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Bureau of Justice Statistics

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

Prisoners in 1983

April 1984

During 1983 some 24,000 prisoners were added to State and Federal prison rolls, bringing the total number to 438,830. The increase for 1983, 5.9%, was less than half of that for 1982 (table 1). The slowdown took place only in State institutions, whose population increased by 5.8%, compared to 12.5% in 1982. The Federal prison population grew at a somewhat faster rate in 1983 than in 1982, 7.6% and 5.5%, respectively.

Table 1. Change in total prison population, 1974-83

Year	Number	Percent change
1974	229,721	
1975	253,816	10.5
1976	278,000	9.5
1977(~ stody)	291,667	4.9
1977(jurisdiction)	300,024	NA
1978	307,276	2.4
1979	314,457	2.3
1980	329,821	4.9
1981	369,930	12.2
1982	414,362	12.0
1983	438,830	5.9

NOTE: Before 1977, National Prisoner Statistics reports were based on the custody population; beginning in 1977, they were based on the jurisdiction population. Both are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

NA Not applicable.

The slowing of the growth rate, evident already in the first half of 1983, continued during the second half of the year.[1] Data for both 1981 and 1982 suggest a general slowing of growth toward the end of the year that may be a seasonal effect. However, the downturn in the second half of 1983 was much sharper than the second-half downturns in 1981 and 1982.

During 1983, 11 States experienced declines in their prison populations; of these, 7 had declines of at least 5%. In contrast, only two States reported declines in 1982 and none in 1981. New Jersey was the only State added to the list of those with more than 10,000 inmates; this was because for the first time it included in its official count inmates held in local jails because of prison crowding. In 1983, as in 1982, the same number of States, four, held more than 20,000 inmates. Only about half as many States (18 vs. 34) had prison population increases of 10% or more in 1983 as compared to 1982.

The slowing of the growth rate during 1983, following record high increases in 1981 and 1982, was similar to the situation in 1977, when the

[1]See Prisoners at Midyear 1983, BJS Bulletin, October 1983, NCJ-91034.

This bulletin presents 1983 yearend information on the population confined within our Nation's prisons. Such data have been collected continuously from the States and the Federal Prison System since the mid-1920's as a central component of the National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) program.

This year, two new features have been added to the collection effort. First, due to concern about prison capacity and the substantial public funds that have been allocated to capital improvements, reporting jurisdictions were asked to provide capacity estimates for available housing stock. Second, jurisdictions were asked to provide data on the use of early release due to crowding as a means of assessing the extent of such crowding. This added information, together with the statistics collected on State-sentenced persons who are held in local jails due to a lack of prison space, helps to provide a more comprehensive picture of prison capacity.

The problems associated with prisons during 1983, including insufficient capacity, court orders, jail back-ups, and emergency releases, represent major dilemmas for the orderly operation of facilities. From a different perspective, however, such problems have also provided opportunities to explore the utility and feasibility of new directions for the Nation's prisons. Many systems, for example, have begun to seek, in the private sector, solutions to problems such as health care, prison industry, housing, and even the operation of prisons. At a broader policy level, legislatures have taken a heightened interest in defining the purposes of prison and have begun to experiment with new models to guide sentencing and release decisions. Corrections practitioners, by articulating minimum standards for facilities, have begun carefully to examine and suggest consensual policies for the profession. Finally, research and systematic inquiry have been initiated to assess the impact of policy and legislative reforms as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of correctional methods and practices.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics wishes to acknowledge the cooperation and continued support of the departments of corrections in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Prison System. The continuing success of the program for nearly 60 years is entirely due to the generous voluntary participation of each of the jurisdictions.

Steven R. Schlesinger
Director

Table 2. Prisoners under jurisdiction of State and Federal correctional authorities, by region and State, yearend 1982 and 1983

	Total			Sentenced to more than a year			Number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 population 12/31/83[a]
	1983	1982	Percent change	1983	1982	Percent change	
United States	**438,830**	**414,362**	**5.9**	**419,820**	**395,948**	**6.0**	**179**
Male	419,811	396,439	5.9	402,391	379,374	6.1	352
Female	19,019	17,923	6.1	17,429	16,574	5.2	14
Federal institutions[b]	31,926	29,673	7.6	26,331	23,652	11.3	11
State institutions	406,904	384,689	5.8	393,489	372,296	5.7	167
Northeast	**65,680**	**60,203**	**9.1**	**63,076**	**57,181**	**10.3**	**127**
Maine[c]	1,049	999	5.0	858	781	9.9	75
New Hampshire	479	445	7.6	479	445	7.6	50
Vermont[d]	497	599	-17.0	378	435	-13.1	72
Massachusetts[e,f]	4,559	4,623	-1.4	4,559	4,527	0.7	79
Rhode Island[d]	1,157	1,037	11.6	878	781	12.4	92
Connecticut[d]	5,474	5,836	-6.2	3,577	3,809	-6.1	114
New York	30,489	27,951	9.1	30,489	27,951	9.1	172
New Jersey	10,209	8,191	24.6	10,159	7,990	27.1	136
Pennsylvania	11,767	10,522	11.8	11,699	10,462	11.8	98
North Central	**81,640**	**78,549**	**3.9**	**79,624**	**77,353**	**2.9**	**135**
Ohio	17,766	17,317	2.6	16,686	17,317	-3.6	155
Indiana	9,360	8,790	6.5	8,973	8,295	8.2	164
Illinois[g]	15,595	14,293	9.1	15,522	13,949	11.3	135
Michigan	14,382	15,224	-5.5	14,382	15,224	-5.5	159
Wisconsin[h]	4,898	4,670	4.9	4,862	4,670	4.1	102
Minnesota	2,156	2,081	3.6	2,156	2,081	3.6	52
Iowa[i,j]	2,814	2,829	-0.5	2,676	2,709	-1.2	92
Missouri	8,053	7,445	8.2	8,053	7,445	8.2	162
North Dakota	410	322	27.3	350	276	26.8	51
South Dakota	824	791	4.2	807	755	6.9	115
Nebraska	1,677	1,709	-1.9	1,452	1,554	-6.6	91
Kansas	3,705	3,078	20.4	3,705	3,078	20.4	152
South	**186,373**	**180,946**	**3.0**	**180,348**	**175,145**	**3.0**	**225**
Delaware[d]	2,190	2,062	6.2	1,659	1,507	10.1	273
Maryland[j]	12,606	11,012	14.5	11,968	10,427	14.8	277
District of Columbia[d]	4,344	4,081	6.4	3,465	3,351	3.4	558
Virginia[k]	10,093	10,079	0.1	9,855	9,715	1.4	177
West Virginia	1,628	1,729	-5.8	1,628	1,729	-5.8	83
North Carolina[j]	15,395	16,578	-7.1	14,257	15,358	-7.2	233
South Carolina	9,583	9,137	4.9	9,076	8,629	5.2	276
Georgia	15,347	14,416	6.5	14,929	14,049	6.3	259
Florida	26,334	27,830	-5.4	25,385	27,139	-6.5	235
Kentucky	4,738	4,077	16.2	4,738	4,077	16.2	127
Tennessee	8,768	7,869	11.4	8,768	7,869	11.4	187
Alabama	9,856	9,233	6.7	9,641	8,581	12.4	243
Mississippi	5,586	5,484	1.9	5,481	5,359	2.3	211
Arkansas	4,183	3,925	6.6	4,167	3,921	6.3	179
Louisiana	12,976	10,935	18.7	12,976	10,935	18.7	290
Oklahoma	7,487	6,350	17.9	7,096	6,350	11.7	212
Texas[l]	35,259	36,149	-2.5	35,259	36,149	-2.5	221
West	**73,211**	**64,991**	**12.6**	**70,441**	**62,617**	**12.5**	**152**
Montana	850	914	-7.0	850	914	-7.0	104
Idaho	1,206	1,047	15.2	1,205	1,047	15.1	121
Wyoming	721	702	2.7	721	702	2.7	138
Colorado	3,450	3,042	13.4	3,450	3,042	13.4	109
New Mexico[c]	2,013	1,718	17.2	2,013	1,447	39.1	142
Arizona[c]	6,889	6,069	13.5	6,693	6,048	10.7	223
Utah	1,275	1,216	4.9	1,262	1,199	5.3	77
Nevada	3,200	2,712	18.0	3,200	2,712	18.0	354
Washington	6,701	6,322	6.0	6,701	6,322	6.0	155
Oregon[l]	4,181	3,867	8.1	4,181	3,867	8.1	157
California[c,i,m]	39,360	34,640	13.6	38,025	33,583	13.2	150
Alaska[d]	1,634	1,306	25.1	1,075	856	25.6	219
Hawaii[c,d]	1,731	1,436	20.5	1,065	878	21.3	103

NOTE: Prisoner counts may differ from those reported in previous publications and are subject to revision as updated figures become available.

[a] Unpublished Bureau of the Census estimates for the resident population were used to calculate rates of incarceration. Sentenced prisoners are defined as those serving sentences of more than one year.

[b] Federal Bureau of Prisons figures for total prisoners include the following number of persons held under jurisdiction of the Immigration and Naturalization Service: 1,203 on 12/31/82 and 1,134 on 12/31/83.

[c] Population counts are estimates believed to be within the following percentages of actual counts: Arizona (2%), California (1%), Hawaii (1%), Maine (3%), and New Mexico (1%).

[d] Figures include both jail and prison inmates; jails and prisons are combined in one system.

[e] Massachusetts cannot distinguish inmates by sentence length for 1983; therefore, the incarceration rate is based on the total population; yearend 1983 data are for December 30, 1983.

[f] Figures for Massachusetts and Kentucky and 1982 figures for New Jersey exclude State prisoners held in local jails because of overcrowding.

[g] Illinois' 1983 yearend figures are a partial enumeration based on manual and automated counts.

[h] Wisconsin's yearend 1983 data are for January 19, 1984.

[i] Figures for California, Iowa, and Texas exclude inmates under State jurisdiction but not in State custody.

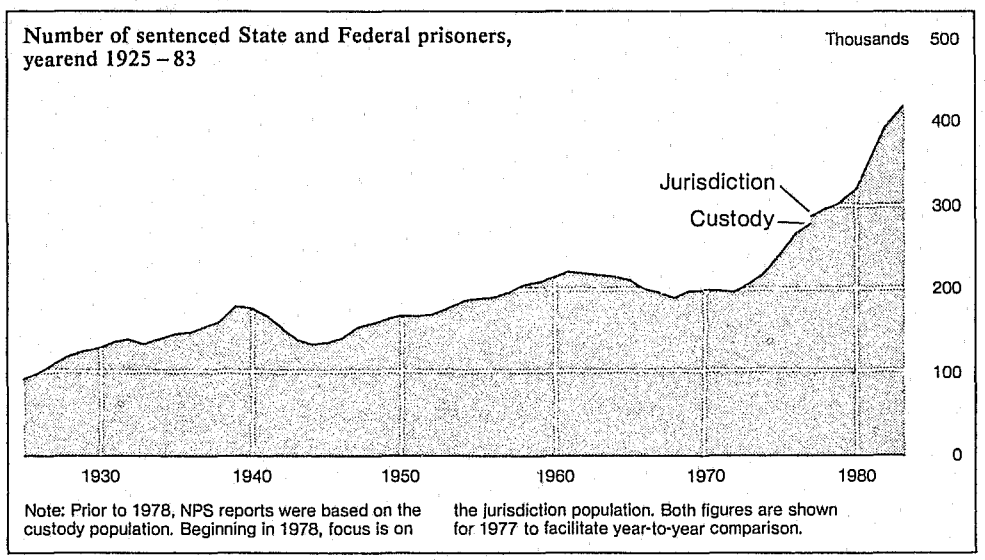
[j] Breakdowns by sentence length for Iowa, Maryland, and North Carolina are estimates. Beginning with yearend 1983 data, Maryland's population includes inmates at Patuxent Institution.

[k] Virginia's yearend 1983 data is for January 1, 1984.

[l] Oregon's figures include escaped inmates.

[m] Figures exclude adult inmates under the jurisdiction of the California Youth Authority.

growth rate slowed to about half that of the previous two years (table 1). The dramatic rise in the number of prisoners during the 1970's marked the third era of sustained growth since data were first collected in 1925 (see figure 1). Increases during the 1970's were spurred in part by the arrival at the prison-prone ages (20-29 years) of the post-World War II "baby-boom" generation. At the same time, innovations in sentencing and parole laws and practices may have had a variety of effects on the prison population. In some cases, the initial effect of new laws may have been to reduce or slow prison growth, with subsequent rapid growth once the laws became fully operative.



Note: Prior to 1978, NPS reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1978, focus is on the jurisdiction population. Both figures are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

Courts intervene in prison situation

During this same period, the strain placed on prison systems by the rapid influx of prisoners was accompanied by a series of court interventions that caused many States to seek means to alleviate prison overcrowding.

As of December 1983, entire prison systems in the following States had been declared unconstitutional or were operating under court order: Alabama, Florida, Michigan (male prison system only), Mississippi, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Texas. An additional 21 States and the District of Columbia had one or more institutions under court order. Two States were operating institutions under consent decrees and nine others had litigation pending.[2]

Federal growth continues at high level

In 1981 and 1982, the Federal Bureau of Prisons experienced increases of 15.5% and 5.5% in its prison population, following 3 years of declines. During 1983, 2,253 persons were added to Federal prison rolls, resulting in a 7.6% increase.

Federal institutions continued to hold more than 1,000 unsentenced persons for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, contributing to the high proportion of Federal prisoners either unsentenced or with sentences of 1 year or less. Although this group has traditionally accounted for a much larger share of Federal (18%) than of State (3%) prisoners, their number declined in Federal prisons (-7%) while it rose (8%) in State prisons during 1983.

Correspondingly, the group with sentences of more than 1 year increased by 11% in Federal institutions, a larger increase than experienced by the States as a whole. A crackdown on crime at the Federal level, especially drug-related crimes, contributed to this increase. Early 1983 changes in U.S. Parole Commission guidelines were also expected to increase the average amount of time served by serious offenders.

[2]Jurisdictions under court order or consent decree due to prison crowding: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Slowdown in State growth across broad spectrum

Slower growth in State inmate populations during 1983 was characteristic of each of the four regions (table 3). The South, with the lowest growth rate, also showed the greatest change in comparison to the 1982 rate, going from a 13% increase in 1982 to a 3% increase in 1983. The West continued to have the fastest growth, followed by the Northeast, the North Central States, and the South.

Table 3. Percent change in prison population by region, 1982 and 1983

Region	1982	1983
State total	**12.5**	**5.8**
Northeast	11.7	9.1
North Central	7.3	3.9
South	13.4	3.0
West	17.8	12.6

Two of four largest States decline

For the first time in 4 years, two of the States with the largest prison populations were among those reporting declines (table 4). Florida, which last reported a decline in 1979, had a 5% decrease in 1983. Texas reported a decrease of 3% for 1983, the first since 1974. The effect of these two declines alone was immediately evident at the national level. Since at least 1980, the four States with the greatest number of prisoners have been major contributors to the large increase among State prisoners, accounting for more than one-third of that increase in 1980, 1981, and 1982. In 1983, however, the net change in the number of prisoners in these States accounted for only 22% of the total increase for all States.

California nears 40,000 mark

California added 4,720 prisoners to its count during 1983, resulting in a 14% increase over yearend 1982, and making it the State with the largest total prison population for the first time since 1976. Increases in reported crime in California and "get tough" attitudes held by both the general public and elected officials are among the reasons cited by State authorities for the increased number of prisoners.

In California, recent criminal justice legislation, including a 1977

Table 4. Percent change in States with more than 15,000 inmates, 1980-83

State	Number of inmates in 1983	Percent change 1980	1981	1982	1983
California	39,360	8.6	18.9	18.6	13.6
Texas	35,259	12.7	5.4	14.8	-2.5
New York	30,489	4.6	16.9	9.6	9.1
Florida	26,334	5.0	13.8	18.0	-5.4
Ohio	17,766	1.0	11.0	15.7	2.6
Illinois	15,595	-0.3	*20.1	-0.2	9.1
North Carolina	15,395	8.8	1.7	5.1	-7.1
Georgia	15,347	0.6	2.2	15.8	6.5

* Percent change may be affected by revision of 1981 data.

determinate sentencing law and laws mandating prison terms for both violent and property crimes (such as residential burglary), may be affecting the number of people sent to prison. In addition, a 1982 Victims' Bill of Rights is resulting in many young adult offenders being sent to State prisons instead of being committed to California Youth Authority facilities[3] or placed on probation. California is one of 22 jurisdictions operating facilities under court order because of overcrowding or other conditions. The California legislature considered, but did not pass, emergency release legislation during 1983.

Declines linked to early release

The 3% decline in Texas during 1983 is attributable largely to the enactment of an additional good-time bill, which, together with other types of early release mechanisms, led to more than 7,000 expedited releases during 1983. The entire Texas State prison system has been declared unconstitutional on grounds of overcrowding and other conditions.

Like that in Texas, the decline in Florida's prison population (5%) is largely the result of a court-ordered ceiling to reduce overcrowding. Florida enacted a new gain-time law during 1982 that reduces time served by giving inmates meritorious gain time under certain circumstances. During 1983, more than 2,400 inmates were released early in this manner.

Two other States, among those with more than 10,000 inmates, reported declines in conjunction with early release mechanisms. North Carolina's prison population dropped 7% during 1983. A 1981 Fair Sentencing Act, while creating presumptive sentences with no discretionary release for some crimes, has had the effect of reducing time served in prison according to State officials. Stepped-up paroles for those sentenced prior to the enactment of this law and an increase in the amount of good-time applied to most inmates' sentences are also cited in the decline.

Following three years of almost no change, Michigan's prison population fell by 6% in 1983. Under Michigan's Emergency Powers Act, if prison population exceeds capacity for more than 30 days, certain inmates are rated eligible for parole release 90 days earlier than normal. This continues until enough are released to bring the inmate population under 95% of capacity (the Parole Board may still deny release to individual inmates). The act has been invoked six times since 1981, including twice in 1983.

[3]The California Youth Authority receives commitments from juvenile courts up to age 18. In addition, young adults apprehended up to age 21 may be placed under Youth Authority jurisdiction through age 25. In 1979, there were approximately 2,000 young adult offenders in Youth Authority institutions.

Table 5. The prison situation at yearend 1983

States with 10,000 or more prisoners		States with increases of 20% or more since 1982		States with increases of 1,000 or more since 1982		States with incarceration rates of 200 or more per 100,000 U.S. population	
California	39,360	North Dakota	27.3	California	4,720	Nevada	354
Texas	35,259	Alaska	25.1	New York	2,538	Louisiana	290
New York	30,489	New Jersey	[a]24.6	Louisiana	2,041	Maryland	277
Florida	26,334	Hawaii	20.5	New Jersey	[a]2,018	South Carolina	276
Ohio	17,766	Kansas	20.4	Maryland	1,594	Delaware	273
Illinois	15,595			Illinois	1,302	Georgia	259
North Carolina	15,395			Pennsylvania	1,245	Alabama	243
Georgia	15,347					Florida	235
Michigan	14,382					North Carolina	233
Louisiana	12,976					Arizona	223
Maryland	12,606					Texas	221
Pennsylvania	11,767					Alaska	219
Virginia	10,093					Oklahoma	212
New Jersey	10,209					Mississippi	211

NOTE: The District of Columbia, as a wholly urban area, is excluded from the list of States with high incarceration rates.

[a]New Jersey's increase is affected by the 1983 inclusion of inmates held in local jails because of overcrowding who were excluded from the count in 1982.

Virginia had a nearly stable prison population during 1983. It has had a Mandatory Release Law since 1979. Ohio's 3% growth during 1983 was far below the increases reported for 1981 and 1982.

Turnaround in Illinois

Among the other States with more than 10,000 inmates (table 5), each had increases that exceeded the average 6% gain for all States. Illinois experienced a slight decline in 1982 when almost 3,000 persons were released under its Forced Release Program. The releases continued until, in July 1983, the Illinois Supreme Court invalidated the practice of multiple 90-day good-time awards. A 12% increase for the second half of 1983 followed a decline in the first 6 months of 1983, resulting in a net increase of 9% for the entire year.

Georgia registered a 7% annual increase but actually showed a slight decline during the second half of the year. More than 1,500 persons were granted accelerated releases in Georgia because of overcrowding during 1983. In Maryland and New Jersey, the inclusion of certain inmate groups for the first time in their yearend counts contributed to the high 1983 growth rates (14.5% and 24.6%, respectively).

Five States report high growth for fourth year in a row

During 1983, 5 States had growth rates of 20% or more[4] while 13 others had increases of more than 10%. Of the 18, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, North Dakota, and Oklahoma each reported increases of at least 10% for every year since 1980. Among the factors cited by authorities for rapid increases in these States are increased crime, increased police and court activity spurred by "get-tough" attitudes toward crime, and longer sentences.

[4]New Jersey's 25% increase in prison population during 1983 is attributable in large part to the inclusion of persons held in local jails because of prison crowding.

Drop in number of jail-housed prisoners

Between 1982 and 1983, the number of States holding prisoners in local jails because of overcrowding dropped from 20 to 18, while the number of jail-housed prisoners dropped by 7% (see table 6). Illinois reported holding such prisoners for the first time in 1983. At midyear 1983, restrictions were placed by the Illinois Supreme Court on the Illinois Department of Corrections practice of awarding more than one 90-day good-time period to inmates in order to maintain the population at or near capacity. With the early release program curtailed, Illinois has contracted with local jails and with another State, Nevada, to house its excess capacity. Florida, Michigan, and New Mexico, each of which had State prisoners in local jails in 1981 and 1982, reported none in 1983 (table 7). Both Florida and Michigan had early release mechanisms and reported declines in prison population for 1983.

Four States reported holding more than 1,000 State prisoners in local jails. In both Louisiana and Mississippi, jail-housed prisoners amounted to 18%

Table 6. States holding prisoners in local jails because of overcrowding

Year	Number of States	Number of prisoners
1983	18	8,078
1982	20	8,689
1981	18	6,900
1980	17	6,360
1979	15	6,497
1978	12	6,774
1977	10	7,048
1976	10	7,725

Table 7. State prisoners held in local jails because of overcrowding

State	1983	1982	1981
Total	**8,078**	**8,689**	**6,900**
Alabama	1,001	1,113	1,472
California	1,244	1,090	600
Colorado	211	[a]244	0
Florida	0	295	287
Illinois[b]	86	0	0
Kentucky	[a,c]244	[a]162	104
Louisiana	2,299	1,499	793
Maine	75	61	24
Maryland	82	67	71
Massachusetts	[a]2	[a]8	7
Michigan	0	7	43
Mississippi	1,006	1,020	1,147
Montana	0	0	1
New Jersey[a]	967	1,584	995
New Mexico	0	2	2
Oklahoma	0	0	48
South Carolina	514	498	549
Tennessee	8	186	219
Utah	55	6	29
Vermont[d]	7	11	0
Virginia	246	643	485
Washington	28	28	24
Wisconsin[e]	3	165	0

[a] Not included in this State's official prison count.
[b] Illinois houses 18 of the reported 86 inmates in Nevada facilities.
[c] Kentucky's figures are for 12/28/83.
[d] Vermont, which has a combined jail/prison system, houses inmates in lockups to alleviate overcrowding.
[e] Wisconsin houses 276 inmates in other State, Federal, and county facilities because of overcrowding.

of the State's total prisoner population. At the national level, about 2% of all State prisoners were being held in local jails because of overcrowding.

Women in State prisons

The number of women in State and Federal institutions increased during 1983 by 6% to 19,019 (table 8). The growth rate, while slightly higher than that for males, was less than half the 15% increase recorded for 1982.

As was the case with other inmate groups, the number of women prisoners showed almost no growth in the second half of the year. Women accounted for 4% of the total prisoner population, the same as in the previous year.

Two States, Illinois and Louisiana, were added to the list of those holding more than 500 women inmates (table 9). In California, with more than 2,000 women inmates, the number increased by 22% over yearend 1982. California houses more than 100 women prisoners in local jails because of overcrowding. In Louisiana, the number of women prisoners grew by 28% to 532. In that State, 175 women—one-third of the total—had to be housed in local jails because of lack of space in State facilities.

Table 8. Women in State and Federal institutions, 1974-83

Year	Number	Percent change	Percent of prison population
1974	8,091		3.5
1975	9,667	19.5	3.8
1976	11,170	15.5	4.0
1977(custody)	12,041	7.8	4.1
1977(jurisdiction)	12,279	NA	4.1
1978	12,746	3.8	4.2
1979	12,995	2.0	4.3
1980	13,420	3.3	4.1
1981	15,537	15.8	4.2
1982	17,923	15.4	4.3
1983	19,019	6.1	4.3

NOTE: Before 1977, NPS reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1977, they were based on the jurisdiction population. Both figures are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

NA Not applicable.

96% of prisoners sentenced to more than one year

The number of prisoners with sentences of less than a year or with no sentence declined by 7% in Federal institutions but increased by 8% in State institutions.

Almost 4 out of 5 short-sentence or unsentenced prisoners were held in the seven States that operated combined jail/prison systems (see table 10). In these States, these inmates accounted for between 20% and 40% of all prisoners. Another fourth of the total were held in three States that had more than 1,000 prisoners with short or no sentences: California (1,335), North Carolina (1,138), and Ohio (1,080).

Admissions outpace releases

The increase in prison population during 1983 of approximately 24,000, or about 5.9%, was more than equal to the average annual gain between 1977 and 1982. During that period, prison population increased by an average of nearly 23,000 inmates, or 6.8% each year (table 1). Admissions of persons sentenced to more than a year consistently outpaced releases from 1977 through 1982. In 1982, approximately 1.3 persons were admitted to prison from the courts or returned for violating conditions of release for every inmate who was released, conditionally or unconditionally, from prison. This ratio ranged between 1.1 and 1.3 over the period 1977 to 1982.

Continued pressure on facilities

Increasing populations in prison continue to exert pressure on the jurisdictions to provide sufficient housing, staff, and programs to insure orderly operation of facilities. The problem of prison crowding was first noted in National Prisoner Statistics publications when it was observed in 1926 that State correctional facilities were operating at more than 108% of the then-reported capacity. Since then, and particularly since the late 1970's, the adequacy of confinement facilities to accommodate growing populations has been of concern to correctional authorities and, as noted earlier, has resulted in litigation over confinement conditions in most of the States.

Table 9. States with more than 500 women inmates

State	Number	Percent of all inmates	Percent change in 1983
California	2,061	5.1	22.0
Texas	1,467	4.2	-12.5
Florida	1,180	4.5	- 5.3
Ohio	971	5.5	7.9
New York	832	2.7	1.7
Georgia	748	4.9	12.8
Michigan	653	4.5	- 1.7
North Carolina	589	3.8	-15.1
Illinois	557	3.6	14.4
Louisiana	532	4.1	27.9

Table 10. States in which inmates with short sentences or no sentence comprise 10% or more of the prison population

State	Number	Percent of total
Hawaii[a]	666	38.5
Connecticut[a]	1,897	34.7
Alaska[a]	559	34.2
Delaware[a]	531	24.2
Rhode Island[a]	279	24.1
Vermont[a]	119	23.9
District of Columbia[a]	879	20.2
Maine	191	18.2
North Dakota	60	14.6
Nebraska	225	13.4

[a]Combined jail/prison systems

During the past dozen years, both executive and legislative branch agencies have enacted reforms designed specifically to affect both sentencing and release decisions. In addition, a growing movement within the corrections profession toward self-regulating standards has stimulated interest in and concern about achieving greater standardization in prison environments and operations.

Facility construction a major response

Nearly 42,000 beds were added to correctional institutions (as a result of both facility renovation and facility construction) during 1981 and 1982 (table 11), with a substantial number of additional beds planned and under construction. The 1983 inmate population gain of approximately 24,000 suggests

Table 11. Prison beds added, under construction, and planned, 1981-82

Number of beds	1981[a]	1982[b]
Added	20,640	21,212
Under construction	32,295	28,338
Planned	60,409	73,673

Source: Corrections Yearbook (1982-83).

[a] For 1981, 35 jurisdictions reported beds added, 40 reported beds under construction, and 38 reported beds planned.
[b] For 1982, 39 jurisdictions reported beds added, 51 reported beds under construction, and 49 reported beds planned.

Table 12. Expenditures (in millions) by State correctional systems, 1971-83

Fiscal year	Direct outlays	Capital outlays	Total expenditures	Capital as % of total
1971	$1,179.8	$143.2	$1,323.0	10.8
1972	1,270.2	107.5	1,377.7	7.8
1973	1,435.3	98.7	1,534.0	6.4
1974	1,688.1	124.5	1,812.6	6.9
1975	2,015.1	177.2	2,193.0	8.1
1976	2,276.3	198.5	2,474.8	8.0
1977	2,561.1	286.0	2,847.1	10.0
1978	2,855.3	321.6	3,176.9	10.1
1979	3,173.3	358.2	3,531.5	10.1
1980	3,863.1	638.0	4,501.1	14.2
1981	4,022.7	759.9	4,782.6	15.9
1982	4,989.5	555.9*	5,545.4	10.0
1983	5,560.1	358.6**	5,918.7	6.1

NOTE: Data for 1971-79 were compiled from Expenditure and Employment Data for the Criminal Justice System (published annually through 1979), Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington, D.C.; 1980-83 data were compiled from the Directory of the American Correctional Association (1981-84), College Park, Md. Because of the differences in sources used, 1971-79 data may not be strictly comparable to 1980-83 data. ACA fiscal data include 17 States that reported combined juvenile and adult budget information.
*An additional $952 million was allocated to capital improvements as a result of bond issues and other revenue-raising mechanisms in FY 82.
**An additional $1.3 billion was allocated to capital improvements as a result of bond issues and other revenue-raising mechanisms in FY 83.

the need to increase available beds (assuming prisons were operating at full capacity at the end of 1982) by nearly 500 each week simply to accommodate the number of new inmates.

For fiscal year (FY) 1983, State correctional systems reported capital expenditures totaling more than $358 million and bond issues and other financing mechanisms totaling nearly $1.3 billion to support capital improvements (table 12). Fiscal year 1983 operating budgets for correctional agencies were more than $5.5 billion.[5]

[5]Combined adult/juvenile fiscal corrections data were reported by 17 States; 4 reported biennial budget data that were halved.

Table 13. Reported Federal and State prison capacities, yearend 1983

	Capacity		
	Rated	Operational	Design
Federal institutions	**24,399**	**30,291**	**24,399**
Alabama	7,783	7,783	7,783
Alaska	1,359	1,429	1,124
Arizona	NR	6,021	NR
Arkansas	NR	4,184	NR
California	25,703	37,986	25,703
Colorado	NR	3,049	NR
Connecticut	NR	5,813	4,209
Delaware	NR	2,045	NR
Dist. of Columbia*	NR	NR	3,355
Florida	28,729	28,177	20,575
Georgia	NR	15,534	NR
Hawaii	NR	1,388	940
Idaho	NR	NR	896
Illinois	15,318	15,318	11,987
Indiana	6,424	6,424	NR
Iowa	2,816	2,652	2,572
Kansas	NR	2,597	3,886
Kentucky	4,754	*4,687	NR
Louisiana	10,699	10,699	10,699
Maine	854	854	854
Maryland	8,660	12,416	NR
Massachusetts	3,112	3,339	3,339
Michigan	NR	13,048	NR
Minnesota	2,405	2,405	NR
Mississippi	4,557	NR	NR
Missouri	NR	8,855	NR
Montana	575	767	575
Nebraska	1,271	1,541	1,239
Nevada	NR	3,185	2,541
New Hampshire*	490	460	392
New Jersey	NR	8,857	7,864
New Mexico	1,950	1,950	1,950
New York	26,284	31,182	26,530
North Carolina	NR	16,261	NR
North Dakota	471	471	471
Ohio	NR	NR	16,417
Oklahoma	7,666	7,666	5,099
Oregon	2,333	3,494	2,699
Pennsylvania	NR	NR	9,517
Rhode Island	1,248	1,122	NR
South Carolina	NR	7,630	6,581
South Dakota	996	894	636
Tennessee	NR	7,982	6,544
Texas	39,785	37,796	39,785
Utah	1,031	1,346	1,170
Vermont	553	586	479
Virginia	9,544	9,544	9,175
Washington	4,491	6,172	NR
West Virginia*	1,446	1,539	1,466
Wisconsin	3,986	3,986	3,986
Wyoming	NR	701	566

See Table Notes, page 9.
NR Not reported
* Males only

Table 14. Prison population (excluding prisoners confined to jail because of prison overcrowding) as a percentage of highest and lowest reported capacities, yearend 1983

State	Prison population[a]	Highest reported capacity	Population as a % of highest capacity[b]	Lowest reported capacity	Population as a % of lowest capacity[c]
United States	**430,695**	**421,187**	**102**	**365,137**	**118**
Federal institutions	31,926	30,291	105	24,399	131
State institutions	398,769	390,896	102	340,738	117
Alabama	8,855	7,783	114	7,783	114
Alaska	1,634	1,429	114	1,124	145
Arizona	6,889	6,021	114	6,021	114
Arkansas	4,183	4,184	100	4,184	100
California	38,116	37,986	100	25,703	148
Colorado	3,239	3,049	106	3,049	106
Connecticut	5,474	5,813	94	4,209	130
Delaware	2,190	2,045	107	2,045	107
District of Columbia*	4,117	3,355	123	3,355	123
Florida	26,334	28,729	92	20,575	128
Georgia	15,347	15,534	99	15,534	99
Hawaii	1,731	1,388	125	940	184
Idaho	1,206	896	135	896	135
Illinois	15,509	15,318	101	11,987	129
Indiana	9,360	6,424	146	6,424	146
Iowa	2,814	2,816	100	2,572	109
Kansas	3,705	3,886	95	2,597	143
Kentucky	4,738	4,754	100	4,754	100
Louisiana	10,677	10,699	100	10,699	100
Maine	974	854	114	854	114
Maryland	12,524	12,416	101	8,660	145
Massachusetts	4,559	3,339	137	3,112	146
Michigan	14,382	13,048	110	13,048	110
Minnesota	2,156	2,405	90	2,405	90
Mississippi	4,580	4,557	101	4,557	101
Missouri	8,053	8,855	91	8,855	91
Montana	850	767	111	575	148
Nebraska	1,677	1,541	109	1,239	135
Nevada	3,200	3,185	100	2,541	126
New Hampshire*	465	490	95	392	119
New Jersey	9,242	8,857	104	7,864	118
New Mexico	2,013	1,950	103	1,950	103
New York	30,489	31,182	98	26,284	116
North Carolina	15,395	16,261	95	16,261	95
North Dakota	410	471	87	471	87
Ohio	17,766	16,417	108	16,417	108
Oklahoma	7,487	7,666	98	5,099	147
Oregon	4,181	3,494	120	2,333	179
Pennsylvania	11,767	9,517	124	9,517	124
Rhode Island	1,157	1,248	93	1,122	103
South Carolina	9,069	7,630	119	6,581	138
South Dakota	824	996	83	636	130
Tennessee	8,760	7,982	110	6,544	134
Texas	35,259	39,785	89	37,796	93
Utah	1,220	1,346	91	1,031	118
Vermont	490	586	84	479	102
Virginia	9,847	9,544	103	9,175	107
Washington	6,673	6,172	108	4,491	149
West Virginia*	1,566	1,539	102	1,446	108
Wisconsin	4,895	3,986	123	3,986	123
Wyoming	721	701	103	566	127

[a]Excludes persons housed in local jails.
[b]Highest capacity reported in table 13.
[c]Lowest capacity reported in table 13.
* Males only.

Capital expenditures (excluding capital spending based on bond issues and other special revenue-raising mechanisms) rose throughout the 1970's and began declining in FY 82 after peaking in FY 1981 at nearly $760 million (table 12).

However, capital improvements derived from bond issues (and other sources) grew by nearly $350 million from FY 82 to FY 83 to approximately $1.3 billion. Some States devised new financing strategies to support capital improvements such as Alabama's 3-year gas and oil fund, estimated to generate more than $60 million in revenues.

Lack of uniformity in defining prison capacity

Most States reported varying capacities for their prison systems at yearend 1983 (table 13). Prison capacities, generally, are reported in three ways:

- rated capacity, or the number of inmates/beds a rating official believes can safely be accommodated within the facility;
- operational capacity, or the number of inmates who can be accommodated, given the staffing, programming, and service provision resources of the facility; and
- design capacity, or the number of inmates intended by the architect or facility planner to occupy the facility.

There is little standardization within the field of corrections (for uniform data reporting purposes) as to what precise population density, occupancy, staffing or service levels constitute a particular capacity for a facility. In 1982, a survey of the States found a wide variety of capacity measures in use among the 50 States: emergency capacity, court-ordered capacity, staffed capacity, optimum management capacity, program capacity, functional capacity, and maximum stress capacity.[6] The standards promulgated by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections suggest a capacity criterion based upon square footage per inmate and time spent per day in a confinement unit.[7]

Measuring crowding

Given the lack of comparability in the way capacities are defined and reported by States, estimating the actual magnitude of crowding must, necessarily, be imprecise. However, examining reported capacity/population relationships in concert with other indicators sheds light on how States are functioning with respect to the populations and facilities they manage. The relationship of the prison population to the highest capacity reported and to the lowest capacity reported provides a range for the degree of capacity utilization in each jurisdiction (table 14). Six States indicate that they are currently operating at less than 100% capacity on both measures—Georgia, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota and Texas. In 1981 and 1982, these six States added by construction more than 9,000 new beds or about 22% of all the new beds constructed in the Nation during those 2 years. Moreover, the American Correctional Association generally suggests that prison populations should approximate 90% of available capacity in order to retain reserve confinement units for special purposes (e.g., hospital beds, segregation housing, replacement units for those taken off-line for repairs, and emergencies).[8] Two of the six States, Minnesota and North Dakota, would conform to that recommended level at yearend 1983. Overall, State prisons are estimated to be operating at approximately 102% of their highest

Table 15. Profile of prison crowding, 1983

State	Yearend prison population as percent of capacity[a]	Percent of yearend population in local jails because of overcrowding[b]	Number of early releases because of overcrowding
United States	**110**	**2.2[b]**	**21,420**
Federal institutions	118	0.0	NA
State institutions	110	NA	21,420
Alabama	114	10.2	0
Alaska	130	NA	33
Arizona	114	0.0	188
Arkansas	100	0.0	0
California	124	3.2	NA
Colorado	106	6.1	0
Connecticut	112	NA	0
Delaware	107	NA	245
District of Columbia*	123	NA	NA
Florida	110	0.0	2,418
Georgia	99	NA	1,530
Hawaii	155	NA	0
Idaho	134	0.0	0
Illinois	115	0.6	2,851
Indiana	146	NA	1,101
Iowa	105	NA	0
Kansas	119	0.0	0
Kentucky	95	4.9	NA
Louisiana	109	17.7	0
Maine	114	7.1	NA
Maryland	123	0.7	0
Massachusetts	141	...	0
Michigan	110	0.0	4,290
Minnesota	90	NA	0
Mississippi	101	18.0	38
Missouri	91	0.0	0
Montana	130	0.0	9
Nebraska	122	0.0	0
Nevada	113	0.0	0
New Hampshire*	107	0.0	0
New Jersey	111	9.5	0
New Mexico	103	0.0	0
New York	107	0.0	0
North Carolina	95	0.0	NA
North Dakota	87	0.0	NA
Ohio	108	0.0	0
Oklahoma	123	0.0	NA
Oregon	150	0.0	0
Pennsylvania	124	0.0	0
Rhode Island	98	NA	0
South Carolina	129	5.4	57
South Dakota	107	0.0	0
Tennessee	122	0.2	259
Texas	91	0.0	7,118
Utah	105	4.3	139
Vermont	93	1.4	0
Virginia	105	2.4	NA
Washington	129	...	847
West Virginia*	105	0.0	0
Wisconsin	123	...	297
Wyoming	115	0.0	NA

See Table Notes, page 9.
[a]Average of highest and lowest capacity.
[b]States with combined prison and jail systems not included.
* Males only.
NA Not available
...Less than 0.5%

[6]Survey of Prison Capacity conducted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency for the reference date December 31, 1982 (unpublished analysis).

[7]Standard 2-4129 recommends 60 square feet of floor space per inmate confined 10 hours or less per day. See Standards for Adult Correctional Institute, 2nd Edition, College Park, Md.: American Correctional Association, p. 32, Jan. 1981.

[8]Estimate suggested by Anthony Travisono, Executive Director, American Correctional Association, March 7, 1984.

reported capacities and 117% of their lowest reported capacities. The similar range for Federal prisons is estimated between 105% and 131%.

In an examination of prison crowding, factors other than the capacity-population relationship are important to note. Particularly significant are the proportion of a jurisdiction's prison population that must be held in local jails (because of the inability of prison facilities to accommodate new admissions) and the number of inmates released prior to normal eligibility dates specifically because of prison crowding. Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Jersey reported housing nearly 10% or more of their prison populations in local jails because of crowding (table 15). Similarly, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Texas reported substantial numbers of inmates granted early releases because of prison crowding. The impact on the capacity/population ratios for these 10 States would have been substantial had either of these two mechanisms not been used. Even using such strategies, all 10 of these States (including Texas, which added nearly 6,800 beds during 1981 and 1982) exceeded the 90%-of-capacity objective suggested by the American Correctional Association.

Between 1978 and 1983, reported capacities grew by 50% (122,317) across State prison systems for an annual average gain of nearly 24,500 beds (table 16). Whether this growth represents actual new space or refitting of existing space to accommodate housing needs is not precisely known. It is likely, given the construction programs completed, underway, and planned, that most of the increase results from new construction. During 1978-83, State prison populations increased by more than 128,000 at an average annual rate of nearly 26,000. Thus, capacity expansion, use of local jails for overflow, and programs designed to increase releases have held the observed level of crowding at yearend 1983 to that reported in 1978.

Table 16. State prison populations and reported capacities, 1978-83

Year	Prison population	Reported capacity	Percent of reported capacity
1978	270,025	243,500	111
1979	281,589	265,531	106
1981	319,893[a]	293,176[a]	109
1982	375,676[b]	338,379[b]	111
1983	399,072	365,817[c]	109

See Table Notes, page 9.

[a] Montana, New Jersey, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Alaska are not included.
[b] North Dakota is not included.
[c] Average of highest and lowest reported capacities.

Age of facilities

The problem of prison capacity is further exacerbated by the age of available housing stock. That is, older prisons disproportionately require high-cost maintenance, renovation, and replacement, draining scarce capital dollars away from new construction designed to house the growing inmate population. The average prison inmate (specifically, the median inmate) is estimated to reside in a facility built in the mid-1940's (table 17). Generally, those inmates confined in the North Central States are located in the oldest prisons (nearly 1 in 5 are in facilities built before 1875); those in the South and West reside in the newest facilities. The average (median) Federal prisoner is confined in an institution about equal in age to that of the average State prisoner. An approximately equal proportion of State prisoners reside in facilities opened during the 5 years from 1979 to 1983 as reside in facilities opened during the 9 years from 1970 to 1978 (12.9% and 12.3% respectively). This suggests that the pace of new facility construction from 1979 to 1983 may be estimated at nearly twice that for 1970-78 (few facilities built during the period 1970 to 1978 are likely to have closed by 1983). This estimated pace of new construction is further supported by the capital spending data noted earlier, particularly when the bond issues (and other revenue measures) passed during FY 82 and FY 83 and the large fraction of total expenditures devoted to capital improvements in FY 80 and FY 81 are taken into account.

1983 prison population: A summary

While the rate of increase in prison population during 1983 slowed to about half that of 1981 and 1982 (5.9% compared to 12.2% in 1981 and 12.0% in 1982), the number of inmates gained was approximately equal to the average annual growth during the preceding six years. The yearend 1983 population reached a new high of 438,830, nearly 93% of which was under the jurisdiction of State correctional systems. Males accounted for approximately 96% of the overall population.

Prison administrators and staff continued to grapple with a shortage of available housing capacity to accommodate the 1983 population. Correctional systems reported that:

- the entire prison system in seven States (and all male penal facilities in one additional State) were operating under court order;
- 24 jurisdictions were operating one or more facilities under court order or consent decree, and 9 others had litigation pending;
- 18 States reported a total of nearly 8,100 sentenced prisoners held in local jails because of State prison crowding;
- 15 States reported 21,420 prisoners who received early releases during 1983 because of crowding in State prisons;
- State and Federal prison systems reported that, on the average, they were operating at about 110% of capacity; and,
- 1 in every 10 inmates was estimated to reside in a prison built before 1875; the average inmate resided in a prison nearly 40 years old.

In response to the dual demands to house inmates and to replace outdated

Table 17. Estimated percentage[a] distribution of inmates by age of facility and by region, yearend 1983

Region	1983 population[b]	Year facility opened: Before 1875	1875-1924	1925-1949	1950-1969	1970-1978	1979-1983	Median year
United States	**430,998**	**9.7**	**23.0**	**20.6**	**21.4**	**12.3**	**12.9**	**1946**
Federal institutions	31,926	0.0	15.8	41.8	13.2	19.2	9.9	1945
State institutions	399,072	10.7	23.6	18.3	22.5	11.6	13.1	1946
Northeast	64,631	14.0	29.7	26.8	9.4	11.5	7.9	1931
North Central	81,551	19.4	28.8	14.9	17.7	8.4	10.6	1928
South	181,217	6.5	20.1	19.3	22.4	14.2	17.5	1954
West	71,673	8.5	21.2	12.2	40.8	8.0	9.3	1954

Sources: American Prisons and Jails, Volume III; Directory of the American Correctional Association, 1984.
See Table Notes, page 9.

[a] Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.
[b] Excludes population housed in local jails.

facilities, substantial capital expenditures have been undertaken by correctional systems. During FY 82 and FY 83, State correctional systems reported more than $900 million in capital outlays and approximately $2.25 billion in bonds and other revenue-raising mechanisms to support capital improvements. Annual expenditures by State correctional systems during FY 83 were reported to be approaching $6 billion.

* * *

Table notes

Table 13

1. Colorado's operational capacity includes 253 community residential beds.
2. The District of Columbia does not include the Detention Facility in the design capacity reported.
3. Kansas defines operational capacity as optimum management capacity; design capacity is the number of inmates who can be housed without using non-housing areas.
4. Massachusetts' operational and design capacities include 19 beds for women in a pretrial status; rated capacity includes 17 beds for this purpose.
5. New Hampshire's rated capacity is defined as the maximum capacity of male facilities.
6. New York's operational capacity includes 3,652 beds designated as temporary housing not normally deemed suitable for housing inmates but used only to meet the demands of prison crowding.
7. Wyoming's design capacity does not include one facility used as an honor farm.

Table 15

1. The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that it is not their policy to house inmates in local jails due to crowding.
2. Arizona permits expedited parole release due to prison crowding.
3. Delaware permits supervised custody releases because of prison crowding.
4. Florida's gain-time law permits expedited releases because of prison crowding.
5. Georgia reports figures for accelerated releases from January to November of 1983. The number of inmates given expedited parole release because of prison crowding could not be reported.
6. Illinois reports 18 inmates housed under contract in Nevada prisons because of crowding. Illinois also reported using forced release as a result of prison crowding.
7. Indiana reports that State inmates may not be housed in local jails to alleviate crowding. Indiana permits regulated community assignment because of prison crowding.
8. Iowa reports that State inmates may not be housed in local jails to alleviate crowding.
9. Minnesota reports that State inmates may not be housed in local jails to alleviate crowding.
10. Mississippi reports using commutations as a release mechanism because of prison crowding.
11. North Carolina reports that accelerated parole release and accelerated good-time were used during 1983 because of prison crowding, but the specific number of inmates affected could not be provided.
12. Tennessee permits early parole review and reports court-ordered releases during 1983 because of prison crowding.
13. Texas' legislature enacted a special good-time law to expedite releases because of prison crowding.
14. Vermont reports State inmates housed in police lock-ups as locally held persons because that State operates a consolidated prison/jail system.
15. Wisconsin reports 195 additional inmates housed in Minnesota, 72 housed in the Milwaukee House of Correction, and 9 housed in Federal facilities because of prison crowding.

Table 16

1. Prison population data obtained from National Prisoner Statistics.
2. Persons held in local jails because of prison crowding have been excluded.
3. Capacity data for 1978 obtained from American Prisons and Jails, Volume III.
4. Capacity data for 1979 obtained from the Census of State Prisons, 1979.
5. Capacity data for 1981 and 1982 obtained from The Corrections Yearbook (1982 and 1983).
6. Capacity data for 1983 obtained from yearend 1983 survey by the National Prisoner Statistics Program.
7. Capacity data for 1980 not available.

Table 17

1. Estimates were derived by combining survey data gathered in 1978 with facility data reported in the Directory of the American Correctional Association—1984. Average daily population figures from the Directory were used as the basis for calculating the fraction of a jurisdiction's prison population in each facility built after the 1978 survey. It was assumed that the balance of the prison population residing in facilities built before 1978 were distributed in the same manner as they were at the time of the survey in 1978.
2. The oldest prison still operating in 1983 was reported to be the Virginia State Penitentiary, opened in 1800 with a 1983 average daily population of 907 inmates.

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