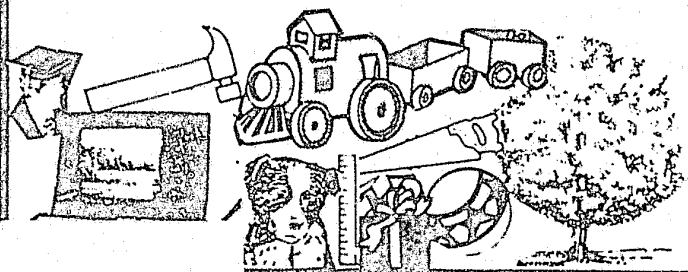


CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

PLACES and PROGRAMS:
A CAPSULATED VIEW OF
CONNECTICUT CORRECTIONS



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NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

WHERE WE WERE...

The prison system in Connecticut began with Newgate Prison in East Granby, a coppermine which was operated with inmate labor. Newgate served as the state's prison for men until 1827 when the new state prison was opened at Wethersfield.

Wethersfield prison served as the maximum security facility for males until 1962-63, at which time our present facility was opened in Somers.

Wethersfield shared its place in the Connecticut prison system with what was then called the Osborn prison farm, a massive expanse of rural acreage in Enfield, and with Niantic prison for women. The latter, built around 1920, was also located in a rustic, wooded area; the premise at the time was that farming and country air were the right ingredients for inmate rehabilitation.

Along with those facilities, there were eight county jails which operated independently under the county system of government in Connecticut at that time; these were administered by politically appointed sheriffs. In 1957, the county system of government was abolished, the jail system fell by the wayside, and jails came under the aegis of the State and its restructured Jail Administration.

WHERE WE ARE...

In 1968, by legislative mandate, the Connecticut Department of Correction came into existence, absorbing 10 facilities under a centralized agency. The Department is a statutory, cabinet-level department within the State's executive branch of government. It's administrator is a Commissioner, appointed by the Governor for a four-year term, with reappointment possible.

The Department holds in confinement both pre-trial and adjudicated persons; it also holds some federal and interstate compact prisoners.

Currently, the Department houses about 5700 inmates in 15 facilities. About 20 percent of these are persons awaiting trial.

Through contractual arrangements with community-based agencies and groups, the Department maintains approximately 235 beds in about 20 halfway houses around the state. Contractual arrangements also provide re-entry services for inmates (job finding, counseling, etc.) in all major urban areas. The P/PREP Network, as it is called, has been shown to have positive impact on recidivism (the return of inmates to the system). A separate report about this is available from the Department of Correction.

The Department further offers services to inmates who have a history of drug and/or alcohol addiction; known as Project FIRE, this program lends re-entry assistance to these persons as they ease back into the community. (Approximately 70-75 percent of inmates in our system are incarcerated because of alcohol- or drug-related crimes).

Also in the area of community re-entry, the Department itself provides parole supervision and supervised home release (SHR) for inmates who qualify for these programs which are designed for those who are deemed ready to go back to their communities.

A brief description of facilities and programs follows.

MAXIMUM SECURITY...

The Connecticut Correctional Institution-Somers, the State's maximum security facility for adult males, was opened in 1962-63. It was designed to hold approximately 800 inmates; current population is in the 1400 range.

Somers offers a full gamut of programs and services for inmates, including educational, vocational training, addiction and counseling services, classification services, religious services including those for American Indians, inmate newspaper program, and prison industries. Some of the more unusual programs are:

SIGHT FROM SOUND RAINBOW-- whereby inmates read and record books and materials on tapes for distribution to the blind throughout Connecticut (bringing the material to life with vocal effects and sound effects).

SESAME STREET-- a program which offers inmate caretakers the opportunity to care for children while adult family members visit with incarcerated persons; the children are care for in a specially designed "nursery-type" setting.

HOBBY SHOP-- on their own time and using their own creative abilities, inmates make original handcrafted articles (from pictures and lamps to furniture) which are sold to the public, with the hobbyist realizing the profits from the sale. Aiding this program is the unique PRISON STORE in Bloomfield, a retail outlet for inmate craftsmen, run by volunteers from the community and sustained by volunteer contributions and interest. This project has a successful 12-year record; it was selected for recognition by President Ronald Reagan in 1985.

FAMILY VISITING-- designed to foster ties and communications with family and community, this program permits inmates to spend about 24 hours with wife, children, parents, on grounds but in a self-contained mobile housing unit. This program does much to sustain family cohesiveness and family support for inmates who are not eligible for furloughs, an important factor which impacts on the individual's community re-entry potential for success.

SEX OFFENDER PROGRAM-- part of Somers' Mental Hygiene Unit, this program offers a variety of therapeutic services for those inmates having a background of sex offenses who wish to participate in the program.

The Somers Correctional Institution employs approximately 625 persons in custodial and non-custodial positions.

In fiscal year 1985-86, the institution processed 1560 new admissions. The median age of inmates there is 28.3, and the average sentence is 7 years.

MINIMUM SECURITY...

The Connecticut Correctional Institution-Enfield (Minimum) was opened in late 1986. Before this facility was built, minimum-security inmates were housed at what is now called the Enfield Medium Security Institution, formerly the old Osborn Prison Farm.

The new minimum security facility houses about 600 inmates in dormitory-style buildings. The

philosophy at Enfield CCI is geared toward preparing inmates for community re-entry; all inmates at this facility must hold a job, either on grounds or outside the compound, in preparation for return to the community as they complete their sentences.

As with other Department of Correction facilities, Enfield CCI offers educational, voc-ed and vocational programs as well as addiction services programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Unusual programs include:

DOG GROOMING-- a vocational training program whereby inmates learn the skills of canine grooming by providing these services to pets of senior citizens who have negligible resources but who keep pets as companions.

GET SMART-- inmate speakers address groups of

young people at various grade levels, talking about crime and incarceration as it impacts on them personally. In existence for nearly 15 years, this program is a peer-to-peer effort at deterrence which has a noticeable and dramatic impact on audiences.

SHOPLIFTING CONSUMER AND MERCHANT PROTECTION--

in this program, inmates demonstrate the art and means of shoplifting, including special devices used by shoplifters. Businesses and consumer groups throughout the State have benefited from this program which has proven valuable in preventing losses from shoplifting and its ultimate cost to consumers.

COMPUTER TRAINING--inmates learn the basic skills of computer operations in inhouse classes, skills which are applicable to many jobs in the outside world once the inmates leave the institution.

When the new Enfield Minimum Security Institution came into use in late 1985, the facility formerly used for that purpose became the Enfield Medium Security Institution. It's primary role is to serve as a facility of transition for inmates who no longer need maximum security custody but who are not yet ready to live in a minimum security setting.

The median age for inmates in these two facilities is 30.6; the average sentence is 7.3 months (this reflects the fact that inmates in these facilities have already completed much of their original sentences).

THE MANSON YOUTH INSTITUTION...

The John R. Manson Youth Institution in Cheshire is the Department of Correction's facility for

youthful male offenders sentenced as adults.

Opened in 1982, the facility houses about 390 inmates ranging in age from 16-19 years.

The philosophy of MYI is reflected in its physical design of multiple and separate "cottages," each a self-contained unit in regard to living and programs. This unit-type management enables staff to concentrate on small groups of youngsters while providing them with opportunities for self-development and personal growth.

As a new facility, the development of programs is ongoing. Those in effect include:

EDUCATIONAL-- all levels of academic study are offered: literacy attainment; remedial courses; G.E.D. diploma studies; business skills; and college courses. (This school, like all schools in correctional facilities, is part of the Unified School District of the Department of Correction, recognized as any other school district in the state, having the same entitlements and standards).

THRESHOLDS-- this award-winning program is run by volunteers from the community who come into the institution to teach inmates, in a structured and monitored way, how to develop problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities in an effort to have them take charge of their lives.

LIFE MANAGEMENT SKILLS-- staff and volunteers teach inmates basic living skills and needs, such as how to apply for a job, in preparation for return to their communities.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS-- community volunteers from AA work with the inhouse chapter to aid inmates wishing to free themselves of addictive behaviors. Staff counselors offer ongoing support and assistance.

INTRAMURAL SPORTS-- inmate teams are matched with those from outside schools around the state as a way of encouraging community ties and positive social interactions.

VISITING-- family visits and family ties are greatly encouraged and are considered a vital factor in inmate wellbeing at this facility.

The average age for inmates at the Manson Youth Institution is 18.5 years; the average length of stay is 18 months. About 600 young offenders are processed through this facility in a 12-month period.

WOMEN AT NIAN TIC...

The state's only facility for women is the Connecticut Correctional Institution-Niantic. It holds female inmates, both pretrial and sentenced, and maintains all levels of security: minimum, medium and maximum.

Set in a somewhat remote rustic area near the

Connecticut shoreline, close to Rocky Neck State Park, the facility resembles a college campus with its buildings scattered around the spacious, open grounds. Noticeably absent are guard towers, fences and other external security features present at most correctional facilities. The early buildings were constructed sometime about 1920 and additions were made in the decade that followed.

In recent years, the Department of Correction has attempted to meet the needs of the expanding population at Niantic CCI by introducing a number of special programs:

THE MENTAL HEALTH UNIT-- staffed by correctional officers trained in the management

of behavioral problems, under the aegis of professional staff, the unit serves those with evidence of psychiatric or psychological problems who are unable to function in a general care setting.

LEGAL WORKSHOPS-- this program was set up to permit law students from Yale University to meet with inmates on a regular basis to present information and answer questions on a pre-determined topic of interest.

PARENT-CHILD COORDINATOR-- a professional staff person works closely with inmate mothers to develop mothering skills and family care abilities. This program was established to facilitate communications and to foster more positive relationships between inmate mothers, their children, and other family members. It is an on-

going, pervasive effort aimed at strengthening family ties and problem-solving and coping skills in the area of family living.

SESAME STREET PROGRAM-- designed to lend greater quality to visits with their children, this program enables inmate mothers to be with their children in a separate visiting area where they share activities and practice improved inter-relations.

Other outstanding programs at Niantic CCI include:

KEYPUNCH OPERATION-- inmates are taught keypunch skills as they perform work for non-profit agencies within the State. As they develop these skills, they also earn above average wages based on production. This program is now in its 19th year and

continues to prove popular with inmates.

NON-TRADITIONAL JOB TRAINING-- established in cooperation with the State Labor Department, this program provides women inmates the opportunity to receive classroom instruction and hands-on training to acquire skills in plumbing, electrical, maintenance, machine shop, food service and other traditionally male occupations. Those who complete the program receive credit for apprenticeships and may earn high level wages normally associated with these trades once they return to the community.

As the sole women's facility, Niantic CCI processes approximately 2,000 persons each year. The average age of inmates is 26 years; the average length of sentence is 43.8 months.

OTHER PLACES...

In addition to those facilities already mentioned, the Connecticut Department of Correction maintains a number of correctional centers around the state.

These include three urban jails: Bridgeport Correctional Center, New Haven Correctional Center, and Hartford Correctional Center; three rural jails known as the Montville Correctional Center, the Brooklyn Correctional Center and the Litchfield Correctional Center, the latter in eastern Connecticut.

There are two detention facilities operated by the Department as well: the Morgan Street Detention Center, in Hartford; and the Union Avenue Detention Center, in New Haven.

Completing the complement of correctional facilities is the J. Bernard Gates Unit at Niantic CCI, and

the Cheshire Correctional Center in Cheshire, each of which has a specific role within the Department of Correction.

A brief description of the aforementioned facilities follows:

THE URBAN...

BRIDGEPORT CORRECTIONAL CENTER (CCC) houses male offenders, both sentenced and pretrial. Overall, the facility is actually three-in-one: the new center opened in 1974; the old center, still in use, was constructed around 1888; and the North Wing was opened in 1958. In all, the facility houses 650-750 inmates. Programs of interest include: Art programs, religious programs and Behavioral Studies, all of which are conducted with the help of community volunteers.

NEW HAVEN CCC-- opened in 1976, this facility holds about 480 adult males, both pretrial and sentenced.

In the area of programs, the facility serves as world headquarters for the World Prison Poetry Center which encourages the writing, publication and reading of poetry by inmates and outside poets. In addition, inmates may join the very active Creative Writing program sponsored by the facility.

The New Haven Correctional Center also has the distinction of serving as the regional training center for the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), based in Boulder, Colorado, a national resource center which fosters training and professionalism in corrections.

HARTFORD CCC-- newest of the correctional centers, this facility was opened in 1977 and houses about 535 adult males, both pretrial and sentenced.

Its programs are primarily in the realm of education; it also has a very active Alcoholics Anonymous program run by volunteers from the community and supported by the center's staff.

THE RURAL AND THE REST....

LITCHFIELD CORRECTIONAL CENTER is located in a picturesque, colonial village, adjoining the town bank on the Village Green. It was opened around 1812; presently, it houses about 80 males in both pretrial and sentenced status. Though antiquated, the building has been modernized to the degree that it serves its role satisfactorily. However, the Department has determined that sometime in the not-too-distant future a replacement facility will be

needed, and studies have been initiated in that regard.

Programs at Litchfield CCC are limited due to space constraints. Educational programs are highlighted such as Literacy Volunteers (in which inmates are trained to teach other inmates basic reading skills), high school equivalency diploma studies (G.E.D.), and ONCET, a self-contained inhouse program for inmates wishing to break themselves of addictive behaviors from alcohol- and/or drug-use.

In addition, inmates at Litchfield are actively involved in community betterment projects under a work release agreement geared to public service.

Unique at Litchfield is the facility's relation-

ship with the Society of Brothers, a secular community group which sponsors inmates for work and friendship projects within their own community which is of a non-profit nature.

MONTVILLE CORRECTIONAL CENTER-- another of the state's rural correctional centers, Montville CCC opened in 1957. It serves about 150 adult males, pretrial and sentenced.

Montville CCC is perhaps best known for its longstanding Toys For Tots program whereby inmates repair and refurbish toys year-round, for presentation to indigent youngsters throughout the state at the Christmas holiday

Montville's rural location lends itself to environmental programs as well. Chief among these is the Cohegan Wilderness Lands, an area set

aside as a conservation area, maintained and preserved by inmates. Inmates are also involved in the Save the Elm program, an attempt to propagate elm trees which were virtually wiped out by blight, restoring these native trees to the Connecticut landscape.

BROOKLYN CORRECTIONAL CENTER-- is another picturesque, rural jail, acquired from the former county jail system. Built in 1850, the facility holds about 100 adult males, both pretrial and sentenced.

Small in size and population, Brooklyn CCC nevertheless has gained prominence through two unusual programs for inmates: Forestry Restoration, designed to save woodlands in eastern Connecticut; and Story Train, a program in which inmates tape origi-

nal and published stories, adding emphasis with sound effects; these are then distributed to visually handicapped children throughout the state by staff from the State Services for the Blind. Story Train has received a number of awards and fan letters. More recently, the program was nominated for the prestigious Baldwin Award in recognition of its contributions to visually impaired preschool youngsters.

CHESHIRE CORRECTIONAL CENTER-- this facility plays a somewhat unique role in the correctional system; unlike other centers which hold both pretrial and sentenced persons, Cheshire serves as a holding center for short-term sentenced males who are being readied for community release.

Cheshire CCC's North Block was built in 1910, while

the South Block was added in 1956. The population of the facility averages 490-500; rapid turnover of population limits the types of programs offered. Among those in effect are: educational and vocational training programs; Alcoholics Anonymous; and an intramural sports program in conjunction with outside schools.

Rounding out the list of state correctional facilities is the J. BERNARD GATES UNIT, a short-term facility for sentenced males, located on the grounds of the Niantic Correctional Institution, but apart from the facilities for women; also, the two detention centers.

The MORGAN STREET DETENTION CENTER, in Hartford, and the UNION AVENUE DETENTION CENTER, in New Haven, are examples of the Department of Correction's admin-

istrative creativity. In March, 1983, by contractual agreement, the Department leased the Hartford police lockup as accommodation for pretrial detainees in the Hartford area. This move provided an additional 182 beds within the correctional system; in addition, it freed local police from custodial duties, permitting their assignment to more pertinent types of police work. The Morgan St. Detention Center houses approximately 150 males who average a 7-day stay before being processed to a correctional center.

A similar contract was effected in New Haven in May, 1984, in regard to the local police lockup there. This added 106 beds through the utilization of the space which permitted the housing of 100 pretrial detainees who remain there for about 7 days prior to transfer.

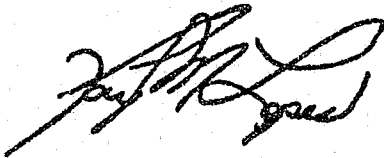
A WORD ABOUT CONNECTICUT'S CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM...

The Department of Correction represents only one part of the overall criminal justice system.

It's the last segment, coming into play after the individual has gone through those previous segments representing Police, Prosecution and Courts.

While Corrections is the "final stop" in the criminal justice process, it's important to remember that the progression continues; persons coming out of correctional facilities go somewhere. In most cases, that "somewhere" is your local community.

Thus, whatever support citizens and communities provide in reinforcing the work of the Department to effect the ex-offender's successful re-entry will certainly benefit one and all.



Raymond M. Lopes

Commissioner

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