediscovery, the functioning of primary-like groups has been examined in large industrial organizations, military situations, college and university fraternities, business enterprises, and many other areas in which persons interact.

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4For example, Mayo's discovery of the importance of the informal group in industry was an "unanticipated consequence" of experiments which were intended to uncover certain psychological reasons for changes in workers' behavior patterns. When the psychological explanations proved inadequate, Mayo had to look for other explanations. In this process he rediscovered the importance of the primary-like group. Elton Mayo, The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933); Elton Mayo and George P. Lombard, "Teamwork and Labor Turnover in the Aircraft Industry of Southern California," Business Research Studies, 32, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, 1944.


with one another, but very little has been written about the functioning of the informal group within the prison environment.\footnote{Lloyd E. Ohlin believes that the limited amount of sociological research in the correctional field may be attributed to the general lack of acquaintance on the part of sociologists with the research potentialities in the correctional field and their anticipated difficulties of acquiring access to correctional materials for research purposes. He stresses that the paucity of sociological research in the field cannot be attributed to a lack of theory or methodology because these exist in a form directly applicable to correctional problems. \textit{Sociology in the Field of Corrections}, Russell Sage Foundation (Pennsylvania: The William Fell Company, 1956), p. 54.}

\textbf{Purpose and Scope of the Study}

The purpose of this study is: (1) to examine the extent of informal group life among women inmates in the female section of a state prison; (2) to describe and compare the characteristics of the discovered groups and their members; (3) to determine whether there are leaders among the inmates and within the groups and to describe their characteristics; (4) to ascertain the presence of isolates among the members of the inmate social system and (5) to compare the conclusions with results of other studies.

Studies of small groups and large organizations should be undertaken in conjunction with one another. As William Foote Whyte states, "There is no point to studying the overall organizational structure unless we can trace out its..."
impact upon particular individuals and groups. Nor is there any point in studying the small group as if it operated in a vacuum." With these views in mind, the present writer studied the small group structure of female inmates as it operates within the formal organization of the entire institution.

Cooley believed that the individual becomes socialized and that human nature develops in primary groups as individuals engage in face-to-face contacts. These intimate associations, psychologically, lead to a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. . . . the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a "we"; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which "we" is a natural expression.

For Cooley, the family, the play group of children, and the neighborhood or community group of elders are the most

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12 Cooley, op. cit., p. 23.
important spheres of primary group associations and cooperation; however, these are not the only face-to-face contacts.\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, he relates the primary group to the larger society.

Primary groups are primary in the sense that they give the individual his earliest and completest experience of social unity, and also in the sense that they do not change in the same degree as the more elaborate relations, but form a comparatively permanent source out of which the latter are ever springing. Of course they are not independent of the larger society, but to some extent reflect its spirit.\textsuperscript{14}

Social unity of the primary group, for Cooley, is always a differentiated and usually a competitive unity admitting of self-assertion and various appropriative passions, rather than a unity of mere harmony and love. However, these passions tend to come under the discipline of a common spirit.\textsuperscript{15}

The informal group, like Cooley's primary group, consists of individuals who usually engage in face-to-face contacts, but unlike the primary group, the informal group is not mainly developed through family and community contacts but emerges naturally in all types of environments and

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., pp. 23 and 24.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 26 and 27.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 23.
social situations to fulfill personality needs of the individuals.  

In the prison, the informal group has been conceived of as a collectivity of prisoners who possess a common body of knowledge and interest sufficient to produce an understanding and solidarity which is characterized by a we-feeling, sentimental attachment, and unanimity, and which allows, at the same time, elements of competition and resistance.

A study of this kind has several implications. It is expected to provide additional information to the growing body of knowledge on the informal group. Moreover, sociological understanding of the functioning interrelations existing among social groups within a prison is essential for the intelligent administration of this social structure. While the natural process of informal group formation within the prison cannot be thwarted, it may be guided. Rehabilitation problems may be manipulated wisely around the dynamic functioning of these informal groups.

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19 Ibid., p. 657.
According to the differential association theory of criminal behavior, persons become criminals principally because they have been relatively isolated from groups whose behavior patterns (including attitudes, motives, and rationalizations) are anticriminal or because their residence, employment, social position, native capacities, or something else has brought them into relatively frequent association with the behavior patterns of criminal groups. If the entire group in prison can be convinced of the members' need for change, the group itself becomes a source of pressure for change. This eliminates the need of inducing criminals to become members of pre-established anticriminal groups. If the subculture cannot be induced to change, the inmate is likely to exhibit two sets of attitudes and behavior, one characteristic of the agency or person trying to reform him, the other of the subculture. It is important for those who are interested in institutional life as a means of rehabilitation to remember that values, beliefs, and systems of intimate personal relations must be considered


in the program if it is to be successful.\textsuperscript{22}

In setting up and administering institutional policy and in considering the problem of reformation, it is therefore important to understand (1) the function of inmate groups, (2) the relationships between these groups and the formal personnel groups, and (3) the social relations of the members of the inmate groups. A study of informal groups may also help to reveal strengths and weaknesses in the formal organization since the formal organization, at least to some extent, determines the kinds of informal groups which emerge.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Conceptual Framework: Definitions of Terms}

Sociological analysis of inmate relations requires that the basic concepts to be employed be named and defined.

\textbf{Informal social group.} An "informal social group" consists of two or more persons possessing established patterns of social interaction, similar social attitudes, social values, and group loyalties, mutual interests and

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{23}For a thorough treatment of the relationship between the formal and informal social system in industrial settings, see Roethlisberger and Dickson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 525-562.
\end{flushright}
the will to cooperate in the performance of a natural function. The groups may range in membership from two or three to twenty-five or more. The "informal group" may be designated as a "natural group" because it emerges naturally in all types of environments and social situations to fulfill personality needs not satisfied by the "formal social system."

**Formal social system.** A "formal social system" is a pattern of human relationships spelled out in explicit rules set down in constitutions, established precedents, charters of incorporation and directives. The instruments governing the interpersonal relationships of members are impersonal, formal, deliberate, rational, and planned.

Within the prison this "formal social system" is referred to as the "prison social system."

**Prisoner or inmate social system.** The informal social groups among the inmates are characterized by an extremely high rate of interaction between members who are set off by sharply defined interests and sentiments from prison personnel. This social system has "evolved a complex of adaptational processes with which inmates attempt to cope.

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with the major problems of institutional living." This
social system is defined as the "inmate" or "prisoner social
system."

**Informal social system.** A combination of elements
of interaction between the "prison social system" and the
"prisoner social system" form the "informal social system." The patterns of interaction within this system may circum-
vent the official patterns, rearrange or change the intent
of the official rules or they may strengthen the "prison
social system." 27

**Status.** Throughout this study, the term "status"
is used to designate the position occupied by a person
relative to other persons in a group. 28 In any relation-
ship pattern certain persons assume positions of leadership;
others are relegated to subordinate statuses. Obviously,
since status refers to position within a group, a person

26 Lloyd W. McCorkle and Richard Korn, "Resocial-
ization Within Walls," *Annals of the American Academy of

27 See Roethlisberger and Dickson, *op. cit.*, p. 559. See also Gresham Sykes, "The Corruption of Authority and

28 "Status" and "role" are used as defined by Ralph
Company, 1936), pp. 113 & 114.
has as many statuses as the groups to which he belongs. In prison, for example, the inmate has a status in his work group and in his informal inmate group. He also occupies a status in relation to the statuses occupied by others in the total prison social system.

Role. The term "role" is used to designate the behavior expected of a person occupying a specific status position. Obviously again, since a person occupies as many statuses as the groups to which he belongs, he also has a number of roles to play. For example, certain behavior is expected of the inmate who is a leader in an informal group. He may be expected to make the major decisions for the group. On the other hand, the same person may be expected to be subservient and an acceptor of decisions as far as his status as a prisoner in the total prison system is concerned.

Each role is associated with certain other elements in the social system. Roles determine the rights and duties, and privileges and responsibilities of individuals as well as the lines of communication for the formal social system.

The preceding terms are the basic concepts employed in this study. Other concepts will be defined in the contexts in which they are employed.

Review of Selected Literature

The present study has for its general background descriptive and analytical reports of certain social scientists
who have been concerned with informal patterns of human interaction. Since 1920 the number of these studies on the small group has grown steadily. From 1920 through 1929, approximately 11 selections were published each year; from 1930 through 1939, the average number of items grew to 21 per year; from 1940 through 1944, the increase was to 31 annually; from 1945 through 1949 an average of 55 items was written each year; and during the next four years, 152 items were published each year. Most of these studies have dealt with the informal group in community and institutional life. However, little has been written on the functioning and importance of informal groups within the prison system, and only one available source discusses the group phenomenon in relation to women inmates.

This review of the literature is divided into two sections. The first is devoted to general literature on informal groups in institutional and community life, the second to literature on social relations in the penal

29 Strodtbeck and Hare, op. cit., p. 110.

30 These studies suggest important theoretical and methodological frameworks for the study of informal groups in other situations. Ohlin, op. cit., p. 56.

31 The writer reached this conclusion as a result of a thorough review of the literature on the informal group in the prison environment. A similar conclusion was reached by Lloyd E. Ohlin on the basis of the literature survey he conducted under the auspices of the Russell Sage Foundation. Op. cit., pp. 0, 11, 57, and 58.
institution.

1. General Literature on Informal Groups in Institutional and Community Life

Reference was made earlier to the re-emergence of the informal group as a focal point of sociological studies. Most of these studies have been concerned with employer-employee relations, military morale, and social mobility.32

Elton Mayo,33 on the basis of his studies at Western Electric, early in the 1930's, emphasized the inadequacy of biological and psychological explanations of human behavior. The studies reported by Roethlisberger and Dickson,34 added additional evidence to the hypothesis that the informal group exerted a tremendous control on the worker and his performance of duty. These social groups demanded conformity to group definitions and expectations in regard to customs, duties, routines, and even rituals. It was not the improvements in the physical plant which led to increased production but the attitudes of the workers in the work groups.

A technique for showing the relationships among individuals in the same social system was presented in 1934 by

33Mayo, op. cit.
34Roethlisberger and Dickson, op. cit.
Moreno, who introduced the sociometric method. This technique, based on an individual's choices and rejections of others, graphically presents positive and negative relationships between members of a specific group.

In the years following these studies, several researchers reported on the importance of the informal group in family and community life. Arensberg and Kimball concluded that the small group, as manifested in the family, is an essential element in the establishment of the pattern for Irish rural life. The authors reported that:

The sociological conditions of Irish rural life are those that determined in a system of relationships among persons based upon the Irish form of the family, family subsistence, and familialistic custom. The demographical indices of population cannot be understood except in such a context.

Allison Davis and Burleigh Gardner, in their description of the life of Negroes and whites in a "Deep South" community, examined the family, cliques, and associations which constitute a social structure. They concluded that for these individuals, "These institutions and the sentiments associated with them form the matrix of existence."


William Poote Whyte studied the informal groups as they exist in the Italian slum district of an "Eastern City." In this district, Cornerville, he found that the corner-gang arises out of the habitual association of the members over a long period of time.38

The life of the corner boy proceeds along regular and narrowly circumscribed channels... The stable composition of the group and the lack of social assurance on the part of its members contribute toward producing a very high rate of social interaction within the group. The group structure is a product of these interactions.39

Hollingshead analyzed the way the social system of a Middle Western Corn Belt community organized and controlled the social behavior of high-school students reared in it. He reported that cliques, or small informal groups, play a large part in determining behavior. These groups reflect and help to perpetuate the social class structure of the community.40

In summary, Mayo in the 1930's emphasized the inadequacy of biological and psychological explanations in the work performance of men in industry. A few years later, Roethlisberger and Dickson added additional evidence to the

39Ibid., p. 256.
hypothesis that the informal group exerted a tremendous control on the worker and his performance of duty. Moreno introduced the sociometric technique for studying interpersonal relationships in 1934. After these studies, a number of researchers conducted community studies in divergent places. Among these were Arensberg and Kimball who noted that the small group, as manifested by the family, was essential for the pattern of life of the Irish rural people. In another community study conducted in the southern part of the United States, Davis and Gardner discovered that the informal group and the sentiments associated with it formed the 'matrix of existence.' Similar informal patterns of interaction were observed by Whyte in his study of street corner gangs in an eastern city. In still another section of the country, the Midwest, Hollingshead, in addition to disclosing the importance of informal groups, showed how the social class structure of the community is perpetuated by them.

2. Literature on the Informal Group
   Within the Prison

The only extensive investigation of the prison social structure is Donald Clemmer's *The Prison Community*. Through schedules, questionnaires, individual case studies,

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41 Clemmer, op. cit.
and participant observation, Clemmer discovered that the prison community is not mainly made up of a great number of highly integrated groups in which sentiment, morale, and solidarity exist. In fact, he found that about forty per cent of the prisoners in the male institution studied were not in any way integrated into groups in which strong social relationships exist. He continued:

Another 42 per cent engage in some of the superficial practices of group life, but are not genuinely affiliated with specific groups. About 18 per cent of the inmates are associated with small numbers of other men in combinations which approach in structure and function the primary groups of free society, but in many of these there is a lack of basic cohesion. Clemmer further concluded that the prison primary groups are small in number and range in membership from two to seven members. Length of time in prison is not highly correlated with affiliation with these groups. In fact, it appeared that group ties tend to become looser the longer the person is in prison. Clemmer noted that those who enter the prison primary groups are younger, somewhat more intelligent and more criminalistic than men who do not become affiliated with groups. An explanation for these characteristics of group members might be the extended process of prisonization which Clemmer does not investigate. "Prisonization in its

__42Ibid., p. 129.  
43Ibid.  
44Ibid., p. 129.__
larger sense is accompanied by restlessness and an incapacity for sustained activity." When the prisonized individual is confronted with sustained and intimate contacts of long duration which have the effects of diverting his self-preoccupation and disrupting his reverie states, he finds these contacts impossible for him to maintain.

Whereas Clemmer found that only sixty per cent of the individuals in the male institution he studied affiliated in any way in the small group structure, Harper, in the only study of the social structure of a women's prison, discovered that almost all of the inmates were integrated into small group structure. She concluded that the informal organization is a total integrated system. This informal system is composed of the relationships between two major factions. Staff personnel, inmates, and "fringers" form the three levels within each faction. The members at each level have different roles and functions. This leads to differences in social and cultural behavior. These differences are overcome through connecting channels on which interaction or communication between different levels proceed. She explained this in the following words:

45 Ohlin, op. cit., p. 39.
46 Ibid., pp. 38 and 39.
48 By the term "fringer" Harper refers to an individual who violates the limited amount of deviation from the norms which the rigid group standards uphold. Ibid., p. 181.
What the individual hears or reports pertains to and affects her behavior. In turn, her behavior has effects not only within her level of the faction but also within the total faction and the total informal system. The high frequency of interaction between members of the different levels and among the individuals within a level enforces a strong collectiveness. From this strong cohesiveness arise rigid group standards that govern behavior of the members as to their places in the faction and the total system.  

Furthermore, certain factors within the prison influence this system of informal relationships. Physical limitations determine the possible activities and interactions. Existing class distinctions, customs, and beliefs influence the pattern and position of life of each individual. Formal activities bring together and provide the subsistence of its people.  

Five types of sub-systems in the informal system were discovered by Harper. These comprised the relationships between the two factions, the relationships between different levels of a faction, the relationships within a level of a faction, the relationships of the "fringers," and the relationships of rejectees.  

Harper also expressed the view that prison activity and conditions cannot be explained or understood apart from the configurational pattern which they form.

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49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., p. 183.
51 Ibid., p. 184.
52 Ibid., p. 181.
In a later report, Harper examines the concept of the "fringer" in detail. She discusses the following three types of "fringers": (1) the "newcomer," (2) the "betrayed," and (3) the "disorganized personality" type. The roles these "fringers" play have three major effects. "Pringers" threaten the solidarity of the factions and thus of the prison life by violating faction norms. At the same time they tend to reinforce the integration of these groups by re-emphasizing to these factions group standards and the need of avoiding those who do not abide by them. The "fringers" also help to lessen the antagonism between factions by acting as counter-irritants. "Fringers" have the same rights as those within a faction since there are two factions with divergent interests competing with one another for power.53

Outside of Clemmer's thorough analysis of a prison social system and Harper's treatment of the social system in a woman's state prison, there have been only a few brief articles concerning the prison social structure and informal group relationships within this 'involuntary environment.' Authors who have discussed these phenomena include Norman S.

Hayner, Ellis Ash, Lloyd W. McCorkle and Richard Korn, and Morris G. Caldwell.

Hayner, as head of the Interim Committee on Penal and Charitable Institutions for the state of Washington in 1941, placed competent graduate students in three institutions. He compiled the findings of these investigators. "In general, as far as the inmate community is concerned, the girls, boys, young men, and older men, in that order, show increasing crystallization in social structure."

Hayner and Ash emphasize the importance of the 'natural group' among prison inmates. They state that frequently a 'first-timer' from a conventional background, fearing that he will endanger his early parole opportunities, hesitates to engage actively in conniving. However, he soon discovers that he jeopardizes his position more by maintaining this attitude than by relaxing and joining the inmate group.

Hayner and Ash point out the differences within the 'community council' in the types of leaders as they appear

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to vary with the prevailing type of administration. "If control is lax and violations of regulations are openly permitted, the hardened racketeers or 'rangatangs' become the politicians." On the other hand, if the administration holds strong control the trouble makers are under close supervision and do not have an opportunity to work themselves into key jobs within the institution. In this case

they do not have the freedom of movement and association that goes with these jobs. The better-adjusted boys with the best records receive the favored jobs. By virtue of these positions, they become the 'town fathers' of the prison community and the leading connivers.61

McCorkle and Korn suggest that the major problems with which the inmate social system attempts to cope are the devastating effects of internalizing and converting social rejection into self-rejection.62 The adaptive inmate can escape the psychologically devastating effects of self-rejection by being a member of an inmate group which defines him as a person.

Caldwell compiled material obtained by various authors from five mid-western and southern prisons. He discusses the dynamic relationships between the informal and formal social structure of the prison community. Since the

60 Ibid., p. 367.
61 Ibid., pp. 367 and 368.
informal, 'natural group' emerges in all types of environment, Caldwell believes that a large part of the population in prisons is organized into small, informal groups based on common interests and the performance of some natural functions. He delineates eleven types of informal groups and states that both achieved and assigned status have a part in the informal status hierarchy. According to Caldwell, the positions of leadership are assigned to long-term recidivists. The social values of the unreformed criminals appear to be used as values for organizing groups. Caldwell is of the opinion that the prison administrator must seek to construct policies and to act with the knowledge that these 'natural groups' are functioning strongly in the environment.

In addition to the above-mentioned articles, several authors have contributed to the body of knowledge on the prison social structure through their partially related studies.

Weinberg in his study of the dynamic social aspects of a prison social structure considers the results of the conflict process "(1) upon the prison's informal social structure and (2) upon the opposing ideologies of the inmate and official groups." He shows that in a modified form

the conflict between the criminal and law-enforcing groups persists in the prison despite the formal administrative setup. Reciprocal conceptions as well as personal relationships express this conflict. "The officials negate and degrogate the inmates, while the inmates deride and condemn both the officials and the whole penal policy." 64 If individuals do not conform to the group representations they are considered variants and subject to pressures and controls of their respective stratum. 65

Schrag, in his sociometric examination of leadership in prison inmate groups, is concerned with an important part of the structure of the informal group. He seeks to identify the general characteristics of leaders and to find out the kinds of inmates most likely to be influenced by certain types of leaders. He reports that in general, factors related to criminal career and institutional adjustment are significantly associated with leadership while social and economic background traits are not. He concludes that leaders as a group do not differ from other inmates with respect to age, occupation, educational attainment, ethnic status, marital status, or scores on intelligence tests. 66

64 Ibid., p. 725.
65 Ibid., p. 726.
Similar length of sentence and propinquity also play a part in leader selection, according to Schrag, who concludes that:

leadership in prison is exercised by the criminally mature inmates who are serving long sentences for crimes of violence. Status of an inmate is ordinarily enhanced by acts of violence within the institution, by homosexuality, or by psychoneurotic or psychopathic behavior. Prison culture is organized around the values of its most persistent and least improvable members. It stimulates aggressive antisocial behavior and minimizes the status of the naive or accidental offender. Socialization in prison means, for many inmates, the acquisition of skills and attitudes of the habitual criminal.67

Sykes, one of America's foremost criminologists, indicates the influence of informal factors in these words: "In the exercise of authority, the deep and pervasive schism which is supposed to separate the captors and captives is actually bridged at innumerable points in the maximum security prison."68

This corruption is often attributed to bribery, but bribery is usually unnecessary, for far more subtle influences are at work which tend to destroy the authority of the cellblock guard. Some of these influences are friendship, reciprocity, and default.69

In summary, Clemmer, Harper, Caldwell, Hayner and Ash, and McCorkle and Korn acknowledge the presence of informal inmate groups in prisons. Harper and Caldwell believe that almost all inmates are integrated into the informal groups; whereas, Clemmer finds that only about sixty per cent of the male prisoners he studied participated in the groups.

Clemmer reports that the younger, more criminalistic inmates tend to affiliate with groups more readily than did the older inmates serving long sentences. Harper in her study of female inmates found that the physical setting limits the possible interactions of inmates and that the existing class distinctions, customs, and beliefs influence the patterns and position of life of each individual.

Hayner and Ash, and McCorkle and Korn emphasize the importance of an inmate's participation in informal groups. The former have concluded that an inmate jeopardizes his position among administrators and inmates by not participating in the informal groups. The latter point out the psychological advantages the inmate gains from holding membership status in an informal group.

With regard to leadership status, Hayner and Ash are of the opinion that the type of inmate leader varies with different administrations. According to Schrag the criminally mature inmates serving long terms usually become leaders and their leadership status is enhanced by acts of
violence, homosexual behavior, and psychopathic behavior.

Sykes and Weinberg present diverse opinions on the relationships between inmates and prison employees. Weinberg acknowledges a schism between these two groups; whereas, Sykes expresses the opinion that the gap has been bridged between these two groups by friendship, reciprocity, and default.

Methodology

The present study was conducted at a Southern penal institution in which a separate division is maintained for women inmates. For reasons to be explained later, the identity of the institution is not disclosed. In fact, fictitious names are given to all persons and places related to the prison. The name given to the prison is "Sheldon." The women's division is referred to as the "Larks."

Sheldon is located about sixty miles from Big Town, the state capital. At the time of the study it housed 3,373 men and 100 women. Only female prisoners were subjects of this investigation.

70 This arrangement, to be found in 42 other states, is not considered to be good and "may too readily degenerate morally as well as physically." Lois Higgins and Edward Fitzpatrick, Criminology and Crime Prevention (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1958), p. 288.
1. Sources of Data

The observations and interpretations herein recorded are based on information gathered from the following diverse sources:

1. Non-participant observation. During a period of four weeks in the fall of 1958, the investigator spent four days a week at the prison and was able to observe the inmates in their physical and social surroundings. The observations were recorded daily.

2. Structured interviews. All of the white female inmates (except two) and thirty per cent of the Negro female inmates were formally interviewed. The questionnaire used for this purpose was designed to elicit information on the existence and functioning of informal groups.71 A copy of the questionnaire is reproduced in the Appendix.

3. Informal interviews. In addition to the formal interviews, the investigator held informal discussions with administrators, inmates, and representatives of the state agency charged with the responsibility of maintaining an effective penal system. These informal discussions were intended to supplement the information obtained through observation and the formal interview process.

71Questionnaires may often tap much information which is not apparent to the observer of interaction at any given time. Matilda White Riley and others, "Interpersonal Orientations in Small Groups: A Consideration of the Questionnaire Approach," American Sociological Review, 19:716, December, 1954.
4. Statistical reports. Records presenting factual data about the inmates are compiled by the prison and the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau. These provided historical information concerning the inmate's crime, date of commitment, years sentenced, age at commitment, year of birth, place of residence, size of community, race, marital status, educational grade obtained, number of previous commitments, type of admission, juvenile commitments, and religion. This information had been transferred onto IBM cards from information collected by the prison classification board in their initial interviews with the inmates.

5. Case histories. A limited number of case histories were obtained from a former Sheldon psychologist. These were used to supplement the background data for certain inmates. The socio-psychological case histories included data collected through interviews with the inmates in addition to information obtained from the inmate's family through mail questionnaires.

2. Limitations of Data

Although all scientific inquiry is based upon observation some might argue that unless observation in such studies as this can be of the participant variety, it is completely inadequate. While it is true that participant observation may provide social-psychological insights that might not be otherwise gained, non-participant observation
may also be of great value provided that the observer is a serious student of social relationships who has received training in the use of conceptual tools which promote the interpretation of what is observed. 72 The important question is not whether participant or non-participant observation should be used, but rather is the observer trained to observe sociologically.

One should be aware of areas of distortion in the questionnaire technique when it is employed in the prison situation. Among these are the general attitudes of the 'prison community' which include a strong attitude of non-cooperation with the administration, the emotionally thwarting nature of the prison environment which often leads the inmate to seek to repair his ego through the interview, the general tensions which may lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretation with exaggerated importance being attached to small things by the inmates, and the inmate's valid fears of leakage of confidential information. 73

72 In field work "by familiarizing the student with the history of the discipline, with the principles of scientific method, with broad comparative knowledge of cultures the world over, and with a knowledge of the mistakes which have been made in the past, we automatically reduce the probability of error." Oscar Lewis, "Controls and Experiments in Field Work," Anthropology Today, A. L. Kroeber, editor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 457.

The investigator, aware of these areas of questionnaire distortion, tried to control them in various ways. She made every effort not to become identified with any particular person or group at the prison. The only explanation for her study which the interviewer presented to the inmates was her sociological interest in group behavior. She assured the inmates that the study was not concerned with the identity of individuals or the prison and that she would disclose the names of neither. Several of the inmates stated at the outset of the interview that they were afraid they would have to refuse to answer certain questions to which might be personal or harm themselves or others. This fear was to some degree alleviated by repeated assurances of inmate and institutional anonymity. Consequently, during the actual interview very few inmates directly or indirectly refused to answer questions. Those questions which a few failed to respond usually concerned the existence of inmate leaders and the actions of free personnel involving "throwing their weight around" and "picking on the inmate."

Some questions were used in the interview to check on the validity of the statistical material gathered by the prison and the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau. In

74 "Free Personnel" or "free people" are the civilian employees of the prison.
almost every case, the data pertaining to the inmate's educational attainments, marital status, and religion as obtained from the bureau and prison were similar to those recorded by the interviewer.

The establishment of rapport is of utmost importance in studies involving responses of individuals to an interviewer. In the prison situation this is especially important. Early in the interviewing, the investigator realized that the girls who attended the inmate school were sympathetic with her purpose and wanted to help her. Therefore, as the study progressed, she used this knowledge of the feelings of the inmates to facilitate the establishment of rapport. Personal questions concerning the inmate's crime, date of commitment, and length of sentence (which many inmates prefer to discuss with only their closest friends) were secured from the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau files prior to actual interviewing. Not questioning the inmates on these personal facts aided the process of establishing rapport. Even though the inmate was assured anonymity for the purposes of this thesis, the investigator knew the identity of each inmate and was able to compare background data with responses to questionnaires. The investigator realized, of course, the possibility that even if the inmates agreed to be interviewed, some of the answers might not indicate what the inmate actually thought or felt, but would indicate rather what the inmate thought
the investigator expected to hear.

Several of the items on the reports from the State Institutional Coordinating Board turned out to be unreliable. These were discarded or used only for illustrative purposes.

The socio-psychological case studies were interesting sources which supplemented information gained by other methods and provided the interviewer with additional insights into the background of different inmates, but they were so limited in number that their true value to the study is difficult to ascertain.

3. Problems

Since all of the white female inmates (except two) were interviewed, no sampling problems arose. However, in the case of the Negro inmates a random sample was taken from an alphabetical listing which included all of their names. When checked with information provided by the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau and the prison records, this sample showed a proportional representation similar to that

75 The sample included every third inmate selected from an alphabetical listing of the last names of the female Negro inmates. To allow an equal chance for each inmate to be chosen, the first three names on the list were written on slips of paper and one of the slips was drawn to obtain the first name for the sample. From this point on every third name was selected.
of the total female Negro inmate population on the following items: (1) religion, (2) work assignments, and (3) crimes committed. In addition to these inmates, two other Negro inmates were formally interviewed. Particular inmates were selected after certain white inmates and the camp superintendent indicated that they felt these inmates because of their length of incarceration or above average educational attainments could give keen insights into the patterns of behavior of Negro inmates. The investigator thought that this additional selection of Negro inmates was necessary since many of the other inmates in this group had difficulty in articulating their ideas due to their limited educational and social backgrounds.

As was stated earlier, all of the white female inmates except two were formally interviewed. The two not formally interviewed were extremely dubious about talking with the investigator. However, since both have been at Sheldon for several years and are important inmate leaders with a wealth of knowledge about historical as well as current happenings at the prison, it was necessary to find a way to get information from them. No attempt was made to force them into a formal interview, but at every available opportunity the investigator engaged them in informal discussions. The initial antagonism gradually disappeared and as a result, the investigator obtained greater insights into the prison situation than she would have had she tried to make these
inmates submit to formal questioning.

No previous studies had been conducted among the women inmates at Sheldon and many of the inmates found the interview situation to be a new experience. They were wary of the interview and interviewer. Recent newspaper articles relating to the touchy subject of narcotic violations and "good time" led others to shy from the interviewer about whom they knew nothing. For these reasons, the inmates refused to participate in the pilot study which had been pre-arranged by prison administrators.

An attempt was made to overcome this problem by convincing a respected inmate that the purpose of the study was to learn about group behavior and not to identify or harm the inmates in any way. The inmate discussed each of the questions in the interview schedule with the interviewer and at the conclusion of the discussion assured the investigator that the girls, once the word "got around" that the contemplated study was not being conducted by the administration, by "politicians," or by a newspaper, but rather by a university student, would cooperate. This proved to be the case. No further pilot study was conducted.

The interviewing was begun in an office in the prison administration building. This site was selected after discussions with the prison administrators. The proximity of this office to the work locations of the inmates who were to be interviewed first (the white prison administration
building workers) also made this selection logical. After these inmates were interviewed, arrangements were made to bring white inmates working at the camp to the administration building to be interviewed. It had been suggested by prison administrators that the privilege of leaving the compound and their work would encourage the inmates to cooperate. However, contrary to this view, it appeared that some of the inmates would object to traveling to the administration building. For this reason it was decided to continue the interviewing in the schoolroom at the Larks. The white and Negro inmates who worked at the camp were interviewed in this room. The Negro administration building workers were interviewed in one of the offices at their work location. In no case was a prison administrator present when an interview was conducted.

The main techniques of analysis used in this study are descriptive, comparative, and sociometric. Descriptive techniques are used to present a picture of intra-group interactions. The respondent's views are categorized and described. Comparisons are made among the different groups and between the races. These are related to the characteristics of the total subject population. The categorization and comparisons make it possible to indicate certain tendencies in interaction patterns among the female inmates.

Sociometric diagrams showing friendship choices and informal group alignments are drawn from the information
obtained from the questionnaires and non-participant observations concerning the person's choices of friends. This is presented to give a broad general picture of group affiliations and interaction.

By way of summary, the investigator employed a combination of approaches in her study to gain an insight into the informal group life of the inmates. Each of these techniques of data collection and analyzation has its advantages and disadvantages. When used in conjunction with one another, they present a less distorted picture of the area under investigation. They also serve as checks on the reliability of the conclusions. If the trends obtained through observation are in line with the trends obtained by interviews, it is reasonable to assume that the reported situations actually exist.

Order of Presentation

The purpose of this thesis is reflected in its plan. The chapter to follow is devoted to a brief description of the history of Sheldon with special emphasis on the development of the women's division and an analysis of the present composition of the female inmate population. Next, attention is focused on the formal social structure of the prison. Special reference is made to the formal organization as it relates to the women's division. The discussion then
turns to a consideration of the informal groupings among the female inmates. The final chapter presents the findings of the study and relates them to findings of other social investigations.
CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PENITENTIARY

A comprehensive and detailed historical account of Sheldon is not considered necessary for the purposes of this thesis. However, sufficient historical material is recorded in this chapter to provide a background for an analysis of the current situation.

Origin and Development of Sheldon

The history of Sheldon is largely the story of the transformation of a plantation-type colony characterized by brutality and inhumane treatment of prisoners into a correctional institution considered by many to be among the best in the South.

The penitentiary was originally established in Big Town as a walled prison by an act of the Legislature almost 160 years ago. From the beginning, however, emphasis was placed on the eventual development of prison industries.

A significant step in this direction was taken in 1844 when a Lease System was inaugurated authorizing the Governor to lease the entire establishment for a period of five or more years. By 1848, as a result of an extension of this system, prisoners were being leased to individual
plantation owners, who found this arrangement extremely profitable, although they were required to turn 25 per cent of their profits to the state.

Around the turn of the century, the state purchased seven plantations, including Sheldon, which along with some other property was to become the new site of the penitentiary. Farming activities were expanded in an effort to make the prison completely self-sufficient.

In 1952, after a series of violent mass strikes, riots, and other disturbances which brought to the attention of the public the overcrowding and brutal treatment to which the inmates were being subjected, a newly elected political administration began to reorganize the penal system. A career warden, who had been credited with developing a federal institution in a nearby state into one of the finest prisons in the country, launched the reform. By 1954 a new physical plant consisting of a centralized unit of buildings was ready for operation. Although this was only four years ago, the penitentiary is badly overcrowded at the present time and some of the old camps have been reopened. Many of the problems facing Sheldon stem from this fact.

Women at Sheldon

Although official verification is lacking, it is rumored that a few female inmates had been leased to work on the Sheldon plantation as early as 1900. They are said
to have been confined in camp "D," which was converted into a women's division of the prison when the plantation was purchased by the state.

Camp "D" consisted of several frame buildings. Negro and white inmates were housed in separate units. Another construction served as a recreation hall during the week and as a Negro Protestant church on Sunday. This building was joined to the white tailor shop which was later converted into a white dormitory, housing six inmates. Other units contained the infirmary, the laundry, and the Negro sewing and cutting room. The buildings were located close together and a fence with a guardhouse on each corner encircled the area.

By 1936 there were approximately 117 female inmates in the prison, 18 of whom were white and the remainder Negro. The white girls worked in the camp store and in the non-assembly line tailor shop where they were expected to complete a certain number of articles during a specified time period. These articles included the necessary clothing for the inmate population as well as other cloth articles needed by the institution. Some of the Negro inmates worked in a tailor shop in another building doing the same type of work, others in the laundry cleaning linen for all of the prisoners and the free personnel. Some Negro inmates worked in the fields under the watchful eyes of foremen and guards. The camp tobacco factory was operated by Negro female
inmates. They combined purchased tobacco with that grown on the farm to supply the inmate population with chewing and smoking supplies. Until 1940, a few of the Negro inmates worked as servants in the homes of captains and foremen. In recent years, one of the Negro inmates has cooked for a warden.

One of the matrons and her husband, the camp captain, supported by the inmate guards, had complete responsibility for the women on the farm. The matron supervised the inmates in the laundry, kitchen, and sewing room.

The women's camp underwent few changes between 1936 and 1946. The responsibility for its operation was entrusted to a matron, captain, night man, and Negro and white male inmate guards. The free personnel assigned to the women's division worked eight hour shifts and lived in houses across the road from the camp. The inmates still worked in the kitchen, tailor shop, laundry, and store.

In 1956, four years after the completion of the new main buildings at the penitentiary, the women inmates were transferred to their present living quarters, referred to in this thesis as the Larks.

This women's division has been called the "step-child" of Sheldon by some of the high ranking administrative personnel. There is no definite or comprehensive classification system for the female inmates. Variation in jobs for them are few. If the inmate is white, neat, has a high
school education, and secretarial ability or noticeable talent in clerical fields, she is placed in the administration building of the prison as a secretary, typist, file clerk, or posting clerk. If the inmate is Negro and shows the same qualifications, she is placed in the mail room or the package room. Other Negro girls who are neat, have janitress experience, and know how to conduct themselves in the office situation, work as orderlies in the administration building. One white inmate with secretarial experience is assigned to the administrative office of the women's camp. Other inmates are placed, according to personal requests and requisitions of the free personnel, in the following jobs: both white and colored in the tailor shop, in the dormitories as orderlies, and in the yard; and only colored in the kitchen and laundry.

Generally, little attention has been given to rehabilitation programs in American prisons. As Coulter and Korpi state:

Rehabilitation is being attempted through improved and improving religious activities, academic or vocational education programs, correspondence courses, library services, recreation, and social education.¹

However, as these authors indicate, this approach is inadequate:

Some institutions seem not yet to have awakened to the new concept, the new method, the new function of correctional institutions: to prepare the inmate for re-orientation into society.²

Or in the words of J. V. Bennett, "The very keystone of the whole correctional process is the personnel."³ Bennett realizes that adequate staffing is costly, but he also emphasizes that to prevent an inmate from becoming stultified in his confinement, personnel must study the offender and plan realistically with him for his future.⁴

Rehabilitation attempts for women inmates at Sheldon follow the inadequate approach described by Coulter and Korpi which is noted above. An Inmate Council was organized in 1956. This group arranged concerts at which male inmate bands performed. Movies, sport facilities, fishing and picnic trips, religious services, television and recording equipment, a Dale Carnegie course, incentive pay, an inmate school, and a library have been provided.

The pattern encouraged by Bennett is neglected as far as the women are concerned. The location of the camp, as well as low salaries, make it virtually impossible to maintain adequately trained personnel to work with the inmates. However, prison authorities recognize these difficulties.

²Ibid., p. 615.
⁴Ibid.
Recent suggestions by an administrator included a proposal to move the female inmates to a small camp located in a little community about fifteen miles from Big Town. This move would have several advantages. Professional and civic personnel from the nearby community and Big Town could be enlisted for needed services. Moreover, inmates could be placed in a community work situation as part of their reorientation into society before they are actually released.

**Composition of the Female Inmate Population**

The development and operation of the penal system to which the subjects of this study belong has been described above. It is appropriate to conclude this historical treatment with a consideration of the composition of the subject-population at the time of this study. Attention is focused on such characteristics as race, age, educational achievement, religion, occupational status, and marital status. Type of crime, length of sentence, date of commitment, prior residence, size of community, type of admission and previous commitments are also considered.

At the time of the study the female inmate population, which comprised approximately four per cent of the total prison population, included 29 whites and 71 Negroes. As explained in the preceding chapter, all of the white inmates and 30 per cent of the Negroes were interviewed. The data presented below and summarized in part in Table I are based
TABLE I

MEDIANs OF VARIOus POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE INMATES AT SHELTON, OCTOBER, 1958, COMPAReD wITh 1956-1957*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age at commitment</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of sentence (Years)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Grade Completed)</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present age</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Information for 1956-1957 was obtained from the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau, Annual Statistical Report 1956-1957; the data for 1958 were obtained from interviews.
upon information gained through interviews and an analysis of statistical information collected by the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau.

**Age.** The white female prisoners tended to be slightly older than the Negroes. The median age for the whites was 32, for the Negroes 28. The ages of the white inmates ranged from 19 to 70, the ages of the Negroes from 20 to 50.

On the average, the white females were slightly older at the time of commitment to prison, the respective median ages being 31 and 26.

**Educational achievement.** The information on educational attainment secured from the classification interviews on file at the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau was checked for validity against the responses recorded in the interviews. In their statements to the Classification Board, the female inmates placed their attainments at a slightly higher level than they did in their responses in the interview situation. The divergence can be accounted for, at least in part, because of differences in definitions of educational status. The investigator asked each inmate for the last completed grade in school; whereas, the classification officer asked each inmate at which grade level she had dropped out of school. Table II presents the material as reported to the investigator.
TABLE II

FEMALE INMATE POPULATION AT SHELDON CLASSIFIED BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED IN SCHOOL, OCTOBER, 1958*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Completed</th>
<th>White</th>
<th></th>
<th>Negro</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced college training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Interviews conducted by the writer. Includes all whites and a 30 per cent sample of Negroes.
The white female prisoners tended to have slightly higher educational attainments than the Negroes. The median educational level obtained for the whites was 9-10, for the Negroes, seven-eight. The educational attainments for the white inmates ranged from no formal education through four years of college; the educational attainments for the Negroes ranged from no formal education through first year graduate study. Six of the white inmates had attended secretarial school and one had attended trade school prior to commitment.

A higher proportion of the white inmates are presently enrolled in the prison school. Twenty of the 29 white inmates and 13 of the 25 interviewed Negro inmates have taken, or are taking, or teaching courses. Six whites and seven Negroes are studying, or have studied, grammar school subjects; ten whites and five Negroes have studied, or are studying, high school and commercial subjects. Three white inmates and one Negro inmate teach in the school.

Religion. The information on religious preference secured from the prison classification interviews on file at the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau were checked for validity against the responses recorded in the interviews. Both sources showed that 15 white and 9 Negro females are Catholic; 13 whites and 16 Negroes are Protestant; and one white is Greek Orthodox.
**Occupational status.** Throughout the report of this investigation the term "occupational status" shall be interpreted as meaning the most frequent occupation of the inmate prior to her incarceration. Table III reveals the occupational statuses for the female inmate population.

For the white female inmates the major occupational category was waitress and barmaid; for the Negro, the principle occupational divisions were housemaid and restaurant worker. Whereas 12 whites had been employed as waitresses and barmaids, only four Negroes had been employed in that occupational category. One-fifth of the Negroes worked as housemaids and the same proportion had been employed in restaurants as dishwashers or cooks. Three white and four Negro inmates stated that they had been housewives. Five white inmates had been employed as secretaries or clerical workers.

**Marital status.** The information on marital status secured from the prison classification interviews on file at the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau was checked for validity against the responses recorded in the interviews. For the white inmates, the data corresponded; however, for the Negroes the number of inmates claiming single status decreased and the number claiming common-law marriages increased on the interviews. Since common-law marriage is a vaguely defined term at the prison and
TABLE III

FEMALE INMATE POPULATION AT SHELDON CLASSIFIED
BY OCCUPATION, OCTOBER, 1958*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Status</th>
<th>White Number</th>
<th>White Per Cent</th>
<th>Negro Number</th>
<th>Negro Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barmaid and waitress</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41.40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary and clerical worker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner and operator of barroom, dance hall and cafe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancer in a small night club</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner and manager of a sundry store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone operator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical nurse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant cook or dishwasher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housemaid</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevator operator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field hand</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone operator dispatcher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County school supervisor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing factory worker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Interviews conducted by the writer. Includes all whites and 30 per cent sample of Negroes.
visiting privileges are allowed between common-law spouses, it is understandable that some inmates would claim common-law marriages in order to enjoy these privileges.

Table IV shows that the greatest percentage of inmates, white and Negro, fall into the common-law category. Of the 12 white and 17 Negro inmates who are married, seven and 10 respectively, have common-law mates. Whereas six whites stated that they are separated and four that they are divorced, no Negroes used these categories in describing their marital status.

Crime. As Table V indicates, most of the female inmates violated narcotics laws. Thirteen white and 11 Negro, or almost one-half of the inmates in each of these races, were committed to Sheldon for violations of narcotics laws. In addition to narcotics violations, crimes relating to theft were an important category among the whites and "crimes against a person" among the Negroes. Thirteen white inmates were incarcerated for theft, i.e., forgery, simple burglary, and armed robbery; only two Negroes were incarcerated for theft. "Crimes against a person" have been committed by six Negroes and three whites. These crimes included murder, manslaughter, criminal conspiracy in an attempted murder, and aggravated battery. One Negro inmate was incarcerated for aggravated arson and the crime of one is unknown to the investigator.
TABLE IV

FEMALE INMATE POPULATION AT SHELDON CLASSIFIED
BY MARITAL STATUS, OCTOBER, 1958*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>White</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Negro</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common-law married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legally married</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Interviews conducted by the writer. Includes all whites and 30 per cent sample of Negroes.
TABLE V

FEMALE INMATE POPULATION AT SHELDON CLASSIFIED BY CRIME COMMITTED, OCTOBER, 1958*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crimes</th>
<th>White Number</th>
<th>White Per Cent</th>
<th>Negro Number</th>
<th>Negro Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.85</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcery</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple burglary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal conspiracy in an attempted murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manslaughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated battery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated arson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Prison classification interviews, State Institutional Coordinating Bureau.
**Sentences.** The white female inmates tended to have slightly shorter sentences than the Negroes. The median length of sentence for the whites was five years, for the Negroes, six. The length of sentence for white inmates ranges from one year to life—for Negro from two years to life.

**Date of commitment.** Among the white and the Negro inmates, the greatest number of commitments occurred in 1958. Sixteen whites and seven Negroes were incarcerated during that year. Three white inmates were committed in 1957, two in 1956, two in 1955, one in 1954, and five in, or prior, to 1953. Six Negro inmates were incarcerated in 1957, five in 1956, three in 1955, one in 1954, two in 1953, and one in 1951.

**Residence and size of community.** "Residence" refers to the place where the inmate lived prior to commitment. The greatest number of inmates, Negro and white, came from a famous historical tourist city of around 500,000 population. Over one-half of the white inmates and almost one-half of the Negro inmates were arrested in this city. In both the white and Negro population, three or four of the

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5Residence data were secured from the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau. It was assumed that they were reliable, but further investigation revealed that a consistent definition had not been employed. In some cases "usual" place of residence was recorded, in other "residence at time of arrest."
inmates were from farm or non-farm areas of around 2,500 or less population.

**Type admission and previous commitments.** Even though data which were obtained from the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau relating to the type of admission and the previous commitments for the inmates were incomplete, those which were available revealed that almost one-third of the white inmates and one-fifth of the Negro inmates are probation or parole violators.
CHAPTER III

THE PRISON SOCIAL SYSTEM

The formal organization of a prison delineates patterns of interaction among administrators, among inmates, and between administrators and inmates. Interaction which develops outside of the formally defined patterns, constitutes the informal relationships. Before seeking an insight into the informal social patterns among prison inmates, it is necessary to be familiar with the setting and functioning of the formal organization which determines the possibilities for informal interaction. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the social system of Sheldon insofar as it involves contacts with the women inmates. Among the elements discussed are the physical setting and the formal organization with its statuses and roles.

Physical Setting of the Women's Camp

The Larks, isolated from the other camps, is in a yard area about the size of a city block. The five main rectangular cement block buildings consisting of the camp administration building, the kitchen and dining halls, the

\[1^{\text{For a thorough treatment of the elements in a social system, see Charles P. Loomis and Allan J. Beegle, Rural Social Systems. (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1930) p. 5}}\]
white and Negro dormitories, and the tailor shop and
laundry are within the yard area surrounded by a wire
fence. The camp office, store, school, infirmary, visiting room, and isolation cells are in the camp administration building. Directly to the rear of this building is the building which houses the kitchen and dining halls with separate eating areas for the white and Negro inmates.

The Negro dormitory, located behind the kitchen and dining halls, contains a recreation room, sleeping quarters, beauty parlor, and bathroom. The sleeping quarters are in a long rectangular area. Approximately eighty beds, placed in four rows, extend the length of the room. Between the beds are "biffies," or clothes lockers, each of which is shared by two inmates. There is one six-unit bath for these prisoners.

On one side of the Negro dormitory is the white dormitory. This two-story rectangular structure has about 50 small individual rooms, each containing a bed, "biffy," and night stand. At the end of the halls on both floors are five-unit bathrooms. A recreation room is located at the rear of this building.

On the other side of the Negro dormitory is a long rectangular building, the newest at the camp, which houses the tailor shop and laundry. In the tailor shop are 22 machines, each performing different operations in the production of prison necessities. The laundry is connected
to the tailor shop by a doorway. In the laundry there are 18 irons and ironing boards and a table used for checking and wrapping bundles of clothing.

Offices of the warden and other chief administrators and the mail room are in the prison administration building which is located seven miles from the Larks.

Organizational Statuses

The formal statuses of the prison administrators considered in this section are those which have direct relationships with the subjects of this study, the female inmates.

All employment at the state prison is based upon state civil service requirements. Specific jobs are classified and responsibilities and job functions are recorded in a file book at the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau.

As the formal organizational chart, Figure 1, indicates, the warden is directly accountable to the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau. Other staff personnel having contacts with the women inmates include the medical administrators, business manager, operations associate warden, and the treatment associate warden. Incumbents of

2Information about the formal status-structure of the prison was secured from the following charts obtained at Sheldon: Organizational Chart of the Treatment and Custody Division, Operational Chart of the Administrative Department, Organizational Chart of the Custody and Discipline Division, and an unlabeled chart showing major staff departments and related lines of authority.
Formal Organization of Sheldon as It Relates to Female Inmates, October, 1958

Figure 1. Organizational chart of Sheldon showing only those formal positions and departments which have direct relationships to the female inmates.
of these status positions report directly to the warden.

The business manager supervises the Budget Control Department. This department in turn is responsible for the functioning of the Accounting Office. The Accounting Office relates the Incentive Pay Office, mail room, camp store, tailor shop and laundry to the Budget Control Department and the business manager.

The operations associate warden has charge of the prison maintenance and culinary divisions. Through these departments, he has little direct contact with the female inmates; however the treatment associate warden has more direct association with them. Personnel in charge of classification, religious activities, custody and discipline, vocation and academic education, and the recreation of the inmates are all directly responsible to him.

As the organizational chart indicates, the treatment associate warden supervises the chief security officer to whom each camp superintendent is accountable; in turn, the custodial matrons are responsible to the camp superintendent. Lastly, the inmates are under the direct authority of the matrons and superintendent.

In addition to having the lowest status in the prison social system, the female inmates, on a particular day of this study, had the following work statuses in the formal organization.
Secretaries in the prison administration building 5 (white)
Clerks in the prison administration building 7 (white) 6 (Negro)
Orderlies in the prison administration building 3 (Negro)
Workers in the tailor shop building 6 (white) 23 (Negro)
Workers in the laundry 19 (Negro)
Operator of the camp store 1 (white)
Principal of the inmate school 1 (white)
Secretary at the Larks 1 (white)
Classification clerk 1 (white)
Orderlies at the Larks' administration building 2 (Negro) 5 (Negro)
Kitchen crew 1 (white)
Attendant in the white dining hall 2 (white) 2 (Negro)
Yard crew 3 (white) 4 (Negro)
Orderlies in the dormitories 1 (white)
Camp seamstress 1 (white)
Wash-house girl 1 (Negro)

In the work situation each inmate is directly accountable to her work supervisor, the head of the department in which she is working.

**Formal Roles**

The formal roles of prison administrators, employees, and inmates are the expected patterns of behavior for the individuals occupying these status positions.

From an interview with a chief administrator at the prison, the investigator learned that the formal roles of individuals under the supervision of the treatment associate warden are vague and undefined in many situations. Some channels of authority and communication proceed directly to
the inmate from the holder of a staff position; others come through the chief security officer, camp superintendent, and matrons.

The warden is directly accountable to the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau which is the central administrative office in charge of directing and coordinating the operations of state institutions in regard to departmental policy and budgetary control. The warden must plan, direct, and coordinate extensive and varied programs of a large penitentiary. He is responsible for all of the activities pertaining to the care, training, and rehabilitation of the inmates, and supervises large farm operations and industrial production.

A highly specialized man on the institutional staff is the medical administrator. Even though he is directly responsible to the warden, his field provides him with a position of final authority concerning medical problems among the inmates. His main contacts with the female inmate are upon her arrival at Sheldon at which time she is given a chest x-ray, blood test, and medical examination. Other contacts with the inmate are during illness and upon her release. The prison also employs a dentist, whose duties toward and contacts with the inmates are similar to those of the medical administrator.

The business manager, also responsible to the warden, must direct the activities of the business office of Sheldon.
He outlines and maintains a budget control system and supervises its operation. Bookkeeping and payroll and supply are his definite responsibilities. These may lead to such related activities as purchasing and personnel.

As shown in Figure 2, the prison employees in the Incentive Pay Office, mail room, camp store, and tailor shop and laundry are responsible through their supervisors to the business manager. The Incentive Pay Office supervisor is accountable for the promptness and accuracy of incentive pay operations performed by free personnel and inmate workers in his department. He also supervises the functioning of the mail room and enforces the rules relating to inmate mail.

The inmate manager of the Larks' store is appointed by the camp store supervisor; it is the responsibility of the camp store supervisor to provide the necessary store supplies and to keep a close inventory check.

The 28 inmates in the tailor shop and the 19 Negro inmates in the laundry are under the direct supervision of two female correctional officers. Each of the inmates in the tailor shop has one of two designated jobs, sewing or

---

3 Incentive pay is money earned by inmates based on a scaled rate which takes into consideration the inmate's work performance, work attitude, and length of time served.

4 Rules sanction receiving of letters by the inmate from prison approved correspondent and permit the inmate to send two censored letters per week to any approved receiver.
FORMAL ORGANIZATION OF SHELDON AS IT RELATES TO THE WORK POSITIONS OF FEMALE INMATES,

OCTOBER, 1958

State Institutional Coordinating Bureau

Warden

Business Manager

Operations Associate Warden

Treatment Associate Warden

Budget Control

Accounting

Superintendent

Supervisor

Matrons

Matrons

Camp Store Supervisor

Camp Store

Incentive Pay

Mail Room

Tailor Shop

Laundry

Kitchen

Camp

Classification

Inmate School

Security Office

Classification Officer

Educational Superintendent

Figure 2. Organizational chart of Sheldon showing female inmate work positions in relationship to the formal prison social structure.
cutting material. Those inmates in the laundry iron clothes for specified free people; it is the function of one inmate to check the contents of the incoming and outgoing laundry.


The contacts of the operations associate warden with the women inmates occur through the relationships which he has with the culinary division. Each week the prison diettian plans the menu and delivers the food to the camps. Inmates in the Larks' kitchen prepare this food according to the menu and serve the meals at prescribed hours.

The role of the treatment associate warden involves the supervision of the departments under him which have direct relationships with the female inmates. As stated previously, personnel in charge of classification, religious activities, custody and discipline, records, identification, vocation and academic education, and recreation of the inmates are all responsible to this associate warden.

The classification board members interview new inmates and assign them to the available occupational positions. The religious chaplins, Protestant and Catholic, interview inmates upon their arrival at camp and direct
weekly services for them.

The chief security officer is accountable for custody and treatment of the inmates. He delegates some of this responsibility to each camp supervisor. This supervisor checks the work of the inmates at the camp, takes care of their needs and administers the general rules and regulations. If an inmate breaks a rule, she is subject to disciplinary action. A report of this infraction to the chief security officer leads to a trial of the accused. If found guilty, she is punished. Forms of punishment are forfeiture of incentive pay, loss of "good time," and isolation. Rewards granted the inmate include "good time," visiting privileges, outings away from the compound, and incentive pay.

Helping the supervisor to perform his duties and directly responsible to him are the camp matrons. Their role is described formally in terms of the performance of assigned duties relative to detention, rehabilitation, security, and discipline of the inmates.

The inmate workers at the Larks are accountable to the matrons and superintendent in the performance of their duties. These are the camp secretary-typist, the administration building orderlies, the kitchen crew, the dining

5"Good time" refers to the amount of time an inmate's sentence is shortened as a reward for co-operative behavior during incarceration.
room attendant, the yard crew, the dormitory seamstress, the dormitory orderlies, and the wash-house girl.

In addition to supervising the work performed by the inmates, the matrons and superintendent are responsible for the maintenance of the following week-day schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:45</td>
<td>Arise and count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>Leave for work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-9:45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45-10:45</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:45</td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-2:45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-4:30</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>Off from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td>Mail call and count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sundown</td>
<td>Lock up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Records Office, also under the supervision of the treatment associate warden, files information obtained about the inmate from the Identification Office. This information is maintained in a central office for the entire inmate population.

The Identification Office has contact with the inmate on her arrival at the prison and at her departure from the institution. Inmates are brought by the local police authorities to the prison gates. They are then taken to the Identification Office located in the hospital. At this time, the inmate is fingerprinted; her picture is taken; her height and weight are recorded; and, other identifying characteristics are noted. Upon release the same identification materials are recorded and the inmate is turned over
to the prison gate. She must sign her release papers in his presence before she is considered free.

The prison educational supervisor is directly accountable to the treatment associate warden. His professional duty is the direction of the academic and vocational activities of the inmates. He assists in the selection and supervision of an inmate staff who carry out the program. The director of education personally contacts the inmate school principal at the Larks. With the help of the supervisor, she works out the courses and schedules and also keeps a record of the progress of each inmate who is enrolled in the classes which are taught at night.\(^6\)

The recreation department under the jurisdiction of the treatment associate warden provides equipment for basketball, volleyball, baseball, and ping pong. This department has helped arrange movies, bridge clubs, and special holiday programs.

In the next chapter consideration is given to the patterns of social relationships which develop outside of the formal structures.

\(^6\)In May 1958, the female inmate school was opened with an enrollment of 59 pupils; seven months later the enrollment had dropped to 39.
CHAPTER IV

INMATE SOCIAL SYSTEM

Interacting with the prison social system—and in some ways independent of it—is another social system, the inmate social system, which has evolved a complex of adaptational processes with which inmates attempt to cope with the major problems of institutional living.¹

Through personal interviews, incomplete but revealing case history files, and non-participant observation, the writer investigated the nature and extent of informal interactions of the female inmates as expressed in their group life. Factors such as the historical development of the white female inmates' informal group life and leadership tendencies as well as the nature and extent of the present informal groupings among both white and Negro inmates were considered. The status and role of the "isolate"² in the inmate's social system was also studied.


²By the term "isolate" the writer here refers to the individual who either voluntarily or involuntarily fails to interact regularly and mutually with one or more persons.
Historical Development

Five white female inmates, who were admitted to Sheldon between 1950 and 1956, and several of the free personnel, who had been associated with the prison for many years, were asked to describe the development of informal groups and leadership patterns among the white female inmates. They were all in agreement with the following version.

At the old camp for females, there were few whites. In the beginning, all of these white inmates lived in the same dormitory. They slept in the same room, ate at the same table, and worked together on the camp compound. According to the inmates who were interviewed no special groupings of inmates existed at that time. Big Bertha, an inmate with a dominant personality who is serving a sentence for violation of the narcotics laws, was the camp inmate leader. At present, she continues to be a leader of a group, and an influential person with respect to the total inmate population.

Evidence of Big Bertha's leadership status during the days when the female inmates were at Camp "D" was presented to the interviewer by a prison employee who related the following event. One Saturday afternoon the female inmates asked permission to attend a baseball game between the male inmates. Even though they were denied this privilege, they intended to go. When they started
down the road the free people on duty became very upset
and did not know how they would control the inmates. Big
Bertha told them not to worry because she could make the
inmates return. When she went down the road and talked
with the female inmates, they promptly gave up their plans
to attend the baseball game and returned to the camp.

As the white female inmate population increased, six
of the inmates were moved to another dormitory. This marked
the beginning of definitely noticeable group formations.
The girls who remained in the original dormitory formed one
group and the girls who were moved formed another.

As the number of inmates continued to grow, some were
assigned to work in the prison administration building. Big
Bertha was one of the first three inmates to secure a work
position away from the camp compound. Eventually she was to
become a secretary in the office of one of the chief ad-
ministrators of the prison. Her strong personality, in ad-
dition to her new duties which involved working alongside
free personnel, helped her to maintain her leadership role
over both white and Negro inmates.

Through the years as newer concepts of penology were
accepted, more female inmates were transferred to prison
administrative offices. One inmate, Frances, serving a
ten-year sentence for violation of narcotics laws, became
the warden's personal secretary. A very talented high-
school graduate with some secretarial training, she emerged
as a major leader, challenging the position held by Big
Bertha. A separate group formed around each of these inmates.

Recent administrative changes led to a transfer of both of these inmates to jobs at the camp compound. The resulting alignment of groups is described below.

**Inmate Leaders**

Interviews with the staff personnel and inmates revealed the following information about present leadership statuses and roles among white female inmates.

After Frances was transferred by prison administrators and Bertha asked to be transferred to camp jobs, Frances lost much of her prestige and became a member of a group led by Big Bertha. Bertha maintained her superordinate position and Frances became "second-in-command." In most ways these two inmate leaders are similar. Both are in their early thirties, have completed high school, have worked in various capacities around bars prior to commitment, are narcotics offenders serving ten-year sentences, were committed to Sheldon prior to 1955, and lived in large cities at the time of arrest. Bertha told

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3) The warden at Sheldon resigned after being charged with showing favoritism particularly with regard to his secretary. McCorkle & Korn describe a situation similar to the one which developed at Sheldon and concluded that, "a breakdown of social distance between the inmate and his keeper, sooner or later, results in the exploitation of one by the other and the ultimate degradation of one or both." *Ibid.*, p. 94.
the interviewer that she was from a family unit in which the conjugal relationship was emphasized. She has several brothers, has been married five times including her present marriage, and has one child. She stated that she is a Baptist. Frances has been married and has one child. Her religious preference is Catholic. Neither of these inmates has participated in church activities and their attendance at church services at the prison has been very irregular. Frances, now principal of the inmate school, and Bertha, manager of the camp store, continue to have high prestige and leadership statuses in their group as well as within the total inmate population. Clemmer suggests that the inmate's ability to maintain a leadership status in secondary relationships is due in part to inmate jobs which allow the individual to be more or less in the public eye of the other inmates. This appears to be the case with Big Bertha and Frances.

Both dress neatly and stylishly insofar as the situation allows. They have served on appointed or elected inmate committees which include the Inmate Lending Fund and the Inmate Council. Several other inmates suggested to the interviewer that one of the matrons was a member of the clique in which these two girls are the leaders, but the

other inmates did not refer to such a situation. Bertha and Frances expressed feelings of contempt for some free personnel whom they consider their inferiors both socially and intellectually.

With the recent administrative changes, two additional leaders have assumed importance. These inmates, Tommye, who "works with the flowers in the camp yard," and Bobbye, a dormitory orderly, are referred to as "boy-girls" by some of the prison personnel. These leaders have less influence in the total population than the previously mentioned leaders and have a different set of friends.

Tommye and Bobbye, both around thirty years of age, are slightly younger than the two major inmate leaders and have not been in prison as long. Tommye was committed in 1937 and Bobbye in 1958. Neither have they had as much formal education as Big Bertha and Frances. Whereas the latter two are high school graduates, Tommye ended her formal education with the ninth grade, Bobbye with the tenth. With regard to crime committed and occupation and residence prior to arrest, Tommye and Bobbye resemble the major leaders. They are serving ten and five-year sentences respectively for violation of narcotics laws, usually were employed as barmaids.

5The term "boy-girl" refers to a female inmate who assumes a masculine role in her relationship with another female inmate.
and lived in large urban centers. Tommye is a parole violator; Bobbye has numerous arrests on her record.

**Informal Groups**

In considering friendship patterns among only 29 individuals, the investigator realizes that the constant state of flux in the population due to admissions and releases makes a definite and permanently closed group structure highly unlikely.

Among the questions on the interview schedule aimed at revealing the nature and extent of the structure of informal group life were those relating to (1) the existence and activities of groups, "bunches," or "cliques" among the inmates, (2) the individual's sentiments toward sharing secrets and luxuries with other inmates as well as her feelings about "covering up" or "taking the blame" for disapproved action of other inmates, and (3) the individual's association with members in informal groupings prior to and after commitment.

The data provided in the interviews and the writer's observations indicated that there were six more or less cohesive groups and a number of "isolates" among the 29 white inmates. Each of these classifications discussed below in terms of: (1) population characteristics, (2) individual friendships and group affiliations, (3) self-concepts of the individual inmates, and (4) the inmates' relationships
to the administration.

1. Group I

Group I, the most clearly defined group, is composed of four main white females and one "hanger-on." Bertha, the inmate storekeeper, and Frances, the inmate school principal, already described as the major leaders of the total female inmate population, are the "first" and "second-in-command" leaders respectively of this group. As previously mentioned, the expansiveness of leadership status is due to some extent to work assignments which place these inmates in the "public eye" of the other inmates. The two other main Group I members are Beth, who works as a secretary in a high-ranking prison administrator's office, and Sondra, who during the study was transferred from the position of camp office secretary to that of a tailor shop worker. The "hanger-on," Rex, works in the yard. One of the inmates and some of the free personnel refer to this individual, who has a "butch" haircut, wears no make-up, and dresses in blue jeans as a "boy-

6The term "hanger-on" is used here to refer to an individual who experiences a strong mutual friendship with one member of a group, but who fails to be accepted by the other group members. Clemmer also uses this term, op. cit.
girl" or homosexual. Bertha and Frances, the leaders, were interviewed informally at great length on the historical background of the Larks and on the functioning of their particular jobs; however, they were not asked to respond to questions on the interview schedule. As explained in the methodological note in Chapter I, the writer thought that this was the best possible procedure in view of the fact that both of these inmates were extremely dubious about talking with the investigator. This was especially true of Frances, who had been involved in the recent changes in the prison administrative personnel. The writer believed that rapport with these two could be best secured by talking with them informally from time to time. During the course of these discussions, all of the pertinent questions on the interview schedule were covered.

One of the group members, Sondra, sentenced for violating narcotics laws, used the interview period to praise her group friends and derogate inmates in other

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7An additional six inmates chose friends in Group I, but their choices were not reciprocated with sufficient intensity by the group members to consider these individuals a functioning part of its structure. On the periphery were two subgroup members who hold full membership in Group III, a triad. By the term "subgroup" member the writer refers to an individual who holds her main membership status in one group but who looks to the stronger group for leadership and support. Two other inmates who chose friends in Group I are members of loosely integrated Group IV and two are isolates.
groups. She and the "hanger-on," who is charged with simple burglary and parole violation, both responded freely to the questions. Beth, a college graduate who is serving a sentence for forgery, in addition to discussing the pilot study with the interviewer and promoting the idea among the inmates that the interviewer's motives were harmless, helped the writer to gain insight into the inmate social system by her willingness to submit to additional questioning from time to time.

Population characteristics

In considering the population characteristics of the groups, the inmate's age, school achievement, religion, occupational status, marital status, crime, length of sentence, date of commitment, residence and size of community, type of admission, and previous commitments are reported.

Age. The median age of the inmates in Group I, which is about 30, is similar to the median age for the total white female inmate population at Sheldon.

School achievement. The median educational attainment of the members of this group as measured by years of school completed is higher than the median for all of the white female inmates. Three of the five inmates have completed high school; one has been graduated from college;
one attended secretarial school; and two, Sondra and the "hanger-on," have completed the eighth and tenth grades respectively. Beth and Frances teach in the inmate school; Sondra and the "hanger-on" have attended this school.

Religion. With the exception of Big Bertha, all of these inmates profess to be Catholic; however, none attended church regularly prior to commitment. At present, only one attends mass regularly.

Occupational status. Prior to commitment, the "hanger-on" and three of the group members worked in different capacities in bars. The main leader, Big Bertha, and Sondra said that they owned and operated bars and dance halls with their husbands. Frances, "second-in-command," was a night club dancer; the "hanger-on" was a barmaid. Beth, a check forger, had been a secretary and bookkeeper.

Marital status. Marital instability characterized the members of Group I. Only one is now married although all five said that they have been married one or more times. One is widowed and the other three are separated or divorced. None of these inmates are only children.

Crime, length of sentence, and date of commitment. Three of the main group members are violators of narcotics laws; the fourth is a check forger. The "hanger-on," a parole violator, is charged with simple burglary. The
length of sentence for these inmates is on the average longer than the median length of sentence for the total white female population, the respective medians being 10 and five years. The three narcotics offenders are serving ten-year sentences and the inmates incarcerated for forgery and burglary two and one-year sentences respectively. All of the narcotics offenders were committed to Sheldon prior to 1955. Beth, the forger, and Rex, the "hanger-on," both came in 1958. In other words, most of the members of this group are among those who have been in prison the longest.

Residence and size of community. All Group I members and the "hanger-on" are from urban areas of 500,000 or more population.

Type admission and previous commitments. This is the first commitment for three of the main group members. However, Rex, the "hanger-on," is a parole violator and has served time at Sheldon previously. Beth has served a sentence in another state women's prison.

Individual friendships and group affiliations

In considering individual friendships and group affiliations, the inmate's conceptions of her own popularity, her awareness of other groupings, her choices of friends, her sentiments toward sharing with inmates, her knowledge about the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates, her
attitude toward the Sheldonite (the inmate newspaper), her hobbies, her beliefs concerning the duration of friendships, her plans for the future, and the extent of her participation in organization prior to commitment were investigated. The individual friendship choices and group affiliations for the inmates are graphically shown following the discussion of the six groups and the "Isolates."

**Inmate's popularity, awareness of groupings and leaders.** The study of the inmate's conception of her own popularity, her choice of friends, and her recognition of other groups revealed that all of the members of this group consider themselves to be popular or about average in popularity. The group members reported that they have three or four main friends including one close friend. Rex, the "hanger-on," said that she has "five or six close friends."

All of the inmates stated that they like their close friends better than any other girls because they are "clean, quiet, and about the same age." When asked what qualities they looked for in a friend, the inmates named "honesty" and emphasized the importance of a friend's being able to "keep a confidence."

The members of this group meet several times a day in their rooms, in the dining room, at school, in the yard, and in the television room. They visit, talk, eat, and go
to school together. Topics of conversation, the inmates told the investigator, include the future, "good time," books, politics at the prison, and home. Group I members have adjacent rooms in the dormitory. One member confided that up until recently their group had been able to control whom they wanted as "room neighbors" in the front end of the dormitory which is located near the bathroom and away from the "loud television set" in the recreation room.

All revealed an awareness of groups at Sheldon, giving affirmative answers to the question, "Are there groups, bunches, or cliques of friends among the inmates here?" Moreover, they indicated that they became aware of these groups very soon after their arrival at the prison.

To questions on the extent of group cohesion, all expressed the opinion that some groups of friends "stick together" more than members of other groups. Furthermore, all said that they thought some of the groups had more disagreements internally than others. They claimed that the members of their group did not have disagreements and that all of them used the pronoun "we" in referring to group activities.

Sentiments toward sharing. Group I inmates admitted that in most cases they share their secrets with only one other inmate; yet, all think that it is best to share some secrets with no one. They stated that they
share luxuries with anyone, but mainly with their own group members. On the question involving "accepting the blame" for another's actions, all believed that each girl should "ride her own beef." This is an expression used at Sheldon which means that once an action has been taken an individual should be willing to accept the consequences. However, the "boy-girl" stated that she would "accept the blame" for her friend. Beth expressed the view that if an inmate is ready for release, the others should and would "accept the blame" for her providing that it did not involve them in serious trouble.

**Nicknames, Sheldonite, and hobbies.** Most Group I members acknowledged the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates and said that they are used extensively among friends. All stated that they read the *Sheldonite* weekly and two have served as editor for the column written about the Larks. The inmates claimed that the paper achieves many beneficial results in the inmate social system. These include presenting an instrument for communication with the male inmates, providing information regarding the assistance which the "free world" is giving the inmates, and relating incidents from other camps which indicate to the inmate that others are also beset with similar problems.

**Duration of friendships.** Almost all members in this group admitted that prior to commitment they knew
other individuals who are now inmates, but said that these acquain-
tances did not determine their group alignments.
Three reported that they think that the friendships with Group I members will end with release; however, the "hanger-
on" and Sondra believe that friendships will continue out-
side the prison.

Past groupings and plans. Most Group I members claimed that they participated in fraternal or social organ-
izations prior to commitment. All plan to work when they return to the "free world," most of them in secretarial positions. None admitted that they were afraid to leave Sheldon.

Self concepts of individual inmates

In trying to gain an insight into the individual inmate's concepts of herself in the prison situation, questions were asked concerning her thoughts on arrival at Sheldon, her self-conceptions after being in prison for a while, her use of the terms "inmate" and "convict" in referring to herself, and her ideas about the existence and effectiveness of the prison rehabilitation program.

Sentiments associated with commitment. Most inmates in Group I stated that their main feeling upon arrival at Sheldon was "fear." After being in prison for a while this fear is no longer present. All said they believe that the
prison administration has treated them "fairly." They do not like to think of themselves as "convicts" and believe that the word "inmate" sounds better. The members in this group defined "rehabilitation" in its narrow sense, considering it to be a program involving services to the inmates within the institution. The broader concept of this term, i.e., preparing the inmate to meet her societal obligations by allowing her to participate in community activities outside of the penal colony was not mentioned. Two who served time at Camp "D" said that there was at present a "good" rehabilitation program at the prison. The others, whose prison experience at Sheldon is limited to the Larks, did not agree.

**Inmate's relationship to the administration**

In investigating the inmate's relationship to the administration, the following were considered: her feelings toward the work situation and the free personnel, her conceptions of the prestige rankings of inmate jobs and duties of the prison employees, as well as her beliefs about the honesty of the free people and inmates in abiding by the prison rules.

*Work situation and free personnel.* The inmates in Group I reported that they are satisfied with their work positions as secretaries, inmate school principal, and inmate storekeeper. The "hanger-on" said that she does
not like her yard job. All group members claimed that they like their administrative boss, but none admitted liking the camp supervisor. They said that they like their fellow inmate workers, feel that their job is important, but believe that it could be equally well done by another inmate.

**Rankings of inmate jobs.** When asked which inmate jobs they considered most important, all respondents in Group I named administration building office jobs. The "hanger-on" ranked highly all the jobs of Group I members.

**Problems at work and with other inmates.** In the event of a work problem, according to the responses of the inmates in this group, most would seek aid from their immediate boss. The girls who are partially responsible to the camp superintendent stated that they would either ask help from his superior or subordinate.

In the case of a problem with another inmate, all responded that they would solve it "among ourselves." Beth expressed the belief that the new commitments, referred to in prison slang as the "new fish," are the only ones who seek help from the free people in inter-inmate problems.

**Sources of help.** All said that some of the free people have helped them during incarceration. They named their previous work bosses as those who have helped them
and said that these individuals have given them advice and have shown patience in teaching them their work assignments. Furthermore, they agreed that other inmates have helped them during their incarceration. Ways of help listed included being understanding, giving moral support, listening to problems, and advising. All felt that some of the free personnel "throw their weight around" or "pick on the inmates."

**Concepts of the duties of the free people.** The conceptions which Group I members hold regarding the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and warden are in line with the expectations of the administration. These inmates have an opportunity to talk with the matron, superintendent, and wardens during the performance of their assignments.

**Prison rules.** The inmates in this group claimed that the free personnel at times do not follow the rules of the prison and that a few of the rules which are broken are important. All reported that some groups of inmates almost always oppose official orders, but only Beth admitted that her group sometimes fails to follow them. This failure she attributed to mischievousness on the part of group members.

**Summary of Group I**

By and large, the members of Group I are of the same
age, have the same level of educational achievement which is the highest for any of the inmate groups, profess the same religion, have similar marital backgrounds, are serving time for the same type of offense, have been in prison since before 1955, and are from urban areas of 500,000 or more population. (Table V at the end of the summary for Group VI shows measures of dispersion and central tendencies for various population characteristics of Groups I-VI).

Group I members consider themselves to be popular, prefer their group friends to others, use the term "we" in referring to group activities, and recognized the existence of groups within a few days after arriving at Sheldon.

These inmates consider their group to be a tightly knit unit. All four members live close together, eat at the same table, share secrets mainly with one close friend in the group, share luxuries mainly with group members, and would "take the blame" for the activities of another inmate only in unusual circumstances. All read the Sheldonite and feel that it helps to make life more bearable in the prison.

Some of the Group I members have participated in fraternal and social organizations prior to commitment. They feel that inmate friendships will dissolve with release from prison.
The members of this group were "afraid" upon their arrival at Sheldon, but stated that this feeling is no longer present. They consider themselves as having been "fairly treated" by the administration. They prefer to use the word "inmate" rather than "convict" in referring to themselves. All have "rehabilitation" concepts relating to services within the institution, but only two of the three group members who spent time in infamous Camp "D," believe that Sheldon has a rehabilitation program.

Group I members are satisfied with their work assignments and consider them to be important. Furthermore, they feel that the inmate jobs at the administration building are important. All would seek advice from their administrative boss in the event of a work problem but in the case of a problem with another inmate, they would solve it among themselves.

Although agreeing that both free personnel and inmates have helped them during their incarceration, they feel that some of the latter "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates."

2. Group II
Group II is composed of four white female inmates. Two inmates, both charged with violation of the narcotics laws, are the co-leaders of this group. They are Tommye, who works in the yard, and Bobbye, who has a job as a dormitory orderly. The recency of their commitments, however, limits the amount of prestige they have outside their own group. Prison administrators as well as other inmates referred to these two as homosexuals. The two other members are Esther, a secretary to the highest ranking prison administrator who uses inmate workers, and Carol, a recent commitment, who is the secretary at the Larks. The former is charged with violation of the narcotics laws; the latter is a check forger.

All four members of the Group II were friendly and co-operative during the formal interviews. Furthermore, they provided additional information in informal conversations.

Population characteristics

Age. Like Group I inmates and the total white female inmate population at Sheldon, the median age for the members of Group II is around 30.

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Four other inmates chose friends in Group II, but their choices were neither made nor reciprocated with sufficient intensity to merit considering these individuals as functioning members in the group’s structure. On the periphery was one subgroup member who holds full membership status in Group III. The three other inmates who chose friends in Group II are isolates.
School achievement. On the average, the members of this group have lower educational attainments than do those of Group I. However, the educational attainments of Group II inmates are similar to the median educational attainment for the total white female population at the prison. Tommye ended her formal education with the ninth grade, Bobbye and Esther the tenth, and Carol three years beyond high school. Tommye, one of the four attended trade school prior to commitment; Esther attended the inmate school.

Religion. Unlike members of Group I, most members of Group II are Protestant. However, like the members of Group I, they are irregular in church attendance. The one Catholic, Carol, attends mass regularly.

Occupational status. The proportion of inmates in Group II who worked in bars prior to commitment is similar to the proportion of inmates who were employed in this occupation within both the total white female inmate population and among Group I members. Two of the Group II members worked in bars prior to incarceration, the other two in offices.

Marital status. Like Group I members, the inmates in Group II have been married; however, only one has a stable marital relationship. None are only children.
Crime, length of sentence, and date of commitment. Just as the violation of narcotics laws characterizes the white female inmate population and the Group I members at Sheldon, it also characterizes the members of Group II. Tommye and Esther are serving ten-year sentences for this crime, Bobbye a five-year sentence. Carol, a check forger, is serving a one-year sentence. Unlike the members of Group I, most in Group II are recent commitments. Esther was committed in 1953, Tommye in 1957, and the other two in 1958.

Residence and size of community. Like the members of Group I, all members of Group II are from urban areas of 500,000 or more population.

Type admission and previous commitments. Two members in Group II have had no previous police records prior to arrest; the other two are a parole violator and an inmate who has been arrested many times.

Individual friendships and group affiliations.

Inmate’s popularity, awareness of groupings and leaders. Like the members of Group I, most inmates in Group II consider themselves to be popular or about average in popularity. Two inmates said that all of the inmates are their friends. The other two felt that about one-half are their friends. Both Carol and Tommye said that they
had "two close friends"; Bobbye named three main friends and one special friend and Esther named five close friends. Like the members in Group I, members in Group II said that "honesty" is a quality desired in a friend.

They like their close friends better than any other inmates. Two said that they knew each other prior to commitment. Generally, the group members thought that their friends have made life easier for them at Sheldon. The latest commitment expressed her feelings on this subject when she stated, "My group of friends fixed me up with clothes and put me in the know when I came here."

The four group members meet several times a day in the dining room, in the television room, in the rooms, and at coffee break. They visit, talk, eat, and watch television. Topics of conversation include "most anything"—detainers, getting out, narcotics, crimes, the future, families, and "kids." Carol, the "new fish" in the group, stated that she does not like to talk about her family, home, sentence, past, or crime.

Like the members of Group I, the inmates in Group II revealed an awareness of groups at Sheldon by responding affirmatively to the question, "Are there groups, bunches, or cliques of friends among the women inmates here?" Moreover, they indicated that they became aware of these groups very soon after their arrival at the prison. Friction between Groups I and II was indicated
in responses of the leaders in Group II. Bobbye described the inmates in Group I as "politicians who think seniority rules." Tommye classified Group I as the "do wrongers" and her own group as the "do righters."

Inmates in Group II have definite opinions about the cohesion in the different groups. They think that some groups of friends "stick together" more than members of other groups. All responded affirmatively to the question, "Do some groups have more disagreements among group members than others?" In case of internal disagreements, they agreed that it was best for them either to "talk it out and agree on one solution" or if they were not directly involved "to stay out of it." Whereas the members of the most tightly knit Group I use the pronoun "we" in referring to group activities, two in Group II stated that they use "we" and the other two that they speak more in terms of "I."

Unlike the Group I members, the inmates in Group II do not have dormitory rooms near one another.

Sentiments toward sharing. With the exception of the newest group member, the members of Group II share secrets with only one inmate. All are of the opinion that it would be best to share secrets with no one. Luxuries are shared mainly with group members.

These inmates expressed differing opinions on the
questions relating to "taking the blame" for another inmate. Carol, the "newcomer," presented the inmate's code on this subject when she said, "Never tell on others whether you are in it or not." Esther, the member of the group who has been at Sheldon the longest, expressed partial acceptance of the inmate's code on this point.

Bobbye stated that there is only one other inmate for whom she would "accept the blame" under all circumstances although she would do so for anyone provided the infraction was of a minor nature and the offender not habitual in such action. Tommye admitted that she thinks it is best for each girl to "accept her own blame."

Nicknames, Sheldonite, and hobbies. Most inmates in Group II acknowledged the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates. Bobbye said that all members in her group have them. They read the Sheldonite; two have written articles for it; and, all feel that the inmate newspaper is a good idea. One of the main reasons reported for this opinion is that the paper presents news of events taking place among the male inmates. All inmates in Group II have hobbies.

9"Newcomer" refers to an inmate who has been recently committed to prison.
Duration of friendships. Like in Group I, prior to commitment most members in Group II knew some individuals who are now inmates. Only one admitted that this influenced her informal group affiliations within Sheldon. Esther claimed that the person she knew prior to commitment, Marge, a member of Group II, made her own friends. The respondents in this group had differing opinions about the duration of friendships formed in prison. Esther and Tommye feel that inmate friendships will last even after release; Bobbye and Carol feel that inmate friendships will end with release.

Past groupings and plans. Most members in Group II said that they had not actively participated in social, church, or school groups prior to commitment. However, Carol claimed that she was a member and a leader in some of these organizations.

Three inmates in Group II plan to return home after release from Sheldon. One wants to work in an office; the other two are uncertain of their plans. Tommye, who does not intend to return home, claims that she looked forward to opening a restaurant.

Self concepts of individual inmates

Sentiments associated with commitment. Most inmates in Group II, like the members in Group I, said that their main feeling upon arrival at Sheldon was "fear." One inmate
described these feelings in an article entitled "This is Our Life 1953-1958" which was written for the investigator.

We enter this Institution not knowing just what we are expected to do and how we are expected to live. After we are brought to the camp, we look around and we see so many faces we wonder who is who. Very seldom do you know anyone from the outside, therefore, you are leery about answering questions, but naturally you answer short and to the point.

After here a couple of weeks, the new girls see how the rules and regulations are carried out and they live up to what is expected of them. Of course many rules are broken; have you ever seen a place where there weren't exceptions?

All members of Group II reported that they have received "fair treatment" under the present Sheldon administration. Whereas, only one of the four stated that she "sometimes" considers herself a "convict," the others admitted thinking of themselves as "inmates." Most respondents claimed that the term "convict" sounds "terrible," but a different conception of this word was expressed by the newcomer. She said that Kate, an isolate with previous institutional experience, had told her that inmates are for themselves and convicts are for other convicts. All in Group II conceive of the term "rehabilitation" as the provision of services in the prison, but only the two who have been at Sheldon the longest, one of whom served time at Camp "D," thought that the prison has a "good" rehabilitation program. The other inmates feel that there is no program. Carol claimed that one "accepts this (the prison) way of life while here
and this entails stealing and lying." Bobbye, a narcotics offender, said, "All is not equal here. If I had the money in here, they would never cure me."

Inmate's relationship with the administration

Work situations and free personnel. All inmates in Group II are satisfied with their jobs and like their boss, fellow inmate workers, and the free people with whom they work. Unlike Group I members, the four girls in Group II said they like the camp superintendent.

These inmates feel that their own work is important. The dormitory orderly stated that her work is important for sanitary reasons. The yard girl said that her work benefitted the Larks by making it more attractive. The secretaries felt that their work is significant in the transaction of administration business. Only one, the camp inmate secretary, believed that her work could not be equally well done by another inmate. She said that few inmates could refrain from disclosing the personal and confidential material with which she works.

Ranking of inmate jobs. When the respondents were asked which inmate jobs they considered most important, all named the secretarial positions. Only Tommye reported that she thought other positions such as that of main inmate cook and hospital attendant were most important.

Problems at work and with other inmates. In the
event of a work problem, each inmate in this group would seek help from her immediate boss. All, in the case of a minor problem with another inmate, stated that they would solve it within the inmate social system. Bobbye said, "I'd talk it over with the group. The other inmate and I would both wind up in the hole [isolation cell] probably." Whereas Bobbye and Esther claimed that, in the event of a very serious problem with another inmate, they would solve it among the inmates, Carol and Tommye said they would seek help from the camp superintendent.

Sources of help. The four inmates in Group II reported that some free people and inmates have helped them since they were committed to Sheldon. Three said that free people who have aided them are their work supervisors. Ways in which this has been done included giving the respondent equal and fair treatment, understanding her personal problems, and expressing an interest and concern in her work progress. According to responses of Carol and Bobbye, other inmates helped them by providing them with clothes when they arrived at Sheldon. On the other hand, Esther and Tommye reported that the advice, truthfulness, and cheerfulness of other inmates have helped them. All four inmates stated that some of the free people "throw their weight around" or "pick on the inmates." Bobbye said about one of the matrons, "She wants to run the whole
thing; you take orders from the captain. She tells you another way. She is in a clique." Tommye stated that one matron is "constantly reminding you to be good--to do this and do that like you were an idiot."

Concepts of the duties of the free people. The conceptions which Group II members hold regarding the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and the warden are in line with the expectations of the administration. These inmates have an opportunity to talk with the matrons and superintendent during the performance of their work assignment.

Prison rules. Most inmates in Group II claimed that the free people do not always abide by the rules of the institution and that the rules which they break are sometimes important. Carol and Tommye reported that some groups of inmates almost always "oppose official orders," but only Esther admitted that her group did not always accept official rules.

Summary on Group II

By and large, the members of Group II are the same age, have the same level of educational achievement, which is lower than that of Group I but similar to the median educational attainment for all of the white female inmates, profess the same religion, have similar marital backgrounds,
are serving time for the same type of offense, have been committed to Sheldon fairly recently, and are from urban areas of 500,000 or more population.

Group II members consider themselves to be popular or about average in popularity, prefer their group friends to others, use both the pronouns "we" and "I" in referring to group activities, and recognized the existence of groups within their first few days at Sheldon.

Like Group I members, inmates in Group II form a tightly knit group. However, unlike Group I members, they do not live close together. They usually eat at the same table, share secrets mainly with one close group friend, share luxuries mainly with group members, and have varied ideas about "taking the blame" for another inmate. These ideas range from "accepting the blame for any inmate" to "accepting the blame for only themselves." All read the Sheldonite; most recognize the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates; and all have hobbies. Only one group member participated in social and fraternal organizations prior to commitment. Two inmates feel that inmate friendships will end with release; and the other two feel that they will continue even after the individuals return to the "free world." The inmates plan to return home upon release, but most do not have any definite plans about working.

All members were "afraid" when they arrived at
Sheldon, but said that this feeling is no longer present. They consider themselves as having been "fairly treated" by the administration. They prefer to use the word "inmate" rather than "convict" in referring to themselves. All have "rehabilitation" concepts relating to services within the prison, but only the two who have been at Sheldon longer than other group members believe that the prison has a rehabilitation program.

Group II members are satisfied with their work assignments. They consider the work positions at the administration building to be the most important assignments for the inmate. All would seek advice from their supervisor in the event of a work problem, but in a problem with another inmate, they said they would solve it among themselves.

Although they agreed that both free personnel and inmates have helped them during their incarceration, they feel that some of the free personnel "throw their weight around" or "pick on the inmates."

3. Group III

Group III is a triad of three inmates who work in the prison administration building. Each claims subgroup membership in Group I or II. These girls do not consider their own group to have much power and look to the leaders of the two main groups for guidance.
The inmates cooperated with the interviewer in the formal interview situation. They also helped her in her endeavor to establish rapport with the total female inmate population.

**Population characteristics**

**Age.** Unlike Groups I and II, Group III is characterized by wide divergences in age. Members are 20, 29, and 34 years old.

**School achievement.** On the whole, the median educational attainment of these inmates is lower than that of the Group I members, but slightly higher than that for all white female inmates. One has completed the tenth, one the eleventh, and one the twelfth grade. All have attended inmate school.

**Religion.** Group III members are Catholic, and with the exception of one, attend mass regularly. However, prior to commitment only one of the inmates attended church often.

**Occupational status.** In contrast to the similarity of occupational statuses which characterized Groups I and II, the occupational statuses of the members of Group III were varied. Marge was a barmaid; Shirley owned and managed a sundry store; and, Mary worked as an office clerk.
Marital status. The members of this group have varied marital statuses. Marge is divorced; Shirley is married; and, Mary is single. Mary is an only child.

Crime, length of sentence, and date of commitment. The crimes of the Group III members are similar to those for the inmates in Groups I and II. Two are violators of narcotics laws serving five and three-year sentences. One is a check forger serving a two-year sentence. The members of Group III came to Sheldon within the last few years; one was committed in 1956, one in 1957, and one in 1958.

Residence and size of community. Like the members of Groups I and II, the members of Group III are from urban areas of 500,000 or more population.

Type admission and previous commitments. Two group members have had previous institutional commitments. Mary spent part of her childhood in a training school and Shirley has served sentences in two prisons in different states.

Individual friendships and group affiliations.

Inmate's popularity, awareness of groupings and leaders. In relationships with other inmates, the girls in this triad classify themselves as popular or about average in popularity. Shirley reported that she
considered "six or seven girls" her close friends; whereas, Marge and Mary thought that they had only "three" and "one close friend" respectively.

All said that they prefer each other's company to that of other inmate friends. Their particular friends, they claimed, provided material needs for them when they were committed and were less likely to involve them in trouble. All named different qualities which they like in a friend. Some of these were that the inmate should be one who is able to "keep a confidence," one who is willing to discuss problems with the inmate, and one who is "sincere, loyal, honest, truthful, and adaptable." Two respondents said that most inmates are more interested in themselves than in other inmates. On the other hand, Shirley who has had previous institutional experience, thinks that the inmates "go out of their way" to help other inmates.

The three group members meet several times a day in the dining room, at coffee break, and in the television room. They visit, talk, eat, and watch television together. Two attend church with each other. The main topic of conversation according to statements by these respondents is "getting out."

Group III members recognized the existence of groups among the inmates. They answered affirmatively the following question: "Are there groups, bunches, or cliques of
friends among the women inmates here?" Mary indicated her subgroup membership by saying, "I am in the middle of two groups."

The inmates in this group have definite ideas about group cohesion. Shirley and Mary claimed that some groups "stick together" more than others. All inmates in Group III reported that in a disagreement within the group, those not involved should remain neutral. These inmates are similar to those in Group I in their preference for using the pronoun "we" rather than "I" in referring to group activities.

**Sentiments toward sharing.** All members of Group III reported that they think it is best to share secrets with one friend and to share luxuries with three or four close friends. The power of social control was evidenced by Shirley who claimed that "you'd feel guilty if you didn't" share with a few friends. Mary stated that sharing luxuries was a part of "fair play."

Group III members reported that they would "take the blame" for any inmate; however, Shirley qualified her answer by adding that if an inmate were in serious trouble she evidently was "big enough" to involve herself in it and must be "big enough" to accept the consequences. According to responses received by the interviewer, a special effort is made to "take the blame" for another
inmate if she is ready for parole or if she would do the
same for the person who "takes her blame."

Nicknames, Sheldonite, and hobbies. The members
of Group III acknowledged the prevalence of nicknames
among the inmates. All reported that they read the
Sheldonite weekly and one has written an article for it.
They claimed that the prison newspaper is a "good" idea
because it builds up their morale and informs them about
the events taking place at other camps on the prison com-
 pound. Most inmates in this group have hobbies.

Duration of friendships. Like the members in
Groups I and II, prior to commitment most members in
Group III knew other individuals who are now inmates but
these acquaintances did not determine their present inmate
group alignment. Mary, a subgroup member of Group II
"fell" with Bobbye, a co-leader of that group. Marge
said that she knew Esther, an inmate in Group II, prior
to commitment. Both found their own friends at Sheldon.
Shirley and Mama Brenda, a member of loosely structured
Group V, served time together in another correctional in-
stitution. As a whole, the group members said that friend-
ships between inmates will terminate with release; however,

10To "fall" with another person means to be arrest-
ed at the same time. Individuals who "fall" together are
referred to as "fall partners."
Mary expressed the opinion that the duration of intimate friendships after release is relative to contacts which arise in the "free world."

**Past groupings and plans.** Two inmates claimed that they participated in organizations prior to commitment. All reported that they want to return home when they are released, but only one has definite plans for securing a particular occupational position. None of these inmates expressed "fear" about returning to the "free world."

**Self concepts of individual inmates**

**Sentiments associated with commitment.** Like the inmates in Group I and II, the inmates in Group III said that their main feeling upon arrival at Sheldon was "fear." The respondents feel that they have been "fairly treated" by the prison administrators. None consider themselves "convicts." All have a concept of the term "rehabilitation" relating it to services performed within the institution. Only one said that there is a rehabilitation program at Sheldon. One claimed, "It won't work. It's a nice plan. When you're here it's okay, but when you are out it's a different story." The other inmates expressed the opinion that the men in Sheldon are provided with a better program of rehabilitation than the women.
Inmate's relationship with the administration

Work situation and free personnel. According to the responses received to the question, "Do you like your prison work? your boss? your fellow inmate workers? and the free people with whom you work?" all three inmates in Group III are satisfied with their work assignments; and, they like their boss, fellow inmate workers, and the free people with whom they work. None of the administration building workers reacted positively when asked about their feelings toward the male camp superintendent. Two indicated that they thought their jobs were important, but all felt other inmates could do them as well.

Ranking of inmate jobs. As indicated by the rankings of inmate jobs by Group III members, administration building jobs are considered to be the most important work positions. The investigator noted that all mentioned their friends' jobs as important work positions.

Problems at work and with other inmates. In the event of a problem at work, two Group III members would seek help from the warden or their immediate boss. Mary, the youngest member of the group, said that she had never had this problem. With regard to a minor or a serious problem with another inmate, two said that inmates should solve the problem "among themselves." One said that only
in the event of a serious problem with another inmate, would she seek help from the warden.

Sources of help. Most members of the group stated that they felt free personnel and inmates have helped them during their incarceration. The priest and the warden were named among those who have given aid.

Group III members reported that free personnel "throw their weight around" and "pick on" the inmates. One inmate who feels that a particular matron "picks on" some of the inmates gave the following illustration: "She let's you know who she is by making you know what kind of clothes you wear."1

Concepts of duties of free people. The conception which Group III members hold regarding the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and warden are in line with the expectations of the administration. According to responses recorded by the interviewer, the girls speak or talk to the matrons; only two speak to the superintendent and the warden.

Prison rules. Most inmates in Group III said that staff members usually follow the prison rules. Two reported that some groups of inmates almost always oppose

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1Female inmates wear gray pin-striped skirts.
official orders; however, all agreed that their group always accepts official orders.

Summary on Group III

Group III members differ greatly in age, marital status, and occupational status prior to incarceration. For the most part, they have similar educational attainments, the median being 11 grades which is about the same as the median educational attainment (9-10 grades) for the white female inmate population. They have similar religious preferences, are serving time for similar types of offenses, have previous institutional experience, have been committed to Sheldon during or since 1956, and are from urban areas of 500,000 or more population. (A graphic representation of the age, type crime, and institutional experience, for the members of the first three groups is presented following this summary.)

Group III members consider themselves popular or about average in popularity, prefer their close group friends to others, use the pronoun "we" in referring to group activities, but do not express definite opinions on the time of their recognition of groups at Sheldon.

These inmates are members of a less tightly knit group than are the previously mentioned inmates in Groups I and II. Two of the members live near each other in the
dormitory. They usually eat at the same table, share secrets with one close friend in the group, share luxuries with three or four friends, and would "take the blame" for any inmate. All read the *Sheldonite*; most recognized the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates; and, all have hobbies. On the whole, the group members feel that friendships will terminate with release. The inmates desire to return home upon release, but only one has definite plans about working. Two inmates participated in fraternal and social organizations prior to commitment.

Most group members said that they were "afraid" when they first arrived at Sheldon, but that this fear is no longer present. They feel that they have been "fairly treated" by the administration. None think of themselves as "convicts." To all of these inmates "rehabilitation" means the provision of services within the institution, but only one believes that Sheldon has a "good" rehabilitation program.

Group III members are satisfied with their work assignments; they rank as important jobs those at the administration building. In a work problem, the girls would seek help from the warden or their immediate boss. In a problem with another inmate, they would solve it alone, among the group members, or within the inmate social system.
CHARACTERISTICS OF WHITE FEMALE INMATES IN THREE MAIN GROUPS AT SHELDON, OCTOBER, 1958

Figure 3. Type of crime, age, and institutional experience of members in the three main inmate groups at Sheldon, October, 1958. Each circle represents an inmate; the larger the circle the greater the degree of acceptance in the inmate social system.
All agreed that for the most part both free personnel and inmates have helped them during their incarceration. On the other hand, they feel that some staff members "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates."

4. Group IV

Group IV is a loosely structured group consisting of two pairs of inmate friends. Pair A, Joan and Rene, work respectively in the inmate sewing room and in the administration building as a clerk. Pair B, Verna and Bula, work in the tailor shop. The "involuntary isolate," Ruth, is a file clerk in the administration building. Group IV members express some mutual choices among themselves. Since these choices are neither intense nor in all cases reciprocal the inmates form a rather loosely structured group.

During the interview Joan and Rene were recalcitrant, but cooperative to the extent that they completed their formal interviews. Ruth and Bula were cooperative, but were unable to comprehend many of the questions even

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12On the periphery of loosely integrated Group IV is an "involuntary isolate." An "involuntary isolate" is an isolate who desires, but does not have reciprocal friendships.
when the interviewer presented them on an elementary level. Verna was unable to complete the interview because she became upset emotionally.

Population characteristics

Age. Whereas similar ages among members characterize Groups I and II, wide divergences in ages characterize the members in Groups III and IV. The "involuntary isolate" is 35, members of Pair A, 28 and 42, and members of Pair B, 24 and 38.

School achievement. On the whole, the educational attainments for this group are the lowest for any group thus far discussed; furthermore, the group's median educational attainment is lower than the median educational attainment for the total white female inmate population. In Pair A, Joan and Rene, completed the tenth grade and two years of college, respectively. In Pair B, Verna had no formal education and Bula completed the seventh grade. Ruth, the "involuntary isolate," completed the seventh grade.

Religion. The members in Group IV have greater similarity of religion and are more regularly in their religious practices than the members of any of the other groups. All are Protestant and attend church regularly. Also, prior to incarceration, most of these inmates
participated in church activities.

**Occupational status.** Whereas a similarity of occupational statuses characterize the members in Groups I and II, the members in Groups III and IV have had diverse occupational statuses. Two worked as barmaids or waitresses, one as a secretary, one as a house servant, and one as a housewife.

**Marital status.** Although all members of this group have been legally married from one to three times, common-law arrangements predominate at the present time. Only Rene at present is legally married; Ruth is separated; and the other three inmates are married under common law. All have siblings.

**Crime, length of sentence, and date of commitment.** Unlike the inmates of the more cohesive groups, members in this group have committed either "crimes against the person" or theft of some type. The inmates in Pair A and the "involuntary isolate" were incarcerated for theft crimes including forgery and/or simple burglary. Inmates in Pair B are charged with "crimes against the person," which were murder and criminal conspiracy in an attempted murder. Sentences for these five inmates range from one year to life. Most are serving five or six years. Contrasted with the diversified and usually earlier date of
commitments for the other group's members, the Group IV members were committed to Sheldon in 1958.

Residence and size of community. Unlike the similar, large-size community for the previously mentioned group members, the inmates in Group IV come from areas which are smaller and have dissimilar populations. Only one inmate came from an area with 500,000 or more people. The "involuntary isolate" and one member of Pair A and one of Pair B are from areas with less than 5,000 population. One inmate is from an urban area which has a population of from 5,000 to 24,999.

Type admission and previous commitments. None of these inmates had previous institutional commitments. However, Ruth is a parole violator and Joan is serving a sentence for two offenses.

Individual friendships and group affiliations

Inmate's popularity, awareness of groupings and leaders. In relationships with other inmates, the members in Group IV stated that they consider themselves about average in popularity. Rene classified herself as not very popular among the inmates. Three reported that all of the inmates are their friends.

Most group members said that they preferred each other's company to that of other inmate friends. They
listed several qualities which they thought a friend should have. The following are some examples of these: "keeps a confidence," "goes to church," "is a good family wife," "tends to her own business," "don't handle no ugly words." Rene, the only Group IV member who has attended college, did not choose either of the girls in Pair B who have lower educational attainments as her friends. She did choose Frances, the inmate school principal; however, this choice was not reciprocal. Rene said that she does not like people who are illiterate.

The members of Group IV said they are with their friends several times a day in their room, in the yard, or in the dining room. All go to church together. Pair B eat and work together. These inmates go to school, crochet and write letters with one another.

They revealed an awareness of groups at Sheldon by giving affirmative answers to the question, "Are there groups, bunches, or cliques of friends among the women inmates here?" It took members of loosely integrated Group IV longer than it did those in the previously mentioned groups to recognize the existence of inmate groups. Only three indicated that they became aware of these within the week after they were committed to Sheldon.

Most members of this loosely knit group had little understanding of the questions concerning group cohesion.
There was no agreement among Group IV inmates on the use of the pronouns "we" and "I" in referring to group activities. These five inmates said that they live near their friends. Even though most inmates claimed that they did not know if there were leaders among the inmates, Ruth, an "involuntary isolate" said that she was a "spiritual leader" in the group.

**Sentiments toward sharing.** Members in Group IV reported that they think it is best to share secrets with only one person. There was no concensus in the responses to questions relating to an inmate's sharing luxuries. Rene stated that she had no luxuries, Bula that she shared if she were asked, Ruth that she shared with a few, and Joan that she shared her luxuries as long as they lasted. Almost all of the respondents said that they would not "take the blame" for another inmate. Joan stated that she would, but that she thought it best if each girl would "take her own blame."

**Nicknames, Sheldonite, and hobbies.** Whereas, in the previously mentioned groups which are more tightly knit, group members recognized the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates, less than one-half of the inmates in Group IV recognized this prevalence. None of the group members have nicknames. All except the illiterate members said that they read the *Sheldonite* weekly.
Rene and Fula indicated that they do not think the paper is a good idea. The former thought that with her partial college training, she was "above" inmate news. The latter said that she does not think that the paper is a "good" idea because she does not like to read. Those who do feel that the Sheldonite is a "good" idea said that it let the inmate know what was "going on." Most respondents in Group IV have hobbies.

**Duration of friendships.** Two admitted that they knew some of the other individuals who are at Sheldon now prior to their commitment, having met while in jail. They said that these acquaintances did not influence their informal group alignment in prison. Two reported that they think friendships made at prison may last after release. None of these inmates "fell" together; however, the three who claimed common-law marital status and the one who claimed legal marital status "fell" with their husbands.

**Past groupings and plans.** Most Group IV inmates did not participate in fraternal or social organizations prior to commitment. Only one member in the group reported that she plans to work outside of the home when she is released. None said that they were afraid to leave Sheldon.
Self concepts of individual inmates

Sentiments associated with commitment. Most respondents in Group IV said that their main feeling upon arrival at Sheldon was "fear." After being in prison for a while, they no longer are afraid. All claimed that they have been treated "fairly" by prison administrators. Whereas, none reported that they think of themselves as "convicts," Rene admitted that she thinks of herself as an "inmate." Rene defined the term "convict" as a hardened criminal and the term "inmate" as an animal in a cage. Only two Group IV members indicated that they have a concept of the term "rehabilitation" relating it to the provision of services in the prison. They said that Sheldon has a "good" rehabilitation program.

Inmate's relationship with the administration

Work Situation and free personnel. Most inmates in Group IV claimed that they are satisfied with their job, like their boss, fellow inmate workers, and the free people with whom they work. All reported that they feel, that their work is important.

Rankings of inmate jobs. As indicated by the rankings that Group IV inmates gave to occupational positions open to them, administration building jobs are considered to be first in importance. Other jobs ranked
Problems on the job and with other inmates. In the event of a work problem members of Group IV, would seek help from various sources. Among these are their boss, an inmate friend, or the minister. In a minor or serious problem with another inmate, most said that they would settle it by themselves. Ruth qualified this answer by stating that if the problem were too serious she would ask help from the "one in charge." An inmate, Joan claimed, should never go to a matron in the event of an argument with another inmate.

Sources of help. Three respondents said that free personnel have helped them since they were admitted to Sheldon; two indicated that this help came from their boss who encouraged them in their work. Most inmates claimed that other inmates have helped them. Two reported that some of the free people "throw their weight around" and three that a few of the staff members "pick on the inmates." Pair A indicated that they feel that partiality is shown by the matrons in their "disciplinary reports."

Concepts of the duties of the free people. When questioned regarding the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and warden, all respondents conceived of duties...
of the matrons which were in line with administrative expectations. Rene and Joan had a concept of the duties of the superintendent and only Rene had any concept of the duties of the warden.

**Prison rules.** All inmates reported that the free people follow the rules of the prison, but one admitted that she did not know what the official orders were. Two said that some inmate groups almost always opposed official orders, but three claimed that their group always followed them.

**Summary on Group IV**

By and large, the members of Group IV have divergent ages, dissimilar educational attainments which on the whole are lower than the median educational attainment for the white female inmates, profess the same religion, participate in the prison church services, have similar marital backgrounds, are serving time for two types of offenses, have been in Sheldon only during the last year, and are from urban areas of less than 500,000 population.

Group IV members consider themselves "about average" in popularity, prefer their friends to others, and recognized the existence of groups within their first few weeks at Sheldon. They did not agree on the usage of the pronouns "we" and "I" in referring to group
activities.

The inmates in this loosely knit group have little understanding of group cohesion. Although most live close together, they do not eat at the same table, will "take the blame" for no one, and have no mutual practices about sharing luxuries with others. Secrets are shared mainly with one close friend. Almost all Group IV members read the *Sheldonite* weekly and have a hobby, but do not note the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates. Several feel that inmate friendships will continue even after group members are released from Sheldon. The respondents plan to return to and to work in their homes. Only one participated in fraternal and social organizations prior to commitment.

All members of this group were afraid upon their arrival at Sheldon. They said that this feeling is no longer present. They consider themselves as having been "fairly treated" by the administration. None thinks of herself as a "convict"; only one thinks of herself as an "inmate." Most group members do not have concepts of the term "rehabilitation," but those who do, feel that Sheldon has a "good" program.

Most Group IV inmates are satisfied with their jobs; they rank as important the inmate work positions in the administration building. They would seek help from different sources in the event of a work problem,
but in a problem with another inmate, they would try to solve it themselves.

They agreed that both free personnel and inmates have helped them during their incarceration. On the other hand, they also feel that some of the free personnel "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates." Whereas members of other groups had concepts of the duties of the superintendent and warden, few inmates in Group IV could enumerate any of them.

5. Group V

Group V is a loosely integrated triad. The members in this group are Irene, who works in the prison administration building, Sarah, who works as a dining hall orderly, and Mama Brenda, who works as a night clerk at the Larks. In many respects these members can almost be characterized, both individually and collectively, as "voluntary isolates." All respondents cooperated during the formal interview.

Population characteristics

Age. Group V has a wider age range and an older median age than any other groups thus far discussed. Their ages are 38, 53, and 70.

13 See Section 7, "Isolates," which follows.
School achievement. The median educational attainment of Group V, similar to that of Group IV, is lower than the median educational attainment for the white female inmate population. One inmate completed the fifth, one the sixth, and one the eleventh grade. Two have attended inmate school.

Religion. Group V members are Catholic and attend mass regularly. However, prior to commitment they attended church irregularly and did not actively participate in church activities.

Occupational status. A lack of similarity in occupational statuses characterizes the members of Group V. Mama Brenda was a practical nurse, Sarah a taxi-dance hall and barroom operator, and Irene a housewife.

Marital status. Two inmates in this triad are widowed. One is married. None of the members has siblings.

Crime, length of sentence, and date of commitment. Members of Group V, like those of Groups I, II, and III are narcotics violators. Two are serving sentences of five years and one is serving a sentence of three years. All were committed to Sheldon during different years, 1955, 1956, and 1957.
Residence and size of community. Like inmates in Groups I, II, and III, members in Group V lived in urban areas of around 500,000 population.

Type admission and previous commitments. This is a first commitment for two inmates. Mama Brenda has served time in a federal institution.

Inmate's popularity, awareness of groupings and leaders. In contrast to the feeling of "average" popularity which most inmates in the previously mentioned groups have, members of the triad say that they are "not very popular." Mama Brenda and Sarah each claimed that they have "two close friends," Irene that she has "one." All said they prefer their group friends to others. Mama Brenda stated that she liked those who are "not perverted" and who "enjoy religious talk." Others wanted a friend to be "loyal, helpful, unselfish, honest, and thoughtful." However, all said that most inmates are more interested in themselves than in other people.

Members of Group V reported that they are together several times a day in their rooms, in the dining hall, or in the television room. These inmates eat together, talk over problems with one another, and the two younger members share coffee in the dormitory room prior to going to work. Among topics of conversation are the following: the "future," "going home," health, religion, missing
each other when one is released, and "what she [an older group member] will do for me and things when I get out."

Members of Group V recognized the existence of groups among the female inmates, but reported that they could not remember when they first noticed their existence. All expressed some ideas about group cohesion. They said that their group members used the term "we" in referring to group activities and that others in similar situations use the pronoun "I." Two admitted that they sometimes had disagreements among themselves; however, none reported that their group ever had disagreements with other groups. Only one member of the group said that she lives near her friends.

**Sentiments toward sharing.** Group V members expressed differing opinions concerning sharing secrets and luxuries with other inmates. Mama Brenda said that it is best to share secrets with no one; Irene prefers to share them with only one other person; but, Sarah said that she shares secrets with more than one person in the group. Sarah and Mama Brenda reported that they share luxuries with a few people. The latter stated that she would share with any inmate as long as the person did not "use" her. Irene said that she had no luxuries. The inmates agreed that it is best for each girl to "take her own blame," but Sarah claimed that she would "take the
blame" for her two friends. Mama Brenda said that unless she were in some measure involved she would not "accept it" for another person.

**Nicknames, Sheldonite, and hobbies.** The members in this partially isolated group acknowledged the prevalence of nicknames among inmates. All read the Sheldonite weekly. They think the inmate newspaper is a "good" idea because it informs the female inmates of the events taking place in other parts of the prison and "prints messages to loved ones in the other camps" at Sheldon.

**Duration of friendships.** Sarah and Mama Brenda said that they knew some inmates prior to incarceration. Mama Brenda said that she met Shirley, a member of Group III, in a federal correctional institution in another state. This is the only group discussed thus far in which all group members express the desire to continue after release the friendships made at Sheldon.

**Past groupings and plans.** None of the Group V members participated in social or fraternal organizations prior to commitment. Sarah and Irene stated that they hope to return home and work after being released; Mama Brenda plans to work in another state.

**Self concepts of individual inmates**
Sentiments associated with commitment. On arrival at Sheldon, two inmates said they felt as though they had been "unjustly treated." One was "afraid." All stated that they have been "fairly treated" by the prison administration; however, Sarah and Mama Brenda claimed that individual staff members had treated them "unfairly." One inmate reported that she thinks of herself as an "inmate," however, no one claimed that she thinks of herself as a "convict." All have concepts of the term "rehabilitation" relating to services within the prison. Only one said that she thought Sheldon had a "good" rehabilitation program.

Inmate's relationship with the administration

Work situation and free personnel. All inmates in Group V said that they are satisfied with their work and like their boss and the free people with whom they work. One said that she did not like her fellow inmate workers because they were Negro. This was the first voluntary reference in an interview situation to Negro-white relations.

All claimed that their jobs are important. The inmate who is on night duty at the Lark's office stated that her job is important because she is present to take care of emergency calls which might affect the inmates. Sarah, the dining room orderly, said that her job is
important because she keeps the dining area clean for the inmates who work eight hours at the administration building. The inmate who works in the incentive pay office claimed that her work is important because by keeping records straight, she provides a necessary service in preparing other inmate's incentive pay check.

**Ranking of inmate jobs.** All three group members ranked as important their own job and the jobs of the inmates who work in the administration building. Sarah claimed that administration building workers "feel superior," but she said that all girls should be equal.

**Problems at work and with other inmates.** In the event of a work problem, the members of Group V would seek help from their head work-boss. Sarah said that the matrons who might be considered her "sub-bosses" were "unfair." All agreed that in a minor problem with another inmate they would solve it among themselves; however, in a more serious problem two said that they would seek help from the camp superintendent or matrons.

**Sources of help.** Group V inmates reported that free people and inmates have helped them since they were committed to Sheldon. Sarah said the superintendent has helped her through his "fairness." The respondents stated that other inmates have helped them by sharing with them and
talking to them. Two claimed that some of the free personnel "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates." One stated that some of the matrons will do a favor for an inmate to gain her friendship. After this the matron will be afraid to demand the inmate to perform certain duties because this person might report the favor and cause trouble for the staff member. Therefore, others have to perform the "favored inmate's" duties.

**Concepts of the duties of the free people.** Group V members expressed concepts of the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and warden which were in line with the expectations of the administration. They also speak and talk to the matrons, superintendent and warden.

**Prison rules.** Inmates had different opinions concerning the practices of the free personnel in following the prison rules. One inmate said that they do not follow them and that some of those which they break are important. Another inmate reported that the free personnel follow the rules; and, a third claimed that she did not know whether or not they followed them. Two reported that some inmate groups almost always oppose official orders; however, they all agreed that their group always accepts them.

**Summary on Group V**
By and large, the members of isolated, loosely structured Group V have a wider age range and an older median age than members of other groups thus far discussed. Furthermore, they have a lower median educational attainment than the total white female inmate population, as well as Groups I-IV. They profess the same religion, practice it actively, have similar marital backgrounds, are serving time for the same type of offense, came to prison in 1955, 1956, and 1957, and are from urban areas of around 500,000 population.

Group V members consider themselves to be "not very popular." They prefer their group friends to other friends, and use the pronoun "we" in referring to group activities. They could not remember when they first recognized the existence of groups among the inmates. The inmates in this group share secrets with no one or at the most with two close friends, share luxuries with group members, and would "take the blame" for activities of another inmate rarely and then only if she were a group member. All read the Sheldonite and have hobbies. They recognized the prevalence of nicknames. Group members feel that friendships will continue after release. None of the inmates in Group V participated in fraternal or social organizations prior to commitment.

Upon arrival at Sheldon two of the members felt
"unjustly treated," At present, except in minor incidents, they feel that they have been "fairly treated" by the prison administration. They do not think of themselves as "convicts." All have a conception of the term "rehabilitation," but like the members of the other groups only in terms of services in the prison. Only one feels that Sheldon has a "good" rehabilitation program.

Group V members are satisfied with their work positions. They rank as important their own jobs and those in the administration building. All would seek advice from their supervisor in a work problem, but in a problem with another inmate, they would solve it among themselves. A serious problem with another inmate would lead them to seek help from the camp superintendent.

They agreed that both free personnel and inmates have helped them during their incarceration. On the other hand, two feel that some of the free personnel "throw their weight around" or "pick on the inmates."

6. Group VI

Group VI is a dyad consisting of two inmates who met in jail prior to their commitment to Sheldon. Both work at the administration building. Even though they have friends in Group II, through strong mutual choice they form their own group. Both inmates cooperated with the interviewer; however, the older inmate, Leigh, was skeptical in
the beginning of the interview.

Population characteristics

Age. The members of Group VI have widely divergent ages which are 31 and 20.

Educational attainment. School achievement as measured by highest grade completed is higher for this group than for the white female inmate population. Both Lynn and Leigh have been graduated from high school. Lynn also attended inmate school.

Religion. These inmates indicated different church preferences. One is Greek Orthodox, the other Protestant. Neither was regular in church attendance prior to commitment; however, Lynn attends church regularly at Sheldon.

Occupational status. The prior occupational statuses of these inmates are similar to those in Groups I and II. Both have worked in bars prior to commitment.

Marital status. Lynn and Leigh have been married one or more times. At present the former is separated from her husband and the latter is married. The older of the Group VI members had no siblings.

Crime, length of sentence, and date of commitment. Members of Group VI were committed to Sheldon for similar crimes, i.e., theft and armed robbery. They are serving
one and ten-year sentences. Their date of commitment, 1958, is similar to that for the Group IV members.

Residence and size of community. Both are from urban areas of 6,000 or less population.

Type admission and previous commitments. Neither of these inmates has had previous institutional commitments.

Individual friendships and group affiliations

Inmate's popularity, awareness of groupings and leaders. In relationships with other inmates, Leigh and Lynn classified themselves "about average" in popularity. They reported that they are mutual close friends. Both said that they prefer to be with each other than with anyone else. Qualities which they like in friends are "honesty," "gratefulness," and "sincerity." The older inmate said that she can let the younger inmate wear her clothes and that she can help her because "she does not have background and home life." They indicated that their friendships began when they were in jail prior to commitment at Sheldon.

The members of this group meet several times a day at the office, in the dining room, and in the television room. They talk, watch television, listen to records, and eat together. One inmate said that the group member who arrives at the television room first saves the other a
place to sit. Topics of conversation the inmates reported to the investigator included "other inmates," "outside," "the future," and "getting out."

Both revealed an awareness of groups at Sheldon by responding affirmatively to the question, "Are there groups, bunches, or cliques of friends among the women inmates here?" Leigh said, "Girls who are the prettiest try to go with pretty girls." Both noted the existence of groups on their first day at Sheldon.

The questions on the extent of group cohesion, Lynn reported that some groups of friends "stick together" more than other groups of friends and Leigh said that they did not. Both agreed that some groups have disagreements among members; however, they stated that they never had disagreements between themselves or with other groups.

Sentiments toward sharing. The inmates in Group VI had differing opinions toward sharing with other inmates. Leigh said that she would share secrets with or "take the blame" for no one, but that she would share luxuries with "four or five" other inmates. Lynn claimed that she would share secrets with one inmate, "accept the blame" for this same inmate and share luxuries with all inmates.

Nicknames, Sheldonite, and hobbies. Both said that they think most inmates have nicknames; they read the Sheldonite weekly and feel that the inmate newspaper is a
"good" idea because it reveals news about the whole prison and presents a channel of communication through which female and male inmates can communicate.

**Duration of friendships.** These inmates acknowledged that they knew other individuals who are now inmates prior to commitment. Lynn "fell" with Mamie, an "involuntary isolate" and Leigh "fell" with her husband. All three inmates mentioned met in jail before being brought to Sheldon. Only Lynn, the younger, stated that she believes that friendships formed at prison will continue after release.

**Past groupings and plans.** Lynn was a member of fraternal and social groups prior to commitment. Both reported that they plan to work when they are released; Lynn stated that she will return to her husband and secure a job; Leigh said that she will work as a secretary.

**Self concepts of individual inmates**

**Sentiments associated with commitment.** When they first arrived at Sheldon, one respondent was "very unhappy and worried about the loved ones I have left at home" and the other said that she felt "unlucky to get caught." Both reported that they have been "fairly treated" by the prison administration. Lynn said that she sometimes thinks of herself as a "convict." Leigh claimed that she never thinks
of herself in this way. Both have concepts of the term "rehabilitation" as involving services performed within the institution, and both think that Sheldon has a "good" rehabilitation program.

**Inmate's relationship with the administration**

**Work situation and free personnel.** According to responses received to the question, "Do you like your prison work? your boss? your fellow inmate workers? and the free people with whom you work?" the inmates are satisfied with their work situation and their associates. Furthermore, they claimed that their work is important.

**Rankings of inmate jobs.** In ranking inmate jobs these respondents placed office positions at the top.

**Problems at work and with other inmates.** The inmates said that if they had a work problem they would seek help from their boss. In the event of a minor or serious problem between themselves and another inmate, Leigh stated that she would work it out herself, whereas Lynn said that she would seek help from other inmates. In the event of a serious problem Lynn said she would seek aid from her work boss.

**Sources of help.** Both claimed that their work supervisor has helped them by giving them self-confidence
and understanding. Lynn said that other inmates have helped her, but reported that free people sometimes "pick on the inmates" or "throw their weight around."

**Concepts of the duties of the free people.** Both inmates have concepts which are in line with the expectation of the administration concerning the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and warden. They speak to or talk with the matrons and superintendent. Neither speak to nor talk with the warden.

**Prison rules.** Lynn admitted that free people break the rules of the prison some of which are important. Both stated that some groups of inmates almost always oppose official rules and that their group does not always accept them.

**Summary on Group VI**

In summary, the two members in Group VI are of widely different ages. However, they have the same educational achievement, which is higher than the median educational attainments for Groups II-V. They profess different religions. Both are married, are serving time for the same type of offense (theft), have been committed to Sheldon within the last year, and are from areas of 6,000 or less population. Neither has previous institutional experience.

These inmates do not consider themselves to be as
popular as do the members of the larger groups, but each indicates that she has one close friend, namely, the other. Although they prefer to associate with each other, only one uses the term "we" in referring to activities with her friend. Both recognized the existence of groups within their first few days at Sheldon.

They live close together and eat at the same table. One expresses stronger group ties than does the other. She thinks that she would share secrets or "take the blame" for her close friend. They both believe that it is best to share luxuries with several or all of the inmates. They read the Sheldonite weekly and recognize the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates. Both knew each other prior to being committed to Sheldon. Only the one who participated in groups prior to commitment feels that friendships formed at Sheldon will last after release.

There was no agreement between the group members on their feelings when they arrived at prison. Unlike the members in Groups I-IV, they were not "afraid." Both feel that they have been "fairly treated" by the prison personnel. Only one thinks of herself as an "inmate." Both have concepts of the term "rehabilitation" based on services within the prison and feel that Sheldon has a "good" rehabilitation program.

Group VI members think that their work positions are important; they rank inmate jobs at the administration
building highly. They would seek advice from their administrative boss in the event of a work problem, but in a problem with another inmate, they would solve it alone or among the other inmates. In the event of a serious problem with another inmate, one feels that she would ask help of her work boss.

They agree that both free personnel and inmates have helped them since their commitment to Sheldon, but one feels that the free personnel "throw their weight around" or "pick on the inmates."

7. Isolates

As has been mentioned in the preceding sections, the ungrouped inmates are classified in this study as "voluntary" and "involuntary isolates." The "voluntary isolate" is the inmate who neither makes nor receives intense mutual friendship choices. The "involuntary isolate" is the inmate who chooses several friends, but has none of these choices strongly reciprocated.

The members in Groups I-VI were asked if they thought there were "isolates" among the white female inmates. Almost all agreed that there were several. Among the characteristics they attributed to these inmates included the following: "too religious," "old," "slovenly in manners and appearance," "not clean," "backward," "unadjusted," "mentally retarded," "too quiet," "too talkative," "recent commitments," "independent," and "hard to
TABLE VI

MEASURES OF DISPERSION AND CENTRAL TENDENCY FOR VARIOUS POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF WHITE FEMALE GROUPS AT SHELDON, OCTOBER, 1958*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Age (range)</th>
<th>Date of Commitment (median year)</th>
<th>Length of Sentence (median years)</th>
<th>School Achievement Highest Grade Completed (range) (median)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>29-39</td>
<td>prior to 1955</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>24-42</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>38-70</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>20-37</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Interviews conducted by the investigator and data obtained from the State Institutional Coordinating Bureau.
get along with."

Several of the ungrouped inmates within this white female inmate population choose friends among the other inmates, but these choices are not reciprocated. Ruth, who is on the periphery of loosely integrated Group IV, Kate, who selects friends in Groups I and II, and Nancy, who chooses friends mainly in Group I, are "involuntary isolates." Ruth and Nancy work in the administration building. Kate is the classification clerk at the Larks. The attitudes of these inmates toward the interview varied. Ruth had difficulty comprehending some of the questions. Kate co-operated and was talkative. Nancy was afraid at the beginning of the interview, but relaxed after she had answered some of the questions. Since Ruth's general characteristics were previously discussed in Group IV, only her responses to the other parts of the questionnaire are recorded in this section.

Kate and Nancy, 21 and 20 years old respectively, have completed the seventh grade and are Catholics who attend mass irregularly. Whereas the former listed no civilian occupation, the latter was a "soda jerk" and a barmaid. Both are married by common law. Neither Kate nor Nancy was an only child. The former is serving a seven-year sentence for armed robbery; the latter is serving a ten-year sentence for narcotics violation. Kate was admitted in 1954, Nancy in 1953. These inmates have
had previous institutional experience and are parole violators. They lived in urban areas prior to commitment.

In relationships with other inmates, Kate and Nancy, "involuntary isolates," consider themselves to be popular and Ruth thinks of herself as very popular. Kate and Ruth said that "all of the other inmates" are their friends. Nancy stated that "six" are. All prefer their friends to other inmates. They like them because they can discuss problems and share with them. The "involuntary isolates" are with their friends several times a day in the inmate store, in their rooms, and in the television room. They talk, watch television, and listen to records with them. Conversations center around different topics for each of these inmates. Nancy said that she talks mostly about "going home," Kate about "everything," and Ruth, about her "family, church, and studies."

These inmates mentioned the prevalence of inmate groups; Kate and Nancy noticed group formation immediately upon their arrival at Sheldon. Kate and Ruth said that there are leaders among the inmates. The latter, a Fundamental Protestant, wears long hair and no make-up and considers herself the religious leader of the inmates. However, she does not receive leadership recognition from other inmates.

In sharing secrets and luxuries, each "involuntary isolate" has a different practice. Whereas, both Nancy
and Kate said that they share secrets with a "few" inmates, the former thinks that it is best to keep them to one's self and the latter that it is best to share them with several inmates so that if one inmate is released, she will still have someone with whom to discuss her personal business. Ruth claimed that she shares secrets with one close friend, but like Nancy she admitted that it is best to share them with no one. All claimed that they share luxuries with one or a few friends. Whereas, Ruth said that she would "take the blame" for no one, Kate stated that she did not believe in "snitching" and would "take the blame" for any inmate. Nancy claimed that she would "take the blame" for her friends or a few others, but would use her own judgment in deciding what to do.

Nancy and Kate acknowledged the presence of isolates among the white female inmate population. Kate said that about six of the girls who are either "too talkative, have unpleasant personalities or would rather stay to themselves" are not members in groups.

The "involuntary isolates" claimed that some groups have closer ties among members than others and that some have more internal disagreements among members than others. Nancy and Kate reported that a few groups almost always oppose official orders.

Whereas, most of the inmates in groups said that they were "afraid" when they were committed to Sheldon,
Kate claimed that she had a "chip on her shoulder," Nancy that she was "lost," and Ruth that she had been "unfairly treated." The two former inmates admitted that at times they think of themselves as "convicts." All considered the term "rehabilitation" to refer to services provided within the institution. They feel that there is a rehabilitation program at Sheldon. Nancy and Kate, who were at Camp "D," said that they like the Larks better because it is cleaner and the living quarters are more private, but Kate feels that the white inmates had better food at the old camp.

None of the "involuntary isolates" belonged to social, fraternal, or church groups prior to commitment. Nancy and Ruth knew individuals who are now inmates at Sheldon prior to either of their commitments.

The "involuntary isolates" feel that the friendships formed at prison will last for different lengths of time. Nancy thinks that they will end when she is released; Kate feels that they will continue after release; and, Ruth believes that they will continue after release only if the individuals are from the same geographical area.

Only one inmate in the entire female inmate population, Kate, stated that she was "afraid" to leave Sheldon. She is an "involuntary isolate" who said that she had spent so much of her life "locked up" that she could not adjust to the "outside."
In solving problems concerning their work situations, Kate and Nancy said that they would seek help from their work supervisors. With regard to problems with other inmates, Nancy claimed that she would solve them alone, Kate that she would seek help from her inmate friends, and Ruth that she would ask the aid of the "one in charge." All of these inmates claimed that they were satisfied with their work positions and liked their work superintendents, the other inmates, and the free people with whom they associated in their jobs. Nancy and Kate rank as important their own jobs and all rank highly the secretarial and clerical position of the inmates who work at the prison administration building.

Kate and Ruth agreed that the inmates and free personnel have helped them in Sheldon, but admitted that the latter sometimes "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates."

On the whole, the attitudes of the "involuntary isolates" are not greatly different from those of the grouped inmates. The investigator surmised that these individuals could be categorized as follows: Nancy—"the inmate who does not talk as 'interestingly' or dress as neatly as the Group I members among whom she chooses her friends; Kate--"the inmate who cannot 'keep confidences' and chooses friends in the two major competing groups, I and II"; and, Ruth--"the inmate who is a
religious fanatic in conversations and actions."

In addition to the three "involuntary isolates," five inmates can be categorized as "voluntary isolates." Two, Trudy and Joy, are recent commitments and work in the tailor shop. Even though these individuals, due to the recency of commitment, know little about life at Sheldon, they cooperated with the interviewer. Two others, Letty and Bev, work as dormitory orderlies and have been at Sheldon for a period of time sufficient for them to have developed keen insights into the prison situation. These inmates had the traditional negative attitude toward cooperating with the interviewer whom they felt had some connection with the administration. They were polite but reserved during the interview. Mamie, a Larks' administration building orderly, the most isolated inmate at the camp, was unable to answer many of the questions. Her lack of understanding even of the most elementarily worded questions was a major barrier.

In the following discussion the attitudes of Trudy

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14 Being newly committed may have some influence on the inmate's status within the inmate social system, but other factors such as group rivalry, job assignments, and work associates are also important. For example, Carol, a newcomer, is a member of tightly knit Group II. The prestige of her work position and the circumstances under which she was assigned this position, i.e., she took it over from a member in Group I, and the contacts which it allows her to have with Group II members throughout the day have a positive effect on her grouping status.
and Joy, the recent commitments, and Bev and Letty, the dormitory orderlies, are considered in pairs and those of Mamie alone.

Trudy and Joy are respectively 24 and 40 years old. The former completed the twelfth and the latter the tenth grade. Trudy is Protestant; Joy is Catholic. Both attend church regularly. Prior to commitment Trudy was a waitress and Joy a telephone operator and filing clerk. The former is married and the latter widowed. Both have siblings. The crime for which they have been imprisoned is the same, namely theft. Trudy is serving a four-year sentence and Joy a two-year sentence. The latter is a probation violator and the former has previous institutional experience. Both were committed to Sheldon in 1958. Trudy is from a community of 9,000 and Joy from a community of 500,000 or more population. Since these inmates have been at the Larks for only a few weeks and had not known any of the inmates prior to commitment, they did not express definite ideas about their inmate friendships. However, both said that they had noticed inmate groups.

In sharing with other inmates, Trudy and Joy stated that they would share their luxuries with others, but they think that it is best for each person to keep her secrets to herself. Trudy, the inmate with previous institutional experience, said that she would "take the blame" for any
friend. On the other hand, Joy stated that she would "take the blame" for no one. They recognized the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates. Whereas, Trudy felt as though the Sheldonite is a "good" idea, Joy, who has had no previous institutional experience, said that she does not care whether or not there is an inmate paper.

Neither Trudy nor Joy participated in fraternal, social, or church groups prior to incarceration. Both plan to work after they return to the "free world." They are satisfied with their work and like the people they associate with in their work situation. However, Joy said that she did not feel that her work is important. They ranked administration building clerical and secretarial jobs as the most important work positions for the inmate.

Both felt that in a work problem they would seek help from their supervisor. Trudy said that problems between inmates should be solved among the inmates. Joy expressed no opinion on this subject.

Trudy and Joy did not agree regarding who had helped them during their incarceration; however, they agreed that free people "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates." Furthermore, they claimed that both free people and inmates sometimes "break" prison rules. Joy said that often free people "overdo" the rules. Both have concepts of the duties of the matrons and superintendent which are in line with the expected duties as
defined by the administration. However, only Trudy, the inmate with previous institutional experience, was able to enumerate the duties of the warden.

Unlike the grouped inmates, these "involuntary isolates" said they did not experience "fear" when they arrived at Sheldon. Joy said that she felt "lonely." Trudy admitted that she had committed a crime and expected to "pay" for it. Whereas the latter thinks of herself as an "inmate," the former does not use this term in thinking of herself. Both have concepts of the word "rehabilitation" involving services performed within the institution. Only Trudy thinks that Sheldon has a rehabilitation program.

Significantly enough, even though these inmates are recent commitments, they are aware of groups and isolates within the white female inmate population. Joy's responses coincided with what one might expect of a "bitter" new commitment. Trudy's were similar to those of the more experienced inmate.

Bev and Letty\(^\text{15}\) are two of the three dormitory orderlies. They are respectively 23 and 27 years old and have completed the eighth and sixth grades. Letty is Catholic and Bev Protestant. Neither is regular in church

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\(^{15}\) Letty has an I.Q. of 77. This information is recorded for very few of the women inmates and was obtained from scores on tests administered by a prison psychologist.
Prior to commitment, Bev and her husband owned and operated a bar-cafe; Letty worked as a waitress and barmaid. The former has been married three times; the latter is single. Both have siblings. Letty was committed to Sheldon in 1957 to serve a five-year sentence for manslaughter. Staff members said that the day before her release Letty attempted to escape with another inmate, a homosexual now at the state mental hospital, who still had a long sentence to serve. As a result, Letty's sentence was lengthened by two years. Bev was committed to Sheldon in 1958 to serve a ten-year sentence for violating the narcotics laws. The former was reared on a farm and the latter in a community of 500,000 or more population. These inmates are either probation or parole violators.

They consider themselves popular or average in popularity with the other inmates. Bev said that "all the inmates" are her friends, but that she has "two close friends." Letty stated that "three or four inmates" are her friends and one is a "close friend." They reported that they are mutual friends and that one of their other friends works as a dormitory orderly. In listing the qualities one likes in a friend, Letty states that she likes those who are "understanding, truthful, and sincere." When asked if these are the qualities of her inmate friends,
she replied, "No one here has these qualities." Bev stated that she liked individuals who are "friends to my face and to my back." Both inmates recognized the existence of inmate groups within their first few days at Sheldon.

Bev and Letty claim that they meet their friends several times a week. The only activity in which they participate with them is watching television. Conversations for these two mainly center around the topics of "inside prison" and freedom.

Both concur in their opinions regarding sharing and "taking the blame" for another inmate. They agreed that it is best to share secrets with no one and to "take the blame" for a few or all provided that it were not too serious.

When asked if the respondent preferred her friends or other inmate friends, Bev replied, "I'm satisfied. I get along with everybody." Letty said that she disliked and could not trust most people at Sheldon. Both felt that one needs friends to avoid becoming lonely. They noted the prevalence of nicknames among the inmates. Both read the the Sheldonite weekly and think that the inmate newspaper is a "good" idea.

When asked about their friends prior to commitment, Bev said that she worked with one of the individuals who is an inmate now. Whereas, she said the friendships made
at Sheldon would terminate with release, Letty felt they would continue. Neither participated in clubs prior to incarceration. Both plan to work when they are "outside." In a work problem within the institution, they stated, they would seek help from their work supervisor. They would try to solve problems between themselves and other inmates, within the inmate social system. Both agreed that other inmates have helped them in Sheldon; only Bev feels that the free people have helped her. She said that the former helped her by teaching her the rules when she first arrived at Sheldon.

Bev refused to answer questions relating to whether or not free personnel "throw their weight around" or "pick on the inmates," but Letty claimed that several free people "throw their weight around" and "pick on the inmates" by showing partiality and making the inmate feel she is an "underdog." In enumerating the duties of the matrons, superintendent, and warden, Letty listed some of those which are in line with the expectations of the administration. On the other hand, Bev said that she did not know what the superintendent and warden were supposed to do. Both inmates speak to the free personnel. Letty said that these employees often "break" important prison rules. Both admitted that inmate groups "break" official rules, but denied that they did.
On arrival at Sheldon, Bev said that she was "afraid" because of the "tales" she had heard about prison life. In contrast, Letty was angry or as she said, "I was burnt."

Unlike the members in the cohesive groups, Bev thinks of herself as both an "inmate" and "convict." Letty seldom uses the latter term in thinking of herself. Both have concepts of the term "rehabilitation" which are based mainly on services within the institution. Neither feels that the present program at Sheldon helps to rehabilitate individuals. Letty who was at Camp "D" stated that she likes the new prison better because there are no bars and the individual can decorate her own room.

Another "involuntary isolate" is Mamie, a camp administration building orderly who has no mutual friendships among the inmates. She has a skin rash and lives in the camp infirmary. During the interview, she was docile but unable to comprehend all of the questions.

Mamie is 25 years old, has completed the sixth grade, and is Protestant and active in church participation. Prior to incarceration she was a barmaid. She is divorced, and has two siblings. She was arrested in 1958 with Lynn, a member of Group VI, and is serving a one-year sentence for theft. Mamie lived in a community of 5,000 population.

The few responses which Mamie was able to give to
the interviewer are presented in this section. She said that there are inmate groups which she noticed a few weeks after being committed to Sheldon. However, she admitted that she is not a member and furthermore that she seldom leaves her room to associate with other inmates. When Mamie is with others, it is in the camp administration building day room or in the television room. She keeps up with camp activities by reading the Sheldonite weekly.

In a disagreement among inmates, Mamie feels that the individuals involved should settle it among themselves. She said that the free personnel have helped her in the same ways in which they have helped other inmates. Mamie feels that among the inmates only the one she "fell" with has helped her. She speaks to the matrons and superintendent in her work contacts, but has no idea of what the duties of these individuals are. Even though she has heard the word "rehabilitation," she does not know the meaning of it.

The three "involuntary isolates" can be categorized in the following terms: Bev---"the independent individual," Letty---"the mentally retarded inmate," and Mamie---"the unclean and mentally retarded isolate."

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, inmates in tightly knit groups consider some individuals who are in very loosely structured groups to be isolates. They
fail to realize that these individuals have special friends with whom they regularly spend some of their time. For example, Mama Brenda is the inmate whom many of the others refer to as an isolate. She is much older than the members of the tightly knit groups and cannot take part in active group participation. However, she does have several special friends.

**Summary on isolates**

There are two kinds of isolates at Sheldon, the "involuntary isolates" who make strong friendship choices among the female inmates but do not have these reciprocated, and the "voluntary isolates" who desire no strong friendships with other inmates. The former select friends among the members of the two main groups but fail to live up to the requirements of group membership within these tightly knit units for many reasons which include the following: "not neat," "not well dressed," and "too talkative." The "voluntary isolates" are characterized mainly by their feelings toward other inmates. In contrast with the members in the tightly knit units, these inmates share secrets with no one, meet their friends during leisure only several times a week, choose friends only within their special work unit, had not participated in social, fraternal, or church groups prior to commitment, and were not afraid when they first arrived at Sheldon.
Figure 4. Friendship choices of members in Groups I-VI and of the isolates. The larger the circle the greater the individual's acceptance within the inmate social system. Levels I, II, and III represent the hierarchical arrangement of jobs open to the inmate.
General Summary

The data provided in the interviews and through the writer's observations indicate that there are six more or less cohesive groups and a number of isolates among the white female inmates. Groups I and II are the more tightly knit units; Groups III, IV, V, and VI are more loosely integrated.

By and large, the members of the tightly knit units have a narrower age range, greater similarity of occupational positions prior to commitment, greater similarity in type of crime committed, and longer sentences than members in the loosely structured units. The members of the strongest group, Group I, have been at Sheldon longer than those in the other groups. Even though some inmates in Group II were committed to Sheldon quite recently, all except one have previous arrests or commitments.

The greater age ranges, wider divergencies in educational attainments, and more variations in occupation prior to commitment occur among members in the loosely integrated groups. Furthermore, the lowest educational attainments for the groups are among loosely knit Groups IV and V. Even though most members in each of the different groups profess the same religion, only members in loosely knit groups participate in church activities at Sheldon. All inmates who committed "crimes against the
person" are in the same group, Group IV, which is a loosely knit unit. In the other groups, most inmates are charged with either narcotics offenses or theft.

In their relationships with other inmates, the members of the more tightly knit Groups I and II, and those in Group III, all of whom claim subgroup membership in the stronger groups, feel that they are more popular than do the members of Groups IV-VI. Some members in each group, except V, have participated in fraternal, social, or church organizations prior to commitment. However, only in Group V do all the members feel that friendships made at Sheldon will not end with release. Most inmates plan to return home after serving their sentences, but only a few have definite plans about working.

Generally, all inmates belonging to groups experienced "fear" when they arrived at Sheldon, but this feeling is no longer present. They agreed that they have been "fairly treated" and helped by the prison administrators, are satisfied with their work positions, and consider the jobs in the administration building important.

In addition to the groups found at Sheldon, there were a number of "isolates." These eight individuals, "voluntary" and "involuntary isolates," either were not accepted as members of the groups from which they selected friends or failed to choose friends.
For the purposes of this study the writer interviewed a sample consisting of 25 Negro inmates. She found that like the white inmates, the Negro inmates have leaders, social groupings, and isolates. In the following discussion some of the characteristics of each of these categories are presented.

1. Leaders

Negro inmates had various concepts of the social position of a "leader." Four said that leaders were "bad" and denied that there were any among the inmates. Some defined a "leader" as an inmate who endeavors to take the place of the free personnel. In spite of this lack of consensus on the part of these individuals, four-fifths of them said that there were leaders among the inmates. Six even claimed that they themselves were leaders. These individuals differed greatly in respect to age, personality, crime committed, and place of residence.

Annie and Marie are inmates who were most often mentioned as leaders by the other inmates. The former admitted that she was a leader, but the latter denied it. Annie, a mail room girl, and Marie, a dormitory orderly, are both serving seven-year sentences which began in 1935 for narcotics offenses. Annie, the younger, is 28 and Marie is 44. The former completed high school, but the
latter has had no formal education. Both are Catholic but irregular in their religious practices. Prior to commitment, Annie worked as a telephone operator dispatcher and Marie as a housemaid. Both have unstable marital backgrounds. Neither is an only child.

In relationships with other inmates both of these individuals said that they are "about average" in popularity. Annie claimed that most girls confide in her. Each thinks that all of the inmates are her friends, but each has one close friend. Whereas Annie claimed that her close friend is like a "mother" to her; Marie feels that she is a "mother" to her friend. Both of these inmates reported that there are groups among the female inmates at Sheldon.

These respondents said that they would not share secrets with anyone. They do share luxuries with some of the other inmates, but do not "take the blame" for anyone. Neither of these inmates feels that there is a prevalence of nicknames among the inmates.

Both knew other girls who are now at Sheldon prior to commitment. Annie who had participated in clubs before incarceration feels that friendships at Sheldon will not end with release. Marie believes that they will.

Like the white inmates, the Negro leaders said that they were "afraid" when they came to Sheldon, but neither had this feeling now. These inmates were at Camp "D" and
have differing feelings about the new compound. Annie said that she liked the Larks because it is cleaner and nicer. Marie claimed that she liked the old camp better because it was more private, the inmates were freer, and there were people and 'mems' around. Whereas, Annie has a concept of the term "rehabilitation" which entails services provided within the prison; Marie does not know what the term means even though she admits having heard it.

Both inmates are satisfied with their work assignments, like their supervisor, the free people and their fellow inmate workers. In a work problem, they would seek help from their supervisors; however, in a problem with another inmate, they would try to settle it among the inmates.

Both claim that other inmates and free people have helped them since they came to Sheldon. Annie said that her boss has recognized her work and encouraged her. Her inmate school teacher (white) has loaned her money. She stated that borrowing money is a big secret and that she will ask her teacher or work boss before she will ask another inmate.

These inmate leaders feel that some of the free people "throw their weight around" and "pick on" the inmates. Whereas, Marie likes the camp superintendent; Annie reported that he has "no understanding for women."

Both inmates claimed that the free personnel do not
always follow the prison rules and that some of the rules which they break are important. They said that they and their friends always tried to follow the official orders.

Annie has been a representative from the Negro dormitory to both the Inmate Council and the Inmate Lending Fund. She was appointed to the former by prison officials and was elected to the latter by her inmate friends. Some inmates stated that Annie, who is their leader, has a "nice education and speaks well before the public."

2. Inmate Groups

One of the respondents who was admitted to Sheldon in 1951 said that there were no groups among the Negro inmates at that time. At present all of the Negro inmates in the sample stated that there are groups. Some reported that there are three main groups, others that there are from six to ten main groups each consisting of from three to five members.

The group relationships mentioned most often were those based on the fact that these members came from the same town. Inmates in the largest group who came from a city of over one-half million population knew each other prior to commitment. They are serving sentences for narcotics offenses.
Some of the inmates feel that work locations at the prison in some ways influence their friendship patterns. Almost all of the inmates stated that they recognized the existence of groups among the inmates on their first day at Sheldon; however, seven said that they did not notice them until after they had been at the institution for a month or longer.

Thirteen of the inmates reported that they live near their friends in the dormitory, but only two said that they share "biffies" with their friends.

Most of the Negro inmates did not answer or understand the question concerning their use of the terms "we" and "I" in referring to group activities.

Even though there were groups among the white inmates and among the Negro inmates, no groups were found in which both whites and Negroes were members. However, 16 of the Negro and 11 of the white inmates said that there are some cross-racial friendships. Some of the whites and Negroes from the same town were friends prior to commitment. Other white-Negro friendships developed through their constant interaction in similar work locations or through mutual interest in music and literature. Bi-racial friends talk, joke, and the whites buy the Negroes' "cokes." The meeting places for these inmates are in the yard, the classroom, the dayroom at the camp, the store and at work.
In addition to the general type of friendship between the Negro and white inmates, another bond exists among some of them. This is the "penitentiary family" which was mentioned more often by the Negro than the white inmates. In days past, at the old Camp "D," one inmate said, that whites and Negroes were closer friends. At that time there were fewer inmates and these inmates seldom had contacts with anyone who was not from Camp "D." For companionship, they would ask other inmates to be their "sisters," "cousins," "mothers," and "daughters." These relationships would then constitute what the Negro inmates referred to as their "penitentiary family." Often these "families" crossed the racial lines. One white inmate said that the "families" serve psychological as well as material functions. Since social stigma associated with penitentiary life led few white families to visit their relatives while they were incarcerated, the need for close relationships was fulfilled through the selection of "penitentiary families." An example of the functioning of a present-day "family" is when the head inmate cook, a Negro, who is "mother" to Brenda, the main inmate leader, brings her "daughter" extra sweets from the kitchen, and the "daughter" buys her "mother" "cokes."

In addition to recognizing that there were leaders and groups among Negro inmates, 17 Negro respondents said that there were some isolates. The isolates were described
in the following terms: "old people," "recent commitments," "independent," "unpleasant," and "afraid of trouble."

**Summary on Negro inmates**

The one-third sample of Negro inmates interviewed for this study indicated that their leaders, informal groups, and isolates function within the informal social system much the same as do the white leaders, informal groups, and isolates. In addition to the informal groups within each race certain bi-racial relationships exist, especially within the "penitentiary family."
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters certain aspects of the inmate social system in a women's division of a state penitentiary have been described and summarized. The purpose has been: (1) to examine the extent of informal group life among the women inmates; (2) to describe and compare the characteristics of the groups and their members; (3) to determine whether there are leaders among the inmates and within the groups and to describe their characteristics; (4) to ascertain the presence of isolates among the members of the inmate social system, and (5) to compare the conclusions with results of other studies.

With the growth of sociology increasing attention has been focused on the informal social structure of formal systems, but very few studies in this area have been undertaken in the penal environment and only one known study has been conducted in a female correctional institution.

Through information gained by nonparticipant observation, structured interviews, informal interviews, statistical reports, and case histories, attention has been focused on the historical background, population characteristics, and formal organization as they relate to the
women's division of a state prison, and to inmate leaders, informal groups, and isolates among both the Negro and white female inmates.

"Sheldon" is the name used in this study to disguise the identity of a real prison characterized for a half-century by the brutal and inhumane treatment of inmates. Today, after the reform which began in 1952, it is considered by many to be among the best correctional institutions in the South. Prior to the reformation, the women inmates were housed in unsanitary and poorly constructed frame buildings and worked at their camp. Within the last few years, the female inmates have been moved to a new location, have been housed in modern cement-block buildings, and some have been assigned to secretarial and clerical positions in the main prison administration building.

Throughout its history Sheldon has had around 100 female inmates. Seventy-five per cent of these have usually been Negro. At the time of this study, there were 29 white female inmates and 71 Negroes. Female inmates compose about four per cent of the total prison population.

By and large, the white female inmates are older, have completed more formal education, have a greater percentage of legal marital relationships, and are serving
shorter sentences than the Negro inmates. Most of the inmates, both Negro and white, are from urban areas. Narcotics was the major offense for both racial groups. Forgery for the whites and "crimes against the person" for the Negroes were also important categories. Almost one-half of the whites were barmaids or waitresses and one-half of the Negroes were either restaurant cooks and dishwashers or housemaids prior to commitment.

**Informal Social Relationships**

This study has disclosed the significant fact that informal patterns of social relationships play a relatively important part in the lives of most of the female inmates at Sheldon. Of 29 white inmates, 21 belong to informal social groups which have varying degrees of intensity. Informal group relationships are also important to the Negro inmates, although complete data on the Negro groups were not gathered.

In order to consider the functioning of informal groups it is necessary to have an understanding of the formal organization of Sheldon insofar as it relates to the female inmates. With the development of modern penological concepts, female inmates at Sheldon have been assigned work positions in the main prison administration building which is located several miles from their camp. Through secretarial and clerical work positions, they have
constant interaction with prison administrators and staff. The limited number of female inmates and the work contacts which some of them have seem to encourage the functioning of staff-inmate relationships on an informal basis.

1. Leadership Patterns

Leadership roles among the female inmates are important in the informal patterns of interaction within the inmate social system at Sheldon. A historical view of the development of leadership patterns among female inmates indicates that those who have served the longest terms, both among the Negroes and whites, are the strongest leaders. Furthermore, changes in the administration have had their effects on inmate leadership and on group alignments. All of the leaders are serving sentences for narcotics violations. The strongest leaders, both of the whole inmate population and within groups, are those who are leaders of the most tightly knit white female groups. The weaker leaders among the white inmates are homosexuals whose leadership status may be enhanced by this behavior pattern.

2. Informal Groups

In addition to the leadership patterns within the female inmate social system, six more or less cohesive informal groups were found among the white female inmates. These groups range in size from two to five inmates each.
Groups were found among the Negro inmates, but their exact size and number were not determined. On the whole, Negroes seem to have more and larger informal groups. Among the whites the more cohesive groups are those in which the group members are more homogeneous with respect to age, educational achievement, occupation prior to commitment, type of crime, previous commitments, date of commitment, and length of sentence. Furthermore, within the more cohesive groups, homosexual behavior patterns appear to be an important factor. The less cohesive groups, data indicate, are held together by fewer ties, which include similarities in religious practices and work assignments, and mutual friendships formed in jail prior to commitment.

Among the Negro inmates the major criterion in group formation in prison was common place of residence prior to commitment. This is not an important factor among the whites since, in contrast with the Negro inmates, few whites knew each other prior to commitment. There are no informal inmate groups in which both white and Negroes are members.

3. Isolates

Some individuals are not members of groups. They are either "voluntary isolates," who do not desire reciprocal friendship choices with others, or "involuntary isolates," who fail to receive reciprocal choices from others.
There are isolates among both the white and Negro inmates. Usually these individuals are characterized by other inmates by such terms as "mentally retarded," "too religious," "independent," "want to avoid trouble," "new commitments," or "rural in dress and customs."

4. Other Informal Relationships

An informal relationship which is similar, but not coincidental, to the informal group is the "penitentiary family." In this group inmates choose others whom they wish to include in their "family." These choices extend across racial lines. Other friendship formations which bridge racial lines develop among those who knew each other prior to commitment (mostly narcotics offenders from the same town), or as a result of mutual interests such as music and literature, found especially among those who participate in the inmate school.

Comparison with Other Studies

Even though the women's division at Sheldon, compared with other prisons in which the inmate relationships have been studied, has fewer commitments, permits greater freedom among the inmates, has a smaller number of inmates who have been incarcerated for longer than five years and has an atypical proportion of narcotics offenders, it should nevertheless prove insightful to make certain comparisons between the findings of this study and those of
other investigators of prison life.

Like Hayner and Ash, the investigator found that leadership among the inmates is affected by the type of administration. For example, as the result of a recent administrative change at Sheldon, one of the two major inmate leaders became subordinate to the other and, whereas there had at one time been two groups each aligned under one of these leaders, the leaders joined forces within the same group. Similar to the findings of Clemmer are those of the present study which indicate that leadership is assigned for the most part to those who have been in the institution the longest and to those who have work assignments which allow them to interact constantly with other inmates. As in the study by Schrag, it was found that in general the leaders at Sheldon do not differ greatly from the general population with respect to age, occupation prior to commitment, educational attainments and marital status.

Whereas Clemmer reported that 60 per cent of the male inmates in the institution which he studied are integrated into more or less informal groups consisting of from two to seven members and that only 18 per cent are integrated into tightly knit informal groups, the investigator found that among the white female inmates at Sheldon 70 per cent participate in informal groups consisting of from two to five members and 27 per cent are
members in tightly knit groups. One possible explanation for these differences can be found in the fact that Clemmer's study concerned a maximum security federal penitentiary whereas the present study was conducted in a less restricted and more informal prison environment. Among the Negro female inmates at Sheldon the exact percentage in informal groups is not known, but their groups are larger than those of the whites.

In Harper's study, the only one known to the investigator which was conducted in a women's correctional institution, it was also found that the inmates formed informal social groupings. Furthermore, Harper indicated that there were the following three types of "fringers" among the inmates: "newcomer," "betrayer," and "disorganized personality." These types may be compared with the individual isolates who in this study were, among other things, called "newcomers," "too talkative," "mentally retarded," and "too religious."

Statuses assigned to the inmate by the administration often influence those achieved within the informal social system of the prison. The leadership statuses of the main inmate leaders and the informal group structures at Sheldon indicate that the assigned work statuses at this institution are among the important determining factors in the informal status hierarchy. Caldwell, in compiling information gathered by various researchers of
five penal institutions, points out a relationship between assigned and achieved statuses among inmates which is similar to the one found in this study.

McCorkle and Korn found that social rejection which accompanies incarceration is often turned into psychological rejection. They suggest that the informal inmate social group often provides a form of social acceptance and allows the individual to avoid the detrimental effects of psychological rejection. Similarly, some inmates at Sheldon feel that the "penitentiary family" has given them a needed feeling of "belongingness."

**Conclusions and Implications of the Study**

Since there have been very few empirical studies of social relationships within the prison, it is believed that this study has provided additional insights of some sociological significance into this particular social problem, especially since the approach used has been that of the informal social groupings within the total institutional social structure.

In addition to adding to the scant body of material currently available on the informal social system in penal institutions, this study is one of two which has investigated this phenomenon among women inmates. Furthermore, this was one of two research projects conducted in the
South in which certain Negro-white relationships within a prison were brought to light.

Inasmuch as this was the first systematic and theoretically orientated study of Sheldon conducted by someone not affiliated with the prison, this may make it easier for future researchers to secure administrative cooperation and to gain rapport with inmates within this particular institution. Furthermore, the methodological procedure utilized in this study proving, as it did, so highly fruitful in securing access to the inmates and to the prison administration should be of some value for future research in this area.

It is hoped that this study of the actual on-going informal social relationships within a prison may not only provide more theoretical insight into informal group relationships, but may also provide material from which hypotheses may be drawn concerning the informal social structure of a prison population for future sociological research.
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*Only literature cited in the text.


B. PERIODICALS


B. PERIODICALS Cont'd.


C. UNPUBLISHED STUDIES


Explanation of Study

(The following is a sample of the explanation for her presence which the interviewer presented to the inmate prior to beginning the formal questioning.)

I'm sure you are wondering why you have been called here. My name is Charlotte Richardson. I am a graduate student at Louisiana State University. I am conducting a study of how people form friendships and the way they feel about them. I have received permission to ask questions of the women inmates here at Sheldon, but I am in no way connected with the free people or the staff. I do not work for the prison; I don't work for the state. The prison authorities do not know what I am going to ask. Neither will I tell them anything you tell me. I have not asked to know your name. The main purpose of this interview is to try to get some information on how friendships are formed in a women's section of a prison. Similar studies are being made of inmates in schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

Now, because everything you tell me will be held in strictest confidence, I would appreciate it if you would not tell anyone about the questions I ask you, not even the matrons. Nothing you say will be used against you, you can be sure of that.

Before I start the interview, would you like to ask me any questions?

(Pause)

If at any time during the interview, you have questions, please feel free to ask them.
Inmate Number__________

1. Crime committed________________________________________

2. Date of commitment____________3. Years sentenced____

4. Age at commitment_______5. Year of birth__________

6. Place of residence_______________________________________

7. Size of community__________8. Race____________

9. Reared by_____________________________________________

10. Marital status___________________________________________

11. Marital history___________________________________________

12. Educational grade obtained____13. Otis I. Q. score________

14. Literacy____________15. Grade equivalent__________

16. Most frequent occupation_________________________________

17. Number of previous commitments___________________________
   LSP________________________Elsewhere____________________

18. Type admission___________________________________________

19. Number of juvenile commitments____________________________

20. Psychobiological history: Inmate_________________________

   Father________________________Mother_____________________

21. Religion: Inmate________________________________________

   Father________________________Mother_____________________

22. Additional data:
QUESTIONNAIRE*

FAMILY
1. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
2. Are you married? Legally?

EDUCATION
3. What was the last grade you passed in school?
4. Have you attended any other type of school? What kind? When? For how long?
5. Are you going to any classes at Sheldon? What are you taking?

OCCUPATION
6. Did you have an outside job? What was it? How long did you work at this job?
7. What is your prison job? What other jobs have you held here?
8. Is your prison job similar to your civilian job? How?
9. Do you like your prison work? Your boss? Your fellow inmate workers? The free people with whom you work?
10. Do you feel that your job is important? To yourself? To other inmates? To the prison as a whole?

*The many colloquial expressions in this questionnaire were found to be necessary in order to reach the vocabulary level of the respondents.
11. Do you feel that this job could be as well done by another inmate?

12. Which inmate jobs do you think are most important?

13. If you have a work problem to whom do you go for help?

FRIENDS

14. Are you popular among the inmates? (a) Very popular. (b) Popular. (c) About average. (d) Not very popular.

15. How many friends do you have here? How many of these friends are close friends?

16. What jobs do your best friends have?

17. What qualities do you like in a friend? Is there any person here who has these qualities? Where does this person work?

18. Are most inmates more interested in themselves or in other inmates?

19. Are friendships here based mainly on mutual help or on other qualities? If on other qualities, name some.

(At this point, the interviewer and interviewee discussed the concept of "group" as a basis for the following questions.)

20. Are there groups, bunches, or cliques of friends among the women inmates here?

21. How many of such groups are here?
22. Are there some people who are not in a group? Why aren't they? What kind of people are they?
23. Are there some people who are in more than one group?
24. Do colored/white inmates have bunches of friends? Are white inmates friendly with colored inmates?
25. Are there many groups with both colored and white members? Where do such groups usually meet?
26. Does residence, job location, or something else determine those who run together?
27. Where does your bunch usually meet? How often?
28. What do you and your friends talk about?
29. Do you share secrets with all the members of your Group? Do you share secrets with one or a few members? Do you think that it is best not to share secrets with anyone? Why?
30. Do the girls you go around with use the word "we" or the word "I" more often in referring to group activities?
31. Do you share luxuries with all friends in your bunch? Do you share luxuries with only one or a few persons in your bunch? Do you think it is best for each person to keep her luxuries to herself?
32. Would you accept the blame for any member of your group? Would you accept the blame for only one or a few friends? Do you think it is best for each person to accept the blame only for the things she has done?
Why?

33. Do you live near any of your friends?

34. Would you rather have the close friends you have or would you rather be in another group? Why?

35. Has being in the particular group you are in made life easier for you here?

36. Do you think some groups of friends stick together more than other groups? Do some groups have disagreements among group members more than other groups? Does your group ever have disagreements among group members? How do the group members not involved react? Does your group of friends ever have disagreements with other groups?

37. Are there any groups that almost always oppose official orders? Does your group always accept prison orders?

38. Do most inmates have nicknames? What are some of these?

39. Do you read the Sheldonite? How often? Have you ever written anything for it? Do you think that an inmate newspaper is a good idea? Does it help the inmate?

40. Do you have any spare time activities (hobbies)?

41. Outside most bunches of friends have leaders. What does the word leader mean? Is being a leader bad or good? Do any of the bunches of friends among the women inmates have leaders? Does your bunch? Do you look upon yourself as the leader? If not, what job
does your leader hold?

42. Did you know any of the inmates before you came to Sheldon? Are these inmates in your group? If so, did they help you get into this group?

43. How long do you feel that the prison friendships will last? (a) Only a short time. (b) All the time the friends are incarcerated. (c) Even after some of the friends are released. (d) Even after all of the friends are released. (e) Other.

44. Have any of your friends been released recently?

45. Do you look forward to leaving prison?

46. What will you do when you leave?

47. Are you afraid to leave? If so, why?

48. How have you been treated in prison? (a) Very fairly. (b) Fairly. (c) Unfairly. (d) Very Unfairly.

**ADMINISTRATION**

49. If you have a minor problem or disagreement between yourself and another inmate to whom do you go for help?

50. If you have a serious problem between yourself and another inmate to whom would you go for help?

51. Is there a staff member who has helped you during your incarceration? What is his/her job here? How has this person helped you?

52. Has any inmate helped you since you came to Sheldon? How?
53. Do you feel that the prison employees throw their weight around? (a) None do. (b) One of two do. (c) More than two do. How?

54. Do these employees pick on the inmates? (a) None do. (b) One or two do. (c) More than two do. How?

55. What are the duties of the matron, supervisor, and warden?

56. How often do you talk with the matrons, supervisor, and warden?

57. Do you think that the free people follow the rules of the prison? If not, are the rules that they break important?

SELF CONCEPTS

58. Now remember how you felt when you first came to Sheldon? Which one of the following best describes how you thought of yourself? (a) Trapped. (b) Bitter. (c) Outcast. (d) About like always felt. (e) Pulling time. (f) Afraid. (g) Depressed. (h) Unjustly treated. (i) Resentful.

59. After you got used to the place here, which one of the following best describes how you thought of yourself? (a) Trainee. (b) Patient. (c) About like always felt. (d) Pulling time. (e) Criminal.
60. Do you think of yourself as an inmate during your stay here? 
   (a) All of the time. (b) Some of the time. (c) Not much of the time. (d) None of the time.

61. Do you think of yourself as a convict during your stay here? 
   (a) All of the time. (b) Some of the time. (c) Not much of the time. (d) None of the time.

62. Is there a difference in the meaning of these two words? If so, what is it?

**REHABILITATION**

63. What does the word "rehabilitation" mean?

64. Were you at the prison prior to 1956? If so, how do you feel about the new prison?

65. How do you feel about the rehabilitation program at Sheldon?

**RELIGION**

66. What is your religion?

67. How often did you go to church before you came to Sheldon? 
   (a) Every Sunday. (b) Every other Sunday. (c) Once a month. (d) Seldom. (e) Only on special occasions. (f) Never.

68. Of what groups were you a member? 
   (a) Church. (b) Benevolent. (c) Labor unions.
69. Since you have come to Sheldon, do you go to church? If so, how often?

70. If there is a change in your church attendance, why?
VITA

The author was born July 28, 1935 in Savannah, Georgia. She received her elementary and high school training in the public schools of Columbus and Atlanta, Georgia. In June of 1953 the author was graduated from Henry Grady High School in Atlanta. From September, 1953 until June, 1954, she attended Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. In September, 1954 through June, 1957, the author was enrolled in Emory University, Georgia where she majored in sociology and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in June, 1957. Since September, 1957 she has pursued graduate study at Louisiana State University, with a major in sociology and a minor in anthropology. She is now a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Charlotte Mae Richardson

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: Women in Prison: A Study of Social Relationships

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

January 9, 1959